Zombie Apocolypse au!
After an Attack that nobody foresaw nor found out about, Zombies start sprouting in every major school of the country. As infected turn within 24h and many news stations didn't work for a few hours during the inital break out, the virus spread quickly.
In one of the few places left to humans, a group of former students do their best to survive.
But not only do they need to fend off constant attacks from dead and gangs, some of them possess their own dark secrets which they are hiding or from which they are desperately running from.
What happens when everyone's past slowly becomes untethered?

Notes

Welp, lets go with this. Itll probably be quite long when im done, cuz i can keep making stuff up as it continues XD
"Hello, my name is Toujou Nozomi."

It was the first day of their new semester, and a new girl had transferred to Elisa's class. Ayase Eli was in her third year of Highschool and so far it had been quite uneventful. Not that she minded that, she preferred it even. Not much ever really caught her interest, so her life had consisted of studies and school.

But this semester, her sister had finally convinced her to attempt to mingle a bit. Alisa thought, she couldn't just go all her highschool career without a single friend. And for some reason, Umi and Maki, Eli's roommates, didn't count. Unfortunately, most in the school are frightened by her, due to the blondes natural cold outwards appearance. So this transfer student was her best bet at making any friends. As the girl introduced herself, Eli began to analyze her closely. She spoke in a slight accent and her voice was rather high. She was smaller than Eli, which wasn't surprising and her uniform was about to burst open on its own by the chest area. The girl had long purple hair, tied into low twintails and her eyes glistened like precious jewels. All in all, Eli concluded, she was quite a beauty and seemed to be quite friendly. Maybe becoming her friend would work?

---

It was now lunch break, Eli stealed herself for what was to come. She was terribly akward, so this really could go either way. She put on the most convincing smile she could muster and turned around, to where the purple haired girl, Nozomi as she remembered, was sitting.

"Hey mind if I turn around and eat with you?"

The girl looked up, slightly shocked

"M-Me? I-I uhh s-sure go a-ahead."

She seemed quite shy. Eli noted down that she needed to be as nice as she could, her normal demeanor would surely scare her away.

"Your name is Toujou right?"

The girl nodded

"A-And your name is..?"

Eli mentally slapped herself, she had forgotten to introduce herself.

"Ayase Eli, nice to meet you."

The girl smiled slightly, Eli realized just how cute that shy smile was.

Jesus, she was way to gay for this.

"I noticed you have a dialect, mind telling me where you're from?"

She noticed that some students had begun to stare at them, no doubt in disbelief at Eli's non-coldness.

"Well I've lived pretty much everywhere. My family travels a lot, so I speak a few other languages as well, which mix into my japanese sometimes."

---

The rest of lunch break, Eli found herself thoroughly enjoying with her new friend. Though she would never admit it, her heart fluttered slightly in joy of her new nickname, Elichi. Class came and school ended way to quickly. She bade her goodbye to Nozomi and head towards the
"Maki Chan? You there? It's time to go home cmon."
A redhead appeared from a corner of the infirmiary, an annoyed look on her face. Eli would have taken offense, but Makis face was permanently like that.
"Yeah I know. Let's go pick up Umi and get going home. You're cooking right?"
Eli nodded. Last time they had let Maki cook, the microwave had exploded, due to her microwaving a toaster, thinking thats how you give it power. Being rich was a burden sometimes.
As they were walking towards the archery club area, an earsplitting scream resounded from withing the school, making both of them stop dead in their tracks.
"Wh-What was that?"
"I don't know. Let's get to Umi and then check it out."
Eli shot a worried look in the direction of the scream but silently followed her roommate.
Arriving there, they found a large crowd of students, surrounding the archery building, Umi standing on the roof with Honoka and Kotori. Despite living with Umi, neither Eli nor Maki were well aquainted with the two.
"UMI!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP THERE?!"
Umi looked at the two startled and quickly motioned them to be silent, pointing at the students below.
"What is she trying to say?"
"No Ide-do those girls look odd to you?"
"They do..why is their skin so pale?"
"honestly they kinda look like zombies...oh no theres no way that is possibly the answer. It's medically impossible!"
Maki and Eli jumped as an arrow whizzed past them, hitting an upcoming student straight through the head.
"UMI!!"
"IDIOTS! THESE ARE ZOMBIES! DAMN RUN!"
Umi kept firing until she was out of arrows. While dead schoolgirls now lay on the ground, more advanced on them from further away. Looking up, Eli saw Umi gesturing to her two friends and jump down.
"I'll use my bow as a bat. Get behind me!"
They nodded and ran, not sure where to. Just away from these moaning, bloody terrors
Umi was quick on their heels
"Where are we running?!!"
Maki spat, looking around in shock, realizing just how fucked they were
"My parents place is close! Fallow me!"
Umi started sprinting down the road, quite a feat, considering that it was blocked by cars, crashed and burning. Terrified screams of despair filled the air, kids and adults alike were running around, some with bite marks, others in the mouth of a dead
"It's like hell"
Ei muttered. As much as she wanted to help them, she knew she couldn't she was hardly alive herself.
Shaking off the feeling of guilt and leaving their desperate please behind, she ran on

---
Umi fumbled with her spare keys as they stood at the entrance of her parents dojo
"A-Almost got em."
"U-Umi? The doors unlocked.."
A sickening feeling welled up in Umis stomach
'No, their fine!'
She attempted to reassure herself as she slowly pushed open the gate
Her heart plummeted, pure fear gripping her heart as she heard low, menacing moans coming from the house's interior.
"Umi..."

Eli faltered as her friend tightened her grip around the bow, slowly inching into the house. As the door swung open, they were greeted by a terrible sight.

Blood and guts were smeared everywhere, dead corpses, bashed heads. A nightmare.

And all the way in the back of the room, stood two, apparently recently changed figures, their blue hair still radiant.

"Mother...father..."

Umi stumbled, her lunch threatening to spill over. Her mother and father—dead!

"Umi, we need to kill them!"

Maki stared straight ahead, fear lacing her voice.

The two had noticed them and were now lumbering towards them. Umi's grip around her bow weakening.

"Mother...it's me, Umi!"

She screamed, but her words fell on deaf ears.

"Their gone Umi! Kill them!"

Tears were streaming out of the archer's eyes, her entire body shaking.

She was so caught up in the scene, she didn't even perceive her friends anymore.

"Father...don't you recognize me?!"

She wafted her eyes starting to lose focus.

"Mother!!"

Her wretched and broken voice stunned the redhead and blonde.

They watched in horror as Umi fell to the floor, blue hair spilling around her.

Maki rushed over to her.

"Eli! Fight them off, keep them away from her!"

She nodded and dashed towards the two, sending both flying into the back wall with a well aimed punch.

The crunch of bone and entrails was sickening.

"Umi! Umi listen to me!"

Maki desperately shook her friend, her misted eyes regaining focus.

"Umi! You're parents wouldn't want you to go down without a fight! They wouldn't want to kill you!"

Maki's eyes were glazed with tears.

"Do them one last favor! Release them from this curse!"

Umi nodded numbly as she got up, teetering dangerously on her shaking legs.

Taking one last look at the groaning, gnashing heap of what used to be her strong and proud parents, of what used to be her idols, the people she respected most, she raised her bow slowly.

"Goodbye Mother, Father...may you rest in peace."

The sickening crunch of broken bone fallowed as bits of brain and blood splattered over the floor.

---

"The police are facing serious fatalities as they attempt to take these...uh...dead into custody. Many say it's pointless, others believe they are still human. This conflict is nationwide, and other large forces of the world have yet to come to our aid."

Umi turned off her television with a scoff.

In the last few days, they had been held up in her family's dojo, in which time Umi had trained her friends and restocked on equipment. She had tidied the place, washed everything and practiced to exhaustion. Anything to keep her mind and body occupied.

"It's the same old same old. Nobody's safe and there's no help in sight."

Eli sighed and sat down on a couch.
"At least we have food and provision for at most three months here."
A grim silence settled over them
Both Maki and Eli had come to the reality that their family was most likely dead or near it
"Guys? I know what is to be expected but...can we visit my place?"
"It seems too dangerous. Maybe once this settles down.."
Eli hummed in approval.
She understood Maki's will to find her family, but they simply couldn't risk it
"I'm sorry.."
---
"Supplies are getting low again."
The trio were sitting in Umi's room, going through their things
"We might need to move soon, the dojo's defenses are weakening."
Eli sighed. How had all this happened in only..what was it, three months?
All it had taken was such a short amount of time, to descend the entire country into chaos. They
had had to kill dead classmates, teachers, friends. Even family.
Tears pricked her eyes as she remembered Umi's broken expression as she was forced to bring down
her parents. How Maki had broken down at the sight of her house, seeing it deserted and destroyed.
She clutched a letter to her chest, the last thing Alisa had left her before she went off to join the
group that has supposedly taken over Otonokizaka. She had explained in the letter, that she and
Yuki would attempt to cross town to get there. That was the last time Eli knew her sister had
been alive. She was scared, scared beyond belief. What would happen to them? Was Alisa alive?
Had Nozomi, her new friend, even survived a minute?
Eli also worried about Umi. She was only even still with them, because she was clinging to the
desperate hope, that her childhood friends were alive. Without that hold, she would have gone
insane for sure.
Of course, at the rate this was going, they would all go insane. They had been holed up in here for
three months, save an expedition to Alisa's and Yuki's place
'Yes they are young, but very independent' had been the blonde's comment
Other than that, the trio had simply sat around, eating canned food for months. And now that their
supplies were running low, all were desperate for change, no matter what kind. Since the Dojo had
been equipped with two small emergency handguns, they had relative security outside
"We should check out Otonoki tomorrow I think. With any luck, our friends could be
there...hopefully."
---
"Are you sure this is a good idea? What if they shoot us?"
"It's our last gamble Maki. We are out of supplies, Umi needs arrows as her Dojo's supply is out as
well and I need to see Alisa. Maybe they'll even take us in and not only give us supplies."
"No offense Eli but I think you are being too optimistic about this..."
The trio was trekking towards their old highschool, hoping for aid from the rumoured group that
resided there. They were walking up the steps as-
"Hold it Nya! You have entered a secure area-well nya secured by us students nyt the military. But
anyway stay still, a group will come and see what you want. If you open fire, we will shoot back!"
They halted abruptly as a voice came out of the school announcement gear.
"Nya?"
"No idea. Eli put that gun down damn it!"
"S-Sorry it was reflexive."

"Who are you and what do y-UMI CHAN!!"
Umi looked up surprised as she was envelopes by a tight hug, ash bangs falling around her.
"That voice..Kotori?!!
"Aaaand HONOKA AS WELL!! UMI CHAN UMI CHAN!! YOU'RE ALIVE!!"
Umi smiled the first time in weeks as she continued her long reunion hug with her two friends
"I..I thought you were both dead. How did you..?"
This time, her eyes were filled to the brim with tears of joy and pure happiness
"This really nice girl helped us. She's our leader now, I'm sure you'll love her!"
"Umi Chan, why exactly are you three here?"
"We wanted to ask for supplies..well actually if we could join as well."
Her friends lit up
"Of course you can! Come all thre-"
"Honoka Chan, that's not how it works.."
A girl with black pigtails stopd behind her
"Y-Yazawa san...?"
Eli tried to remember what she knew about the girl. Hadn't she claimed to be some dainty idol?
"I'm glad you survived Ayase san. Sadly, I hope you don't mind me having to do this."
She walked behind them and cuffed each firmly with a pair of handcuffs
"It's safety precausion. Follow us now will you? Tits is waiting for you."
"Tits?"
"Forget it banana, let's go."
Eli fallowed the twin tailed girl, grumbling angrily.

---

"Yo Tits, the trespassers are uhh..Ayase wasn't it Banana? And a redhead and bluenette. Kotori and Honoka know the blunette."
"Ayase you say?"
Eli looked around for the source of the voice. It sounded familiar yet she couldn't put her finger on it.
"Yes, the kid you're absolutly gay fo-AKGLET GOIMSORRYFORGIVEME!"
In the relative darkness of the entrance hall, Eli still couldn't make out the face, but she did see a pair of strong hands clamp around Nicos miniature breasts and squeeze hard before releasing her.
"Nicochi, let Honoka Chan and Kotori Chan show the blue haired one around. Since they trust her, I do as well. And you take the redhead, see if she is trustworthy and if she has any special talents. Leave Ayase to me."
Nico nodded and motioned for Kotori to unlock Umi, who then took Umis hand and led her off.
"Guess Im stuck with you then slanty eyes. Come on.."
She walked out, with quite some protest from Maki
"W-Who are you..?"
"Now now, Elichi, do you not recognize me?"
As the woman stood closer, she blinked in confusion. It was the transfer student, Nozomi as she recalled, but there was none of the shyness to be seen. Her eyes glinted mischievously as she kept walking slowly towards Eli.
"T-Toujou?"
"Didn't I tell you to call me Nozomi?"
"Y-yes..y-you're the leader?"
"Is it that surprising? Don't worry I'll explain it all later, if you decide to stay. Until then however.."
Nozomi smirked as she got behind Eli, and wrapped her arms around her, her hot breath tickling Elis neck, making the later blush. The purplenette slowly unbottoned the first button on Elis shirt.
"Lemme have some fun.."

Chapter End Notes
No actual sex dont ya worry XD its more extensive now in the first chapter, I hope that settles the rushing slightly
"Umi chan! Umi Chan! Stop looking so worried, you're blonde friend will be fine"
Umi was now walking, unchained, next to her two friends
"A-Are you sure? She looks dangerous.."
"Oh, she's a sucker for drama. She's actually really nice and quite shy when not in on mischief."
"I really do find that hard to believe.."
"Oh lighten up Umi Chan! Look, were gonna show you around now, so forget about her alright?"
Umi nodded shakily
"Alright then"
---
"Where are we going?"
Maki was walking next to Nico, also unbound
"I'm supposed to show you around slanty eyes. And see if you have any talent at all."
"Excuse me, I have plenty of talent."
Maki huffed
"Yeah, we'll see th-ak!"
The raven haired girl got knocked back onto the ground by, what seemed to be an orange tornado
"You damn cat! Slow down!"
She angrily got up, helping up the fallen ginger girl
"Sorry nyehhe...why are you even here? This is my part nya."
"Im showing Tsundere chan around here. She might join us"
Nico jerked a finger in Makis direction, who was standing there, observing Rin bewildered
"H-Hoshizora san?"
Rin grinned
"Oh! Maki Chan! You survived!"
"P-Please don't call me that"
"Nyaa... you prefer slanty eyes?"
Rin giggled but stopped quickly as Maki gave her a hard hit on the head
"Ouch nyaaa"
"You asked for that!"
---
Meanwhile, while the rest was meeting up with old friends and classmates, Eli was a blushing mess
of bewilderment and fright
"N-Nozomi, Wh-what are you doing?"
She felt the purple haired woman giggle as another button was loosened on her shirt
"N-Nozomi?"
Nothing happened for good five minutes. Eli didn't dare turn around. But just as she was about to
ask again a bright flash came before her eyes making her flinch
"Oh my god, your face was priceless!"
Nozomi stood in front of her, holding her broken handcuffs. They didn't even seem to close!
"I uhh what?"
The blonde blinked in confusion
"Sorry Elichi, I just wanted to get a cute scared face from you. Cmon, I'll actually show you around
"So, here we are in the courtyard. Well former courtyard, Hanayo chan made it into a small orchard for us to use."
Kotori smiled as she led Umi through the small garden. There were different beds of plants, all labeled. The blunette could make out an apple tree, the tree that had already been there, different types of berries and herbs, including some medical ones and potatoes.
"You sure are well stalked. Is this Hanayo Koizumi, from the first year?"
"Yes, she and Rin Hoshizora made it out alive. I think they were the only first years though.."
Kotori frowned sadly
"Not quite actually, Kotori. Nishikino Maki, the redhead that is with me, she's a first year as well. And she good with medicine I'd like to add."
The ash haired girl lit up
"Oh that's great! We need a medic."
"Yeaahhh!! The more people the better!"
Honoka fist bumped the air

"Oh onee chan, what are you doing here?"
Nico and Maki entered the computer room to find one of the three Yazawa kids, the oldest apart from Nico, sitting at a computer
"Showing this doofus around. She's new."
"Oh cool, she's got really awesome red hair!"
"Yeah yeah, Anyway, this is the computer room. Cocoro here is responsible for monitoring different security cameras we've set up outside the school."
"How did you get security cameras?"
"Broke into a store obviously. But we probably should've gotten more. We have multiple blind spots..
"Maybe you just need to modify the cameras you have?"
Nico snorted
"Go ahead, if you can"
"Well I don't have the skill, but Eli is quite deft in technology. She might be able to help."
"Well look at that, you might actually have some value after all Tomato head"
"Seriously, how many nicknames can you give me?"

"And here we have multiple look out posts, although we aren't quite enough to man all of them. Alisa and Yukiho take one part, while Cotarou and Cocoa another. Honestly, the later two are way to young though.."
Eli stopped dead
"Elichi?"
"Y-You said Alisa...Alisa Ayase?!"
"I uhh I d-don't know her last name"
"Bring me to her! Now!"
Nozomi shrank back a bit, back to her shy persona from before the outbreak
"Y-Yes r-right away"
She started running towards one part of the roof, fallowed quickly by Eli
"Alisachi! Do you know Elichi here?"
They arrived out of breath, in front of two bewildered teenagers.
The one with light blonde hair and blue eyes smiled widely
"ONEE CHAN!!"

Chapter End Notes

So whatcha think till now?
What happened?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The younger Ayase ran up to Eli and embraced her tightly, tears streaming down her face
"You're alive!"
"You too!"
Nozomi and Yukiho stood on the side, smiling widely
"Guess that's Eli Ayase? Alisa has only been talking about her for days."
"Not a surprise, Elichi is quite a catch isn't she? You'll have a wonderful girlfriend once Alisas through puberty."
Green eyes gleamed mischievously
"Wh-What?!"

---

"So...how did you manage to kill all the Zombies inside the school?"
The second year trio was sitting on the roof, enjoying the warm summer sun
"It wasn't easy, you can trust me on that"
"Basically, Honoka is the reason we managed it"
"Surely that's a joke?"
"Umi Chan!! So meeeann!"
Honoka whined and kicked around on the ground
"No, but the story is quite a funny one actually"
"Is that so? Why don't you tell me. And how you all met as well."
"Let's wait and collect everybody to explain that."
Umi sighed
"Alright, but please explain this. How did you even get all this set up? It's as if somebody had planned ahead.."
Kotori nodded thoughtfully
"Yes I know right? Everything we needed was located here. We only needed to reinforce the school to survive...but surely nobody saw this coming?"
"Unless it's some secret government project gone wrong like in all those movies, theres now way. And that seems unlikely..."
"Yeah..I haven't seen any military since this entire thing started nya"
The group jumped up
"Since when have you two been there?!"
"A while nya."
"Sh-She pulled me with her, she wanted to meet Sonoda san"
Umis face flushed quickly
"A-Aren't you Hoshizora san? Who won some medal in a tournament this summer?"
Rin nodded eagerly
"Nya!"
"Wh-Whats with the nya..?"
"Cat kid here has a tick"
Maki and Nico entered the roof through the door
"So, now the only newcomer missing is banana?"
"Na, we've been here quite some time already ykown"
The group looked up to the platform, where Eli, Alis, Yukiho and Nozomi were sitting, Nozomi grinning.
"Jesus! Will you stop eavesdropping?!
Nico glowered at the older girl as she lightly jumped off, followed by all but Eli, who used the ladder
"So, time to clue em in about Otonokizaka?"

---

-Multiple months ago-

"Honoka Chan! Run!"
Umi had just jumped down, abandoning Kotori and Honoka on the archery houses roof. The two had decided to jump down and run for it
"Kotori chan, to your right!"
Kotori had to doge a yapping mouth of a classmate, falling onto the rough dirt of the front lawn
Honoka quickly helped her up
"Wh-Where do we go?!
"I don't know Honoka Chan! Inside?"
"Seems like more would be in the-how about the Alpacas?"
Honokas eyes glowed in determination
"Wha? Why?"
The ash haired blinked confused
"They are completely avoiding the Alpacas. Just like in this video game I played!"
The ginger dragged her friend up, pulling her over into the stalls and slamming the door.
The alpacas, familiar with the two due to Kotoris frequent visits, didn't bat an eye.
"H-H-How long do we stay here?"
"I don't know...hopefully we get saved..!"
Kotori and Honoka hugged eachother tightly, not for warmth, but for sheer support that this was actually happening. That they had seen dead classmates
'Is..is mother even alive?'
Kotori shuddered at the thought, crying into her friends shoulder
'How could this happen?!

--

"Hey, Tits!"
Nozomi looked up from her book as a raven haired girl approached her. The girl was small..well tiny. And her pigtails looked like she belonged in middle school.
"T-Tits?"
"Couldn't remember your name, just that it starts with T. Anyway, you are the last one not to have been visited by Nico Nii"
"I uhh what?"
Nozomi started packing up, being quite weirded out by the girl
"I'm the class Idol, Nico Yazawa. That's Nico Nii for you."
"That's great. Are we done?"
She didn't want to appear rude, but there were video games waiting at home, and Nozomi disliked people in general anyway. But the girl was persistent, fallowing her all around, even till outside the gates
"I really don't see what's special about you.."
"Special?"
"You're the first person that Ayase has talked to in like ever"
The purplentette blinked in confusion
"She seemed nice, I can't believe that."
"She's known as the ice queen of the school. Cold and closed off Ayase Eli. Shoots down anybody
who asks her out, shoots down anybody who even approaches her."
"Wait seriously?"
Nico nodded
"Yes, and I can not see why you are so special"
"I'm not, that's why"
They had reached the gym as multiple students started walking towards them
"Say uhh..do they have a weird gate to you?"
Nico squinted at the girls
"Their uniforms are bloody? No wait it has to be paint."
She walked up to one of them, a classmate of theirs as a matter of fact.
"Hey uhh are you alright?"
She barely got to finish her sentence as the students dashed forward, clamping around Nicos arm.
Or where her arm would have been, if the idol hadn't been pulled back last second by her companion
"Nico! This will sound quite ridiculous but..Zombies! Run!"

--

"Nyaaaa! Shouldn't Nishikino san be here? I have a cut!
Rin stood at the infirmary, her pinky bleeding from a paper cut, Hanayo standing anxiously next to her.
"Sh-She might've already gone?"
"Looks like it nya..I need to fix myself up then. Help me Kayochin!"
The cat like girl bounded into the room, opening all sorts of drawers and cupboards. Hanayo walked in behind her and closed the door politely.
"Not there, not there, not here..hmmm"
"M-Maybe you shouldn't loot the place Rin Chan..."
"Hm fine ny-Kayochin? Why are there random students in the hall biting each other?"

Chapter End Notes

Flashbacks aren't finished, this is just the first part
Heavy breathing filled the empty archery range as Nico and Nozomi slammed and locked the door behind them
"Th-This can't be true..!"
"It is and we will survive Tits! Come on, I bet you've got more than just good looks on you!"
Nico walked over to the bows
"Ever shot these?"
"O-Only in video games"
"Well now we're doing it for real"
"W-Wait! I c-can't kill them!"
"It's kill or be killed alright?!"
The purplenette shrank back at Nicos sharp tone
Realizing her mistake, the raven haired girl softened her approach
"Look, they are already dead alright? We're releasing them from their misery. Can you live with that?"
Nozomi nodded and grabbed a bow
"I-I'll just use this as a melee weapon"
"That works. I'll use arrows to stab."
They positioned themselves in front to run as they heard a scream
"That came from the school!"
"Theres alive people?"
"Seems so. Let's run!"
The two opened the gates, sprinting across the lawn towards the school, dodging more than fighting
"Where's it coming from?!
"Sounds like the first floor!"
They kept running, only to find five dead blocking the door to the infirmary
"Shit!"
Nico ran at them, stabbing two through the eye, while Nozomi cowered down, trembling on every limb
"Tits! I need some help!"
Nico was cornered by two more, Nozomis wide and frightened eyes staring at her, petrified as one approached her as well
"NOZOMI!!"
Nicos scream woke the older girl out of her stupor as she got up, gingerly grasping her bow
"Just need to hit his head, it'snotaliveitsnotaliveitsnotalive"
she kept muttering to herself and dashed at the one in front of her, hitting and denting the skull, drawing the attention of the other two, which Nico then manages to stab from behind
"Phew..good going tits..! But you almost got me killed"
"I-Im sorry"
"N-Nya? K-Kayochin! Their dead!"
"Eh?"
Out of the door stepped two first years, evident by their bows
"Are you alright?"
"J-Just fine nya..thank you!"
She shot forward and embraced both in a tight hug, making both topple over
"Gah! Get off me!"
The ginger smiled at them, tears leaking out of her eyes
"I-I thought we'd die..! I thought Kayochin would have to die!"
Nozomi smiled gently and embraced the crying first year. She had kept it all in, in order to appear
strong for her friend, but now she completely broke down in an aftershock of the event.
As she sobbed gently into the older girls chest, the brunette approached them shyly, eyes glistening
in relief, then she bowed
"I-I'm forever grateful for saving us..and I'm glad more students have survived"
she rectified, wiping her eyes lightly, Nico consciously turning away to do the same
"Sadly, I think we might be the only ones.."
"I..I think so as well..
"Come on, the archery range is the safest to talk, we can discuss more there"
Hanayo took Rins hand gently and smiled reassuringly
"You were right Rin Chan, we did make it out"

--

"Th-This seems a bit unconventional H-Honoka chan.."
Kotori smirked wryly, as she sat on top of the white Alpaca
"It'll be fine, don't worry!"
"Y-You really still have a lot of energy don't you..
Honoka looked down then smiled the most convincing smile she could muster
"I have to! We won't survive this with negative thoughts right? We can either despair and cry..or
we can fight for survival!"

--

"Nya..I think I'll use this long stick here..for now that is"
Hanayo and Rin stood in the archery range, admiring the weapons and taking their pick
"I-I'll take an arrow, I don't want to have to fight.."
"HYAAAAAAAAAAA!!"
A loud cry echoed through the campus
"M-More survivors?"
"Seems so, and dumb ones that that"
Nico grumbled
"HONOKA!! THERES A DOOR IN THE WA-"
They couldn't even hear the last words as something large and fluffy crashed right through the
archery ranges door
"That was fun!"
"H-H-Honoka Chan! A-Are you alright?!
An ash haired student rode up to the person, both riding on..
"Alpacas?!
They all chorused at once
The two students jumped off
"O-oh god! Nico, theres gonna be dead swarming this place, if we don't do anything!"
"Dead? So they are Zombies! Told you Kotori Chan!"
"Wh-Who are you, pray tell?"
"Kousaka Honoka, I'm a second year, and so is my friend Minami Kotori!"
She grinned
"N-Nice to meet you?"
Hanayo walked towards the Alpacas, stroking them lovingly, as she heard moaning from behind
them. Looking around them, she spotted a small herd, walking directly towards them.
"G-Guys..? We might want to get out.."
Honoka whipped around, slapping her Alpacas side by accident
"Why-whaa!"
The white ball of fluff had been startled and let out a shriek, running off straight again, startling the second one, which prompted it to do the same
"The Alpacas!"
They heard a crash
"That must've been their she-mpf!"
Nico was cut off by a hand clamping around her mouth
"Quiet!"
Nozomi hissed
A second later Nico knew why. The herd had taken to the crash noise and sounds of the Alpacas, multiple ones pouring out of the school
"This is our chance! Run!"
They ran out, maneuvering around their classmates, avoiding any possible confrontation and managed to enter the school without injury
"Lock the door, make sure all entrances are locked!"
"This is the only one Tits, how do you not know.."
"I never had a tour, remember?"
Rin locked the door
"Where to now nya?"
"C-Could we look at the headmistresses room..?"
"Principal Minam-oh you're her daughter?"
"The looks do fit nya"
"I am. Please, I need to see if she's alive!"
"What do you think uhhh.."
Hanayo faltered as she looked at her senior
"Nozomi Toujou. Choose whatever you want to call me"
"Nozomi chan?"
"That works. And well...we can check but..you might not like what we find you know.."
Kotori nodded silently
"I know. I can handle whatever is to come"
Nozomi smiled reassuringly and they all start walking into the direction of the directors office, only encountering one or two dead students and one teacher on the way there
"H-Haruka sensei..that was a shame, I liked her nya.."
The two first years were huddled against each other, shaking lightly, but fighting on nonetheless
"Here we are.."
Kotori stood in front of the door, grasping the door knob firmly. She opened it slowly, making it creek then swung it open
Everybody inhaled sharply at the sight that stood before them.
The furniture was trashed, limbs, hopefully not those of her mother, lay scattered about, blood drenching the carpet and dripping slowly off of the furniture
"K-K-Kotori chan..."
Honoka took a step towards her childhood friend but faltered when she started shaking, a wretched wail echoing around the school as she collapsed onto her knees, sobbing and trembling uncontrollably
---
A depressing silence hung over the group as the six girls stopped their story for a moment
"Kotori.."
Umi started
"I-It's no problem. I'm over it!"
Umi looked doubtful but dropped it
"So..what happened next?"
"Well Kotori went be-mpf!"
Kotori quickly covered her friends mouth
"Kotori went..?"
"NothingNothingNothing!!"
Her voice was even higher than usual
"Honoka just babbles sometimes. No need to listen ehehe.. lets just continue!"

---

"That was the last of them, I believe"
Kotori smiled and wiped her face clean of blood
"Yes! Nico and I just finished the barricade of the front door and broken windows."
Rin grinned happily
"How is the courtyard doing?"
Nozomi leaned in through a window, that led to the courtyard
"The stones of the road are pretty much gone, we are covering them with dirt from the garden shed. It's almost ready to have plants, I'll leave that to Hanayo Chan though"
"Perfect. The blow up pool/ water tank is fully functional as well. I think we can self function well"
Nico joined in
"I think so too Nicochi"
"Please stop with that"
"If you stop with Tits"
"It's easier to say than Nozomi"
"Then say Toujou"
"I find that too formal. Besides, everybody here has a nickname from me"
Nozomi sighed in exasperation
"I guess.."
"Oh by the way, we should gather everybody together to decide a leader"
"Right. Are you sharp on that position Nicochi?"
"It would be nice yes. The great Nico Nii would be a great leader"

---

The whole group was gathered in a classroom, Nico standing in the front
"Now, a leader must be chosen. Any suggestions?"
Rin put her hand up immediately
"Nozomi nya!"
"E-Eh? I-I really don't think I'd be a good leader.."
"Actually, I vote her as well"
"Y-Y-You too Hanayo Chan?"
Nico sighed
"How bout me? Any votes?"
"Nyo!"
"Not really"
"Sorry Nico chan but..no"
Nico stomped the floor, pouting
"Uncultured swines..why should Tits be it?"
"She's smart"
"Motherly nya"
"Pretty"
"Planning"
Nozomi stood up flustered
"S-S-So like..you're sure?"
four nodded, Nico just shook her head
"Alright! Nozomi chan is the leader!"
Honoka jumped up, beaming
"Y-You can always change your mind"

---

"Yeah, we never did. Even the great Nico Nii needs to admit, she's a good leader."
The group laughed
"Did you ever have problems?"
"A lot Maki nya. We had a bandits once for instance"

---

"Ti-NOZOMI!!"
Nico burst into Nozomi's room, out of breath and wheezing
"Nicochi?"
"Bandits! Outside! Rin is in danger!"
Nozomi got up quickly, grabbing a small handgun that they had found in the directors office, and a large knife
"Let's go, set Kotori up as sniper, with the bow. She's best of all of us"
"Yes sir!"

--

The purplenette rushed out of the building, to find Rin kneeling on the floor, surrounded by three teenage boys, which she recognized had been on another school
"Nozomi nya! Help me, their mean!"
She didn't dare get up, one of the males had a gun pointed at her, while another held a Katana. One seemed unarmed
"What do you want"
Her voice turned cold, monotone almost
'Man, I sound like the bad guy here'
The boys laughed
"Medicine, munition. Anything ya got."
"Or what?"
'I'll kill this little cat here'
Rin hissed at him
Nozomi smirked and started laughing, attempting to bring out the most convincing psychotic laugh she could
"Go ahead. I have plenty of minions"
They faltered
"We will kill her woman!"
"I know, I don't mind"
She raised her gun, the signal for Kotori to shoot, having brought their attention off of Rin
And she shot
The boy with the gun and the one with the Katana fell down. Dead
"H-How did you.."
"I have snipers idiot. And you weren't paying attention.."
She raised the gun, grinning wickedly as he paled
"Don't mess with Otonoki high!"
She shot, sending him keeling over, blood flowing from between his eyes
"Thank god...Rin chan!"
All of the members ran out and embraced the trembling ginger
"N-N-Nozomi Ch-Chan? Y-You didn't mean that right?"
"Of course not Rin Chan. I just needed to break their concentration so that they wouldn't shoot you"
The ginger broke out crying again, clinging to her friends for dear life

---

"Nyaaa...no need to mention that"
Kotori giggles
"You were really adorable Rin Chan"
"I-I was just scared...Nozomi chan was really scary too"
The purplenet giggled and patted her friends head
"I'd never hurt a family mem-"
Bang! A gun shot rang over the school, Eli quickly ran to the rail and looked down. There stood, what looked to be a small kid but that was probably just the distance, holding a gun, red flaming hair tied into two pigtails, standing behind her were four other figures, one waving a white flag
"What the.."

Chapter End Notes

Taking into consideration what a comment said on my last chapter, I will spend extra time on character development including each an individual arc for muse members and a backstory to the entire outbreak and also what happened to soldier game. Although these arcs aren't for another 7 or so chapters, since the first 10 are simply to kick the story off
"Please! You need to help us!"
Nozomi was standing in front of the group, who had fired the shot.
'Such idiots, they could've died'
had been Nicos reaction.
Apparently, they had been yelling for a while, which really made it a surprise that they were alive.
The redhead, who turned out to be 15, which had been quite a surprise, was bowing to them, tears streaming out of her eyes
"What's so urgent?"
Nozomi looked worried, but still guarded. It could be a trap after all. No matter how innocent they seemed, she couldn't let down her guard
"Some of our group are trapped, around five miles away from here. We need your help to free them!"
A strong looking girl stepped forward, her navy blue hair rivaling that of Umis
'Looks like yours and Umis daughter'
'Shut up Eli!'
The three semi newcomers muttered amongst themselves
"They have weapons, but they might be wounded! Or out of amo! Please help us!"
A short, grayish haired girl bowed as well
"What would you offer us in return?"
"U-Uhh"
The redhead faltered
"Become a little demon of the fallen angel Yohane!"
One said, making some funny hand gesture, which caused Nozomi to giggle
"Sorry, we already have a devil here. It's little Nicochi"
"Fuck you, I'm an angel"
"Ah, a kin then?"
"No, please shut up"
Yoshiko looked angered but made sure to stay quiet, remembering the situation they were in
"Our eternal thanks and service!"
"K-Kanan!"
Nozomi smirked, the mischievous, almost malicious grin, making Kanan regret immediately what she had said
"Not bad. Let me discuss with my group. Make yourself at home in one of the classrooms"
Nozomi motioned for her group to follow her, entering a classroom with them and locking the door behind them
'I like her, she has evil in her'
'Yoshiko, please stop'
'Its Yohane!'

---

"So..do we trust them?"
Nozomi inquired
"Hell no. They probably are working with banana here and making a trap"
"I-Im sorry what?"
"You heard me. Showing up so close together, you haven't even told us your story yet!"
"Nico Chan, their accent was different though."
"So? Tits has an accent too. It doesn't mean anything about where their from"
"But...what if it isn't a trap? What if they die?"
Nico sighed
"We can't run around helping everyone. We need to look after ourselves alone"
"Seems a bit harsh Nicochi, they offered us to become part of us"
"True, but still...I'd prefer not to sacrifice one of our own."
Umi suddenly stood up and ran towards the smaller girl, aiming to slap her across the face, only to be stopped by Rin, who quickly caught her hand
"N-Nya! What are you doing?!
Umi found four guns immediately pointed at her
"How can you even think of leaving people to die?!"
She burst out, surprising even Kotori. Umi never yelled
"They are humans! High schooler! Like us! How can you abandon them?! Has this ordeal changed you that much?"
"Of course it has you blue haired brat!"
Nico stood up to her full height, but obviously failed to intimidate her opponent
"We've had to kill Classmates! Teachers! Friends! Our own damn parents! How many have you lost?! How many have you had to kill?! I had to kill my mother, my grandmother, my entire damn apartment block!"
She glared daggers, tears building in her eyes, making the bluenette falter
"I understand your sorrow Yazawa san. I had to kill my parents as well. But that does not justify letting innocent schoolgirls be killed. People just like us!"
She was getting desperate, to convince Nico to help
"Nicochi? May I interfere?"
"Yer the leader. Why do you even ask?"
"O-Oh right. Well, how about we let this trio here help? We will have confirmation that its not a trap, and they seem quite willing"
"I pledge our loyalty to you, if you let us rescue their friends"
Umi bowed, making Ei and Maki hide a snort of laughter
"Umi, you're being too formal"
"I'm acting like a true warrior"
"N-Nozomi Chan? May I say something?"
Kotori lifted a tentative hand, continuing after an affirmative nod
"Umi Chan is a terrible liar. I do not believe that this is a trap"
"I'm not sure if you're backing them up or insulting Sonoda San nya.."
"B-Both I guess?"
Nozomi sighed
"Well then, you three uh..warrior trio I guess? You go and help. We will see if you are fit to join afterwards."
"W-Wait! If Umi chan goes, I do as well!"
Kotori stepped up quickly, earning a confused and concerned look by the blue haired woman
"Fine. I'll come to monitor things as well. That leaves you guys to help the wounded amongst the new ones, they don't seem seriously injured"
Nico sighed
"How do we get there though?"
Maki spoke up, already gathering an emergency first aid kit
"We drive of course"
Nozomi chuckled and took out a pair of keys
"A dead teacher had these. The car is perfectly in shape"
"Y-You'll help us?! Really??"
The small redhead, Ruby as Nico had heard, was jumping up and down excitedly
"Yes. Now, who of you is fit enough to come?"
All but Ruby showed Nico various cuts and bruises, or signs of other injuries
"I-I can. I need to help save Onee chan!"
"Alright, let's go then. You guys, stay here and get aquatinted with my group. But don't you dare attempt anything"
They nodded, and let Nico lock their weapons into her old locker, which she hardly could reach, much to their amusement
"Now, lead the way Ruby"

---

The small rescue group now sat in the rather large car. Nozomi and Eli sat in the front, the second row was occupied by Ruby, Nico and Kotori, with Umi and Maki stuck in the back
"Just as an inquiry, where did you get your license? You are underage"
Nozomi chuckled
"I don't have one. But I learned it well in America last year, don'tcha worry"
Of course, this just made the bluenette worry more, although she did her best not to show it
A few minutes later, the oldest stopped the car in front of some collapsed buildings
"This is it!"
Ruby exclaimed and jumped out immediately
"You guys go on ahead. I'll stay with the car, so we can get away quickly if needed"
Nico gave Nozomi the thumbs up and jumped out as well, waiting for the rest
"Don't die on me alright? Mom wants you back safe"
she grinned
"Yeah yeah. Come on everybody"

---

"Seems like just ruble here. Are you sure were at the right spot?"
Ruby nodded then pointed towards a building, 500 meters away
"That's where they said they would go"
Eli stepped forward, carefully walking around sharp glass
"How come there's now dead?"
"Well...they might be eating your frie-Outch!"
Nico got hit on the head by Maki
"You idiot!"
She hissed
"Be more sensitive"
"I was just being honest!"
"Should I hit you again?"
"Bring it on!"
Ruby stepped in between them quickly
"Stop it! You're yelling!"
Umi raised her bow
"Let's hope none heard u-shit!"
She shot near Maki, hitting them square in the face
"Everybody, form a circle, Ruby in the middle"
"I-I want to fight!"
"You're too young!"
"I'm Makis age!"
Eli sighed as they took up defensive position, hitting down dead after dead
"Watch out!"
Maki pulled Nico to safety from a chomp on last second
"Careful!"
Eli shoved Umi aside
"Umi, Maki, defensive formation! Like we practiced!"
The two nodded as Umi jumped up onto a nearby car, covering both Eli and Maki as they blasted the dead
"Th-There's too many..!"
"Keep shooting! We have to keep our ground!"
"Maki to your right!"
The redhead swerved and hit an upcoming snap at her hand
"Eli, get behind that car! Make some noise!"
The blonde nodded, attracting a small herd, which Umi shot down one by one
"They kinda seem like soldiers don't they?"
"Were up against a wall!"
Ruby squeaked as she kept shooting, with a scary accuracy
Umi, who had run out of arrows, jumped off the car and started bashing the heads. Eli was using the back of her gun while Maki was using a spare lead pipe
"K-Kotori get behind me!"
Umi started shielding her friend, as the ash haired girl pushed past them, standing face on to the small horde
"KOTORI?!"
She turned around and giggled
"Not to fret Umi Chan."
"I'll take care of them..for you"
"Kotori you can't! Y-You're too-
"Weak? My dear Umi Chan, you underestimate me.."
Chucking darkly, she shed herself off of her summer dress, revealing a tank top and shorts, two guns strapped to her belt and a machete strapped to her back
"Watching you was amusing and you have your merits, but now sit back and watch a professional"
She smirked and dashed towards the dead, gun and machete drawn
"K-Kotori.."
Umi gasped and shook slightly, wanting to dash after her, but was held by the wrist by Nico, who shook her head
"She's a lot stronger than you think. Don't underestimate somebody who has lost everything and fights to keep the last thing dear to them safe"
"Wh-What?"
"She lost everybody. Only her last bunch of old friends are left. Only y-"
The rest of Nicos sentence was drowned out by an insane, wild laughter.
The blunette spun around, staring in shock at the sight before her
Kotori was smiling as she fought her way through, a mad, insane, twisted smile, that sent Umis stomach flying. The ash haired girl wound and twisted through the horde, decapitating and blasting them one by one. Blood fell like rain on her, making her laugh as she continued the onslaught
The onlookers just watched in shock of what was happening, Nicos face looked pained
The gentle and calm girl was ravaging through the horde, screaming
"DIE!DIE!I WILL KILL ALL OF YOU!"
She laughed more, her high pitch giving it an even more deathly feeling
Then it stopped. Kotori stood in the middle of dead bodies, her breathing ragged, clothing soaked in the sweat smelling liquid, licking the blood off of her knife slowly, as if savoring it
She turned to the petrified onlookers and smiled innocently, sending chills down their spines
"Well, that was fun right? Should we continue?"
They nodded numbly. But as they had hardly taken two steps, an earsplitting scream rang through the rubble.
"Th-Th-That was M-Mari chan...!"
Ruby burst into a run, leaving the rest to follow her. Rounding a corner, she was met with a sight that froze her blood.
She watched in shock, as time seemingly slowed down around them. On the ground lay a blonde girl, trembling as a zombie pounced at her, only avoiding instant death by a bite to the neck by "O-Onee chan..."
Ruby whispered hoarsely.
There stood a brown haired woman, having taken the bite, her right hand now lodged in the deads mouth, staring at it in horror.

Chapter End Notes

The name of the chapter makes sense if you can interpret well. Also, please do tell me if theres anything i can improve and how you like the story so far.
"Onee chan."
Ruby wanted to cry, to scream. This could not be happening!
"Geez wait up!"
Nico rounded the corner then stopped dead
"Oh."
"Ruby..."
the blonde scrambled to her feet, quickly disposing of the walker and freeing Dias hand
"Shit! Shit this is bad!"
a ginger bounded up to them
"Get everybody together! We need to get out!"
"Do...do they know we're here?"
"I don't think so?"
Maki and Nico sighed
"what do we do?"
"We can let her die?"
Kotori giggled, which was echoed by a loud
"No!"
drawing the others attention
Wincing in pain, Dia took a hesitent step towards them
"Who are you?"
"Help, that your friends begged for"
"They're safe...?"
The ginger looked relieved, until the brown haired one started throwing up blood
"Get her to the car! We'll see what we can do in the base"

---

"Go go go!"
Maki was pulling Dia through the small crowd of friends
"You can see her after I'm done!"
Dia had been steadily growing paler and paler in the car, even Ruby didn't dare near herself
The joy of reuniting had been dampened by miles, by the revelation of their dying friend
"Dia!"
The blonde, Mari, was running after Maki
"Mari! Come back!"
Kanan held her friend tightly
She was just as distraught, but she couldn't let another get bit, much less by one of her best friends
"Let me go! I need to see-"
"You need to stay still! The more exited or scared she gets, the faster her blood flows and the faster she'll turn!"
Kanan snapped, finally subduing the blonde as Maki locked the infirmary door behind her
"Can you understand me?"
Dia nodded numbly, but her look had become hazy
"I'm going to have to amputate your hand and perform a dialysis. The chances of success are minimal, but if you have any chance of surviving, that's the only option"
Another nod and a low grunt got emitted by the dark haired girl
"I can't put you under any drugs, you're in a too insecure and unstable state...so this will hurt like hell"
She gently pushed Dia into the right position then got the necessary tools ready
'I can do this, I've watched papa do it.'
She stared down at her shaking hands, concentrating on calming down and breathing properly
She did not want to do this. God did she not want to. But she couldn't just let this woman die either.
Shaking off the ominous feeling, she bit her lip
'Let's do this..' 

---
An earsplitting scream filled the school, minutes after the doors closed on the rest
"Dia!"
"Dia san!"
"Onee chan!"
Ruby arrived first, staring through the broken window in the door
"Stop it!"
She screeched, watching in horror as her sisters hand fell to the floor
"Ruby!"
A strong hand clamped around her mouth, her limbs being restrained
"Let her concentrate!"
She looked up into Yous scared eyes
"It's that or she dies.."
Nodding mutely, Ruby ceased her struggling
"Please.."
she whimpered
"Please let her survive. I promise I'll grow strong for her to protect her next time!"

---

Hours later, Maki collapsed, exaughsted
'Done..' 
She had no idea wether it had succeeded, but she had done her best. The hand had been amputated, in which Dia had fallen unconscious, due to pain or turning, she wasn't sure
The dialysis had been a success, her blood now free of any bad bacteria. She was going to analyze that later
A loud bang sounded at the door, ripping her out of her half asleep stupor. Running over numbly, she unlocked it.
"You could've called and not almost broken down the door.."
"Sorry nya. Anyway, the rest wants to know if it's safe for us to come in"
"Safe enough I do believe..now excuse me, I need to sleep on some bench or something"
She was about to fall asleep standing
"Nya, the new guys..well newer than you guys made a dormitory on the second floor. You're in Nico Chans room, on her demand"
Nodding, the redhead thumped up the stairs, falling exaughsted on the one bed in the room

---

"She's sleeping"
"That's a good sign right?"
"Not sure, zura"
Eight girls stood around Dia, worried expressions plastered all over their faces
"She's stirring"
Dia groaned, her left hand flexing a bit
"Is she.."
"I don't know.."
Ruby stepped forward slowly
"Dia...?"
Before she could even blink, her sister's hand shot forward, grasping her tightly as she moves forward, menacingly close
"O-Onee chan..?"

Chapter End Notes

sorry bout the gap, I have lots of exams and i've been hit with inspiration for a new story, which I shall be writing alongside this. and please do leave comments so I can improve
Dia grasped Ruby harder, green eyes dulled and lifeless as she shot down towards her younger sisters neck. Her teeth barely grazed her as
"Gha!"
Dia was pushed back by You who frantically held a led pipe
"Wh-what do I do?!
They stared at their friend, fear etched in each ones face
"Augh.."
Dia slowly got up, the rest shakily readying their weapons
"You! What the fuck was that for?!
---
"So, while we were gone, did they say anything about their backstory?"
Nozomi was sitting next to Hanayo, who was currently tending to the plants
"They did as a matter of fact"
The purple haired girl stayed silent, waiting for her friend to elaborate
"I thought I had known them from somewhere yknow?"
Hanayo stopped her work and sat next to Nozomi
"And I did. They are a start up Idol group that I had seen enlisted in the next Love Live"
"Love Live?"
"It's a competition for school idol groups"
"Hu..sounds kinda fun doesn't it?"
"Oh it is, I had already reserved tickets. But anyway, yeah I knew them. Even one of their songs"
"So..how come they are all the way up here in Tokyo? Are they local?"
Hanayo shook her head
"A few hours drive away. They came here with a car"
"Who drove?"
"Kanan and You. They can operate boats and learned from that. But anyway, I should start from the beginning right?"
Nozomi nodded
"They had all congregated at Maris house, she's stinking rich, so they had plenty space to practice. All they told me was that they had seen lots of military swarm in, taking her parents and leaving again..
She sighed glumly
"They had been left behind...but they survived a few months off of the food there and well...uhhh..we now know how the Oharas have so much money..."
"Is it at all related to all their guns?"
"Her father is an illegal weapon and drug dealer yeah..."
"Hu..that explains Maris behaviour. Shes on crack!"
"N-No that's just her personality...
Hanayo giggled shyly
"So I'm guessing when supplies ran out they drove off?"
"Pretty much"
"I think we made a valuable addition in the last few days"
---
"See ya!"
A kick to the ass and three females were kicked out of a tall building
"What the fuck?!"
Green eyes stared furiously up to a woman in a lab coat
"You did your job. You are disposable now"
Her voice was laced with a heavy accent. And before they could react, the metal doors clanged shut, locking them out

---

"D-Dia?!!"
Kanan stepped forward slowly
"Yeah?"
The brown haired girl blinked in confusion
"Where are we? Why are you-WHAA!!"
She stared in horror at her hand-or what used to be her hand and is now a stump surrounded by bandages
"WHAT HAPPENED?! WHERES MY HAND?!"
Eight pairs of eyes stared at her in wonder
So..she was alive? She was alive..!
"SHE IS ALIVE!!"
While all screamed in joy, Ruby was still bothered by something
Why had her beloved sister attacked her first?

---

"Kotori!"
Umi stormed into their shared room, causing the later to jump and let out a high squeek
"Y-Yes?"
The ash haired girl was quite sure of what was to come, but she didn't want to have to face it.
Especially not face Umi
"We need to talk"
The blunette sat down on her joined bed. Oddly, every room only had one bed
"A-About?"
"You know what.."
"O-oh...m-my little uhh"
"Slaughter? Maniacal laughter? Sadistic enjoyment?!"
Kotori shrank back at her crushes outburst
"How could you change that much?!"
"I-I-
"Was this always what you truly were?! A sadistic monster?!"
"Umi chan I-
"Tell me...Tell me Kotori. Were Honoka and I..just fun toys for you?"
"N-No wa-
"Toys to slaughter and laugh over?!!"
"No Umi! Let me explain!"
Kotori bursts out, tears pricking her eyes
"You aren't toys! Never!"
"Then why put up that facade? You're just a murderous monster!"
"N-No...stop.."
"You laughed at their death..do you have no qualms about killing?!"
The ash haired girl looked like she was about to break down
"Umi chan..."
"Monster"
Umi couldn't even bear to hear the response as she turned heel, slamming the door behind her

---

"Umi? What are you doing here?" Eli rounded the corner, staring at her friend in bewilderment as she sat on the stairwell, eyes red, as if she had been crying
"Are you alright?"
Umi stared at her, eyes blurred from tears
"I hurt her..."
She muttered slowly, wiping her eyes
"Hurt? Who?"
"Kotori..."
Eli sat down next to her friend, at a loss of what to say. She had never been good with people, even close friends
"Do you...want to talk?"
Sighing heavily, Umi turned to her
"I screamed at her...accused her of being sadistic...her face it was..."
The rest of the sentence was drowned in another fit of sobs, the blonde gently hugging her friend tightly
"Maybe apologize to her...?"
"How? She...she hates me now...I shouldn't have..."
"Umi...she'd never hate you..."
"I...called her a monster..."
"W-Well...she has turned into one...but do you know why?"
"No, do you?"
"Nozomi told me...Kotori has been strengthening herself, becoming merciless...all while clinging to the hope that you were alive..."
"But why?"
"Don't you see Umi? She wanted to be strong. Strong for you. So that if and when you meet again...she can protect you at all cost..."
Amber eyes went wide in shock
"I-I didn't think of that...!"
She got up hastily
"Where is Kotori?!!"
"Honoka said she was on the roof"
"Thanks...I need to fix what I caused"

---

"Kotori!"
Umi stumbled out of breath onto the rooftop, looking around frantically
"U-Umi Chan?!"
The voice came from above her. Swinging her head, her azure hair flying wildly in the evening wind, she spotted Kotori sitting delicately on the rail
"Kotori...! What are you...Get down there!"
She realized that Kotoris eyes were stained red, much like her
"Umi chan...you really think I'm a monster?"
"I-No...! I'm sorry...! I never meant...!"
"Never meant to call me a sadistic monster? Said I used you as a toy?!!"
She started crying again, tears pouring out of her eyes
"Kotori...! Get down there!"
"Why?"
She smiled sadly
"Im sorry Umi Chan.. Im sorry I disappointed you..."
"Kotori what are you-!"
Her sentence fell short as she watched helplessly as the ash haired girl pushed herself off the railing
Time seemed to stop for her as she reached forward, desperately attempting to grab anything, anything of the falling girl
"KOTORI!!"

Chapter End Notes

Took a bit, but heres the next chapter. please tell me whatcha think
Eli rolled over on her bed, or attempted to at least. For some reason, Mari had thought giving her and Nozomi only one bed, would be a great idea.
Eli couldn't see why, she was thoroughly uncomfortable, both by her position, and the fact that her face was now pressed against her friends rather large asset.
How the purple haired woman could sleep soundly was a mystery to the blonde
Giving up on sleep for now, Eli decided to go for a small walk, it wasn't that late yet after all, maybe 8pm
Her watch had stopped working and her phone had died and without a way to recharge it, she had no way of telling the time
Well, She could walk into a classroom and search for a brush, but honestly, she was to lazy for that now
Wandering the school, she passed Hanayo, who was still tending the plants and Kanan, who was arguing with You about boats. The school was quiet otherwise
Slowly pushing open the door to the roof, cold, fall air hit her face
"Fuck, I forgot I'm wearing summer clothes"
Shivering she stepped out, looking out towards Tokyo. Streams of smoke still emitted from certain areas, the occasional dead roaming the street. It was quite a pitiful sight to see. She didn't know how long she had been standing there, but her fingers had gotten numb.
Sighing, Eli decided to turn back, walking right into someone
"Ah! I'm so sorry..!"
"Elichi, be more careful. What are you even doing up here in those clothes?"
Nozomi stood before her, looking at Eli bemused
"Thank god I remembered to bring the blanket"
"What are you doing up here?"
"Well, I noticed you went, and decided to find you dummy"
She laid the blanket over Elis shoulders, her usual smile, shining ever so much brighter than usual
"weird sight isn't it? A few months ago this was a proud city...now its rubble and death"
"Since when are you so poetic?"
"Oh I ain't poetic. I'm just attempting to woo you with my language skills"
She winked teasingly, causing the blonde to blush a slight shade of pink. She hoped dearly that it wasn't visible in the evening dusk
"Hey Elichi?"
"Hm?"
"Why did you decide to talk to me?"
"Eh? What do you mean?"
"Nicochi told me you had always been Icy and cold. So what made you approach me?"
"I...Alisa convinced me to make friends"
A small silence settled between the two
"Ah..I see.."
Had Eli not been as dense as she was, she might have picked up on the disappointing tone. But Eli being Eli, she didn't
"By the way, have you seen Umi?"
"No, what about her?"
"She left to find Kotori..they had a row..but neither have come back"
"That's weird.."
"Maybe they're in their room now. Let's go check"
Eli nodded and started walking towards the door, falled closely by Nozomi
Just before they reached the door however, a gun shot rang through the air
Spinning around frantically, Elis eyes landed on her friend, who was falling forwards, blood flying from behind her neck

---

Umi screamed in panic as she dove forwards, banging her head on the metal rods, grasping for anything, absolutely anything to catch her friend
That turned out to be, a huge chunk of Kotoris hair
"Ak! U-Umi chan...! That hurts.!!"
Umi didn't even respond for a second, her mind still processing what had just transpired. The throbbing pain in her head, didn't help either
"K-Kotori! Grab my hand! Now!"
The bluenette reached out her out her hand, attempting to grab Kotoris
"What?"
"Grab my hand! Do you want to die?!"
"Yes! That's why I jumped!"
Right. Realization hit Umi like a brick
Kotori wanted to die. Because of her. It was her fault.
"I can't let you!"
she grasped the hair hard, pulling her friend, and maybe crush, up, ignoring her flailing and screams until she could grab her hand
"Let me go!"
"Not in a million years!"
"But you want me dead don't you?!
"Why would I ever?"
"You called me a monster!"
Umi groaned in frustration and finally lifted the ash haired girl up, making her stand opposite of the grate
clasping both her hands tightly, Umi finally broke down
"Im sorry..Im sorry alright? I got swept up in emotions. I didn't even think about what you have gone through. I judged you without knowing why you did what you did. I should never have called you a monster...I know I can't undo what I said but..
her voice grew faint
"Please give me another chance"
Tears spilled out of her amber eyes, wetting the bars and floor
"Umi Chan..
Looking up, Umi found Kotori in a similar state. The pressure on her hands increased as Kotori held herself onto them for dear life
"Of course...anything for you...anything at all"

Chapter End Notes

I really have no updating scedule XD
On an important note, which is best for a name?
- Road to despair
- Deteriarating minds
-To the breaking point
Please vote for yer favorite
The purple haired woman clasped her bleeding neck hardly, wincing in pain as her hand rubbed against it
"Nozomi!"
"Im fine..just grazed me"
Her hair had been undone by the shot, broken hairties lay at her feet
"We need to get you bandaged!"
"We need to confront the shooter Elichi. Forget me, get the rest together. Tell them to spread out in the way we practiced. Umi , Maki and you can join in on any group. I've already assigned all the other newcomers."
Eli nodded shakily
As much as she wanted to help, as much as she wanted to stay with her friend, the schools protection and fortification had a clear priority
"Make sure to all have weapons"
"I will"
---
"Everybody! Into your positions. Maki, go with Nico. Umi with Kotori!"
Eli stood amid panicking students. Kanan had taken charge and led each one to their assigned partner, before tapping Eli on the shoulder
"I really don't want to alarm you but...do you happen to know where Nico, Kotori and Umi are?"
The blue haired woman looked around concerned
"Honoka said Kotori is on the roof"
"I just was up there. I didn't see her, although I didn't look either"
The blonde picked up a small handgun
"I'm sure they are already in their positions. Make sure you get to yours"
"This is literally ever mistake ever made in a horror movie right?"
"What do you mean?"
Purple eyes twinkled in bemusement as she did her best to copy Elis voice
"Oh, Im sure they are already where they are supposed to be. Let's not look for them"
All she earned was an annoyed look
"I'm sure their fi-"
"Alarm Nya!"
Rin ran towards the two, panicked
"Nico chan..! She..!"
---
Alisa ran to the rooftop, accompanied by Yukiho
"You think they'll be there?"
Panting under the weight of a large bow, Yukiho nodded firmly
"They have to be. We can't afford a one on one fight. Even if we have larger man-I mean womanpower"
---
Nozomi ran quickly to her room, slapping a bandage shakily to her neck. It was just a scratch
thankfully. Any further and she would have died instantly
Sweeping the room, she strapped on a machete and handgun. It will have to do, they didn't have time for anything else
Sending a quick prayer to any god who was willing to listen, she rushed down to the first floor
"Everybody ready?"
Kanan nodded before heading off to her own station, instructing Rin to do the same
"Nozomi! Be careful!"
"Why? Apart from the obvious reasons"
"They have Nico"

---

The door to the school house flew open as Nozomi strode out, purple hair billowing in the evening wind, eyes portraying pure anger and hatred at the sight before her
Nico kneeled, bruised and bloodied in front of three highschoolers...or rather former Idols. Nozomi may not have had many interactions with the Idol world, but being stuck with Nico and Hanayo had taken its toll on her ignorance quickly
"Well, that's quite low to sink..A-Rise"
Erena, or at least that's what she recalled the woman's name being, smirked devilishly while the other two seemed to feel slightly uncomfortable with the entire situation
"Tough times call for tough measures"
"What do you want"
"We heard you had a group of six hosted here. We want it"
"Who told you that?"
She let her eyes flit down to Nico, who stared up to her, posture proud as ever
"She started talking like mad after a few cuts and bruises. You have six members, three of which are sick. No guns except handguns and bows with no archer to use them. In short, we win"
A blatant lie then. That's what Nico had told
"So, you want Otonoki for Nico's life then?"
The three opposite her nodded
"Don't do it!"
The raven haired girl burst out
"The safety of the rest is more important! Nico Nico never give in to this!"
Had the situation not been this dire, they would have laughed. But with Nicos life on the line, it was disregarded
Erena pulled Nico backwards, hardening her grip on her own handgun, her finger inching slowly towards the trigger
"They have no choice. If three are sick, that means only one other person is on the entire campus! And they won't know about this!"
"The shot you fired before should have gotten that persons attention, Erena san"
Nozomi grinned as she aimed her gun, making Anju look straight down the barrel
"How about you let Nico go or she dies?"
Sweat was beginning to be visible on Erenas forehead as she looked back and forth between her friend and hostage
"Tsubasa! Aim at her!"
Gulping for air, the latter obliged, if shakily
"Oh come on Erena san. We both know she doesn't have the guts. I mean look at her, she's shaking"
"Don't give in to that teasing Tsubasa!"
"Is it teasing if it's the truth?"
Nozomis sly remark ended up with facing down the barrel of Erenas gun, her eyes wide in fear she looked like an animal, that had been backed into a corner, despite having the higher ground
"Don't! You! Shoot!"
A new voice sounded from behind them
There stood Eli, gun in hand, aiming straight at Erena
"So this is the third?"
Nico chuckled
"No. That's the seventh"
"What do yo-"
"Guns down Nya!"
Rin appeared from behind a bush, aiming at Tsubasa
"Bad mistake, messing with Otonoki High!"
Makis voice sounded through the microphone
"Lower your goddamn weapons. Now!"
"E-Erena?"
Tsubasas eyes flighted over to hear friend, eyes wide in fear, a small stream of tears emitting
"To hell with this..."
She grumbled as she threw her gun to the ground, prompting Tsubasa to do the same
"TO HELL WITH THIS ALL"
She screamed, eyes mad and wild, she took out a grenade, holding the security and grenade tightly
"I'll blow us all to hell..."
She broke out into laughter
"ILL BLOW US ALL TO FUCKING HELL!"

Chapter End Notes

Hope ya like it, also the name has still not been decided so please vote on that on chapter 8
The group stood back from Erena, her two friends staring at her in cold sweat
"E-Erena! Put that down!"
Tsubasa sputtered, reaching for the grenade, her request hitting a brick wall
"E-Erena chan..!"
They looked at each other, desperate for an idea on what to do
Their attempt had clearly failed but, blowing all of them up?
That had never been their intention
"Give it up Erena! Put the grenade down!"
Makis voice emitted from the speakers once again
"Put your weapons down or I'll blow us up!"
Nozomi tightened the grip on her gun, eyes flitting around the scene, attempting to calm her
throbbing head and the sting on her neck, caused by the salty sweat on her wound
'This is a stalemate. Neither will give in, she isn't to be reasoned with. Maybe..
"Tsubasa san"
The bruenette looked up in surprised at being called out
"Are you just going to stand there and let her dive into insanity?"
"I-I.."
"Get that out of her hand!"
"I can't betray he-"
"Betray?! She's going to kill us all! Including you! And Anju!"
And it seemed like reality had finally hit the former idol
Nodding decidedly she lunged at her friend, causing the grenade to fall to the ground
The safety pin clutched in Erenas fist
Without any guns pointing at her, Nico ran at it
'This is a five second grenade! I hope Umi is in position'
Grabbing it, the raven haired girl threw the deadly weapon as high into the air as possible, ducking
down onto the ground afterwards
Just three seconds later, an explosion was to be heard, blood splattering onto Nicos face

---

"Maki!"
Looking up at Rins scream, Nico spotted Maki, standing over her, back bleeding from small
embedded pellets of the grenade
"Just in time eh?"
"M-Maki! What are you-get up, we need to remove those!"
"Its fine its fine. They are superficial, it exploded a bit away"
Getting up, she noticed a tree near them, holy as Swiss cheese. An arrow stuck inside what used to
be the grenade
"Was that..?"
"Umi. She and Kotori were on the roof after all"
Sighing in relief, Nico picked up a gun and pointed it at the A-Rise trio, who all had merely
sustained minor injuries
"You three. Come"

---
"So..what do we do with them?"
The still able bodied members of the group sat in a classroom, that had been rearranged into a court
like setting
Nozomi sat at the head, Maki, Umi, Eli, Nico and Kotori in the first row. Rin and Hanayo had both
been injured minorly and Honoka was guarding the A-Rise trio, who were locked in a classroom
on the top floor. Kanan had taken over in the infirmary after having an instruction from Maki and
was being assisted by her friends, most of them also there to visit Dia, who had to stay in bed, since
she had suffered severe blood loss
"Humanely I would say keep them..but with our resources so low as it is..."
The blonde trailed off
"It would seem as a waste. But what are our other options?"
Nico sighed
"If we let them go, they could attack again"
"They couldn't possibly be foolish enough"
"You saw Erena. She isn't sane anymore"
"That's true but-"
Umi was interrupted abruptly by Kotori
"Umi chan...you know how losses can drive people insane or to do things they would have never
done. This is the same"
"I-I..guess"
"So..that leaves us with these options. Kill them, or keep them"
"Actually three"
The purplenette grinned
"Eat them"

---

"I told you this wasn't a good idea!"
Tsubasa had been screaming at her friend for the last five minutes, with Anju attempting to calm
her down
"This was dumb! Stupid! God!"
Stomping off to the other end of the classroom, Tsubasa sank to her knees
"I can't beleive this.."
she stared down at her red stained stockings
"I..I wasn't hit that there...oh"
She groaned
Could her day get any worse?

Chapter End Notes

Yes. yes that is her period XD I am not sorry
"I'm sorry what?"
The redhead stared at their leader flabbergasted
"Eat them? As in cannibalism?"
The purple haired woman giggled and winked mischievously
"Na, I'm just kiddin. We really do only have three options. Kill them, keep them or set them free."
"Glad even a crazy nutjob can think rationally"
Nico muttered
"Nutjob? That's hurtful Nicochi"
"You've killed in cold blood, how is that not crazy?"
Nico raised her voice but faltered immediately as a look of hurt spread across her friend's face, quickly to be covered up by her complacent smile
"It was them or Rin Chan. What was I supposed to do?"
"Scare them perhaps?!"
"Well I'm sorry I saved our friend then. Next time I'll let them die!"
Umi sighed
"This is not what we came to debate here. What will we do? Let us way the pros and cons"
"Well...Kira san and Anju san still seem sane...we could reform them and have them join?"
"No offense Kotori, but that is naive. They would backstab us immediately."
"Well then, make them work for us?"
"That is slavery"
Kotori huffed
"Well it's a practical solution. It seems to me, that they only attacked because they were desperate. If we let them work in exchange for meals and a safe place to sleep, I assume it would be better than before"
Umi almost choked on her own spit as she heard that, causing the rest to jump in surprise
"That seems reasonable. Why are you so surprised Umi?"
Eli shot her friend a puzzled look
"I-It's nothing"
Face as red as Maki's hair, she apologized profusely
"Well then that's settle-
Nozomi was interrupted by the door slamming open
"We're back nya!"
"The wounds are all patched up. Can you catch us up quickly?"
The purplenette had barely opened her mouth as a familiar energetic ginger bounded in
"Hey do we have spare tampons?"
"What?"
Turquoise eyes blinked confused
"We have given everyone rations but the new ones. Are you out?"
Honoka smiled sheepishly
"Not me, Kira san is though"
"Can we afford to waste such resources on them?"
Nozomi looked skeptically at the rest
"We already are low"
"I can give her mine!"
Rin burst out, causing Hanayo to shriek in shock
"But don't you need them?"
"Nop-I-I mean I don't have a heavy flow"
"Rin chan.."
The purple eyed girl attempted to cut her friend off, but her attempts were completely ignored
"I see. How many do you still have?"
"All of my rations nya"
"That seems impossible. How are you getting by?"
"N-Nya uhh"
"R-Rin chan and I share our rations as we both aren't heavy"
"Seems unlikely with your development Hanayo chan...but I guess it'll work. Rin, give Kira san a few of yours. Limit it to tampons as pads can be used as makeshift bandages"
Makis tone took an authoritative note
"On it nya!"

---

"Here ya go Kira san. You're lucky that Rin has a light flow"
Honoka handed the other girl a pack of what had been Rins rations. Tsubasa accepted gratefully
"Thanks...is there a place I can uh change them in private?"
"Ehh..well you could use the restrooms if I accompany you. Cmon!"
The ginger smiled brightly and locked the door behind them, leading ARises leader to the closest bathroom
"Take your time, we aren't in a rush currently"
Nodding thankfully, Tsubasa disappeared into a stall
A few moments of silence passed until she emerged again
"Hey Kousaka san?"
"Just call me Honoka"
"H-Honoka san?"
"Nope."
"Honoka chan..?"
Honoka nodded, her bright smile increasing tenfold
"Yep. What is it?"
"Well...why are you being so nice to us?"
The ginger looked taken aback
"Why wouldn't I?"
"We attacked you and put your friends in danger. You should treat us like scum. Yet you're treating me like an equal...or even a friend"
"Hmm.."
You could visibly see the gears grinding in Honokas brain
"I don't think you should be treated like scum Kira san. It was evident that you were just desperate. We all are...I've seen first hand what loss can do to a person..."
Her cheerful demeanor subsided for a moment, to be replaced by a glummer look
"But just because of that, it doesn't make them a bad person. I still beleive in my heart that even if a person is scarred beyond repair...a small part of them will always remain. I'm sure Todo san will get back up with the help of you and Yuuki san. If we treated you like bad people, we would be in the wrong. Everybody is on edge nowadays, violent acts aren't great...they're terrible really..but inside all of this, all of the brutal acts we are forced to commit...it's always to protect those that are close to us"
"But Erena was going to kill us al-"
"She wouldn't have let it explode. I could tell by her eyes. The reason she hesitated for so long was...she wanted us to stop her. She is a victim of the despair that is created anew day by day in this new world of death. I can't judge her as a bad person for such actions and neither will I judge you."
Tsubasa felt tears prick her eyes as she hastily raised her hand to wipe them away
"There's so much more to you than reaches the eye it seems."
"Ehehe, na mostly I really am just kinda dumb and clumsy"
"Don't fool yourself like that. I'm sure you'll prove yourself over time too"
"Th-Thanks Kira san"
They walked back to the makeshift prison cell in comfortable silence. Honoka took out the keys to
lock it as a foot was shoved in the way hastily
"O-Oh and Honoka chan?"
"Hm?"
"Drop Kira san. It's Tsubasa"

Chapter End Notes

Ehehe so it's been a bit here, I had quite the writers block for this story, but I got it
back now. hope you enjoy it so far
Bonding and Alpacas

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Tsubasa smiled fondly as her new ginger haired friend brushed her hair out. When they had arrived, it had been a mess and although Tsubasa had protested, Honoka had been persistent on putting her hair back in order.

Erena had yet to say a word and was only being kept alive by Anju, who washed her daily, much to what Tsubasa assumed to be for her pleasure mostly, fed her and did her hair

"And 100. There, in perfect condition again. Just like on all those videos that Hanayo showed me"

"Thanks Honoka chan. It does feel better"

She ran her hand through her short hair, feeling a pang of anguish at the mention of her-their previous life. How had things changed so quickly?

"I can't believe you went a whole week without letting me take care of it. I found an owl pellet yknow"

Giggling sheepishly, the green eyed girl laid her head on Honokas lap

"Well, I just didn't want you to go through all the hassle of doing it. Although I do appreciate it"

"To bad we don't have any shampoo...everyones hair is so greasy. I guess we have gotten used to it by now anyway so it's not so bad.."

"I really think greasy hair is the least of our worries"

Honoka ran her hand absentmindedly through the former idols hair

"We're going to need to get supplies soon though. I suppose I'll make sure to get shampoo on the way. And more pads and tampons. We also need duct tape as I recall...

"How about food?"

"We grow most of our food. Water is collected on the roof in various swimming pools"

"I didn't know Otonoki had a swimming pool"

"Oh we don't, they're these blow up ones. But quite big. Sadly, we don't have any electricity though.."

Trailing off, a glimmer of worry flashed in the gingers eyes

"I wonder if mom and dad would be proud of me..."

It was muttered absently, not meant to be heard by Tsubasa

"Are they...?"

"Dead. Yukiho was forced to kill them when she came home from school..."

Tsubasa felt water fall onto her face as the usually optistic girls eyes filled with tears

"I never...got to say goodbye.."

Sitting up, sparkling green eyes met dark blue ones

"Theid be proud. Im sure of it"

Enveloping Honoka in a tight hug, the later began to sob uncontrollably into her friends chest

---

As weeks passed, Tsubasa started becoming more friendly with the rest of the group as well. Especially with Chika and Honoka, the trio was an unstoppable force of energy

Until they were stopped by the unmoving wall named Sonoda Umi and were often sent to do extra work for the ruccus. After all, winter was coming, and they would need all the supplies they could get. Within those weeks, the Alpacas gave birth to a baby, immediately sparking Kotoris interest, who had grown even fonder of the pair over time

Surprisingly, Tsubasa had been of great help at delivering the baby, as it turned out that her grandparents had owned two Alpacas themselves

But while the former leader of ARise was making friends ans admirers like Hanayo and Ruby, Eli
and Kanan remained wary of her. Erena had yet to even move, any fat she had had on her body now completely gone. Her eyes were dulled as all she did was eat and sleep. Anju had been doing her very best, but even she was at the end of her rope. Nobody knew what to do.

---

Whistling happily to herself, Honoka locked the door to the cell behind her, waving Tsubasa goodnight. "See you tomorrow!" "Mhm, sleep tight" She had barely taken a step however as a new voice filled the halls. A voice she had last heard when lives had been on the line. "Kousaka" A happy squeel could be heard from the other two, but Honka's gaze fixated on Erena. Her eyes had gotten a new glint to them, one she did not like. "Why don't you do Tsubasa a favor and help us escape?"

Chapter End Notes

ehehehe so uh been a bit. The story is finally going to kick off soon so enjoy the calm before the storm
Nightmares and Kisses

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Wide innocent eyes stared in horror as the little girl watched a person drop next to her. Dead. She could see the blood spill out from under his blue hat that had some sort of badge on it
"M-Mama why-"
Tears welled up in her eyes. No toddler should witness a murder. For no matter how many times she now thought of it, no matter what her parents had told her, that had not been in self defense
"In self defense hunny, he was going to bring your mommy and daddy off to a place where we'd be separated"
Though her voice was soft with the little girl, a certain coldness ran through it, however the girl was little and couldn't comprehend such ideas yet
"B-But you killed.."
"Im sorry you had to see that darling, it won't happen again"
Had the little crying girl been a bit older, the 'again' would have alarmed her
"But..isn't that wrong?"
"Only if the person is innocent hunny...if they have malice towards you, it's completely fine"
"O-Okay mommy"

---

Honoka was pacing in her room, restless for the last few days. She hadn't slept that night and she could already see the sunshine through her window
"Why don't you do Tsubasa a favor"
the words continued to echo through her brain
She wanted to help her new friend...crush maybe...but she was loyal to Otonokizaka...and yet..
Sighing deeply the ginger fell onto her bed
"What do I do?"
"Id suggest you could tell me what's botherin ya"
Honoka jumped as a new voice entered the room
"I-Its nothing...!"
Green eyes glinted hardly
"Lie!"
The ginger jumped in shock at hearing the usually gentle voiced womans sudden sharp tone
"F-finefine..I'll tell you"
"Im sorry...I didn't sleep very well..had a nightmare"
She muttered, sleepiness evident as she sat down next to Honoka
"O-Oh...not exactly uncommon i suppose given the situation"
"Sadly true yeah..so what is it?"
"Well..."

---

Tsubasa washed her hands in the sink, having just used the restroom. With the heightened trust of both Honoka and generally the whole group, she and her friends had been granted a whole hallway to roam around in, which thankfully contained a bathroom with running water
Closing the tap, she looked up, almost screaming in shock as she was met with a certain purple haired woman, also known as the leader of the group
"No need to look so surprised, unlike you, I can come and go as I please"
Nozomi made no attempt to hide the smugness in her voice
"Wh-What are you doing here?"
She warely eyed the newcomer
"Well...I heard you and your friends are using your new found trust with my group and especially Honoka, to escape.."
A jolt of fear past through Tsubasa
"W-We didn't-It was-Erena did.!!"
She stammered out, causing a giggle to escape the purplenettes lips
"Relax, Honoka confided the story to me. I'm not here to punish you or anything of the sort"
Visibly relaxing, the tension left Tsubasas body slightly
"What then?"
"While I don't know about Erena san and Anju san, I am quite aware of your friendship with, dare I say, fondness for Honoka. I'm sure you don't want her risking you to get out and be caught and jailed along with you"
Taubasa nodded numbly, trying to predict where this conversation was headed
"Therefore, I propose a deal of sorts. I let you go, and you never attack us again, and also give us regular updates on your plans, location and inventory"
"What's in it for me?"
"Freedom, a couple of Mari sans unused Handguns, some food, a map and.."
She paused, eyes twinkling amusely
"A meeting a week with Honoka all to yourself"

---

It was midnight or so when Tsubasa heard the door to their room unlock
Quickly shaking her friends awake, she walked towards it
"Honoka?"
"Yep. Come quickly, I don't wanna get caught"
It had been agreed upon, that neither Erena nor Anju were to know of the deal between Nozomi and Tsubasa
The ginger silently made her way downstairs, having to stop multiple times as to avoid Kanan and surprisingly Ruby, who were patrolling the hallways
Finally, Honoka slid into a classroom on the first floor, sliding the window open
"It's just a few feet drop, nothing to worry about"
She smiled reassuringly and handed each a Handgun and a backpack
"There's no bullets in yet, but you have three refills in your bag"
Anju smiled gently as thanks as Erena stepped forward
"Thank you for deciding to help us in our escape. We will stear clear from Otonoki from now on...and I'll do my best to remain sane"
Honoka smiled happily
"Glad to hear it!"
The two jumped out of the window, soaking in the crisp night air, leaving Honoka and Tsubasa alone
"Well...this isn't goodbye I suppose.."
Honoka laughed sheepishly
"Yeah..I'll do my best to stay alive, don't you worry"
Honoka nodded and took out a small parcel, handing it to her friend
"It's my grandparents hunting knife..I hope it'll help you out"
"Thanks Honoka chan"
They stood there in a comfortable silence until a small knock was heard on the window
"Coming?"
"Ah! Right, I gotta go"
Hesitating she turned around
"See you..."
Honoka waved sadly, causing a wave of guilt to wash over Tsubasa
"Oh fuck this"
She turned around quickly, pressing their lips together for a split second before parting and
jumping out the window, closing it behind her.
in turn, she left a blushing and confused ginger mess behind, her hand raised halfway to her lips
"D-Did she just..."

Chapter End Notes

Nope the first part is not in the wrong spot, it's a hint of sorts
"So, what's the new status?"
Honoka smiled at the brown haired girl sitting opposite of her, a small blush adorning her face
"Still same. We have one less can of beans I guess. We haven't exactly been doing much"
She sighed, leaning her head on her hand
For the last two months, Tsubasa has been allowed to visit Honoka once a week. They have their own designated area of the courtyard, where they were currently holding a picknick. Although it had become colder over time, according to their agendas it was mid December already. But that didn't stop them as Honoka had begged to have a romantic picknick, like she had always seen in her collection of romance Manga
"You could join us you know"
Tsubasa shook her head
"I might, but Erena won't be for sure, maybe not even Anju..."
"I'm sure Nozomi could-"
"It would need a majority vote. And seeing as she tried to blow us all up last time we met, I don't think we'll be welcomed with open arms"
"I..I guess so..
The ginger gazed down disappointed
"But hey, at least we have these meetings right?"
Tsubasa smiled encouragingly
---
Except they didn't. They hadn't had any for two weeks and Honoka was beyond worried
Umi and Kotori had attempted to calm her nerves, saying that they were surely fine...but for once Honoka didn't believe them
"I wonder where she is..?"
She wondered aloud. She had petitioned for a search part multiple times, but it was always shut down as to risky or unnecessary waste of energy and resources
Maybe they were right after all. Maybe Tsubasa was fine
But the odds weren't in that favor. After all...with dead and gangs roaming the streets...it wasn't safe anymore. Anywhere.
Honoka felt like the group had forgotten about their situation as they were lulled into a false sense of security by Otonokis strong defense
But she wouldn't just wait around anymore
Sadling her backpack the ginger took a deep breath, staring up at the full moon with determined blue eyes
"I'll be back by morning. Nobody will ever know I was gone"
With one final nod, she jumped out of the window and onto the soft grass, running off towards where her...girlfriends? Last standpoint was
---
Honoka didn't remember it being such a walk, maybe she had gotten out of shape or maybe it was all the extra head bashing that it took to get there, but she was exhausted
Setting down her bloodied shovel, she sat down next to a ruined house
By her estimates, she'd still make it before maybe three in the morning....but then again math had
never been her strong suit
As she got up after half an hour of rest she fully realized where she was. And that realization struck hard
Her eyes drifted over a small wooden cross, smashed into the ground next to the decaying corpses of two people
Two very familiar people
"Mom...dad.."

She wanted to run, to scream in frustration and grief
Although Yukiho had told her of their death...and although she had had time to get over it...just seeing their bodies like that felt like a kick to the stomach
Had she eaten anything in the last few hours, she would have most likely thrown up
Tears pricked her eyes as she looked at the corpses anew. The last time she had seen them had been months ago. The last words were annoyed as she was late for school again
Had she only been up earlier, maybe everything would be different
Maybe her mother would then have not been right at the counter as an infected stormed in, as Yukiho who had been sick that day had told her
Maybe then her dad wouldn't have had to rush out and help..maybe it would have been her in their place
Tears now freely flowed down her cheeks, leaving clean streaks where mud and dirt had accumulated, she had been to worried to wash for days
"I..I can't leave them like this"
Her grip tightened on her shovel
Maybe she hadn't been a good daughter. Maybe even terrible
But the very least she could do was make sure they had an honest grave
And so she began to dig
She didn't mind the dirt getting under her nails or on her clothes
She had forgotten about Tsubasa for the moment
All that was important was that her parents wouldn't remain just two more corpses on the side of the road, abandoned and left to rot
So she dug on, as long as she could
Before she knew it, she was blinded by the bright sun, breaking through the cracks of her old, battered house
Cursing under her breath she rammed the shovel into the dirt next to her and got out of the fairly large hole she had made
Grabbing her fathers foot she started dragging him the short distance to his new grave
Surprisingly, or rather sadly, he was quite light, which was largely due to half of his body being eaten away
Unceremoniously dropping him in, she stopped for a rest
"There's no way I'll manage a second grave.."
smiling sadly she stared at her mothers remains
"They'd want to be together forever anyway..she always said that"
Dusting some dirt off her hands she set to work again, lifting her mother into the ditch as well and picking the shovel back up
Taking one last look at their now rotten faces, she let one last tear roll down her cheek before shoveling dirt over them, finalizing their new home and sticking Yukiho's cross on top of it, using her ponytail holder to tie the two pieces together tightly
"Goodbye.."
Turning away, she took another step, finally remembering why she was even out here
But the floor swayed with each step, causing her to stumble
"I probably should have eaten ehehe.."
She shook her head, hoping to clear it up
"Ahh! Bad idea!"
Honoka groaned as her head began thumping heavily, her vision blurry
"No...I can't...I need to move on!"
Using her shovel as crutch she hobbled slowly, but tripped again, and hit her head, finally passing out, blood oozing from the back of her head

Chapter End Notes

Im kinda losing my inspiration to write, does anyone want the story continued?
Dark blue eyes opened hazily, to the sound of wood scraping against some sort of surface, probably the wood floor of a house. Rolling over a sharp sting seared through the ginger's skull, causing her to groan in pain, attracting the persons, who had just been pushing a chair to block a door, attention.

"Ah! You're finally awake."
Looking up, Honoka found Anju looking at her, a worried expression on her face.

"What happened?"

"Well we found you on the ground bleeding and unconscious. So me and Erena carried you to this little hideout."
It was clear that she was doing her best to keep her voice as cheerful and positive as she could.

"How did you get there anyway?"

"Ah...I was looking for Tsu-"
Realization finally hit Honoka as she shot up, sending waves of pain through her brain. Frantically looking around she spotted Erena, sitting in a corner almost timidly.

"Where...Where's Tsubasa?"
Looking away quickly, Erena fumbled with her words a bit.

"She...she was kidnapped..."

"What?!!"

Wide awake and completely ignoring her pain, Honoka stood up.

"It happened three weeks ago or so...it was fast and done by one of those normal street thugs..."

"Why haven't you gotten her back?!"

Honoka was fuming in anger.

"We tried! God did we try. We spent the last three weeks just looking for her!"

Anju raised her voice to match the ginger's.

"Well where is she?"

"A human quarantine. It's a large part of town completely controlled by some sort of gang. People in there live terribly but...you know they live. No dead are inside."

Skeptical, Honoka glanced at Erena.

"How do you know that?"

"We bribed a guard with a bottle a beer. As said, they live scarcely."

"Fine. So where is Tsubasa then?"

Anju stepped up and held up a picture. On it, Honoka saw her girlfriend waiting tables in a very shabby looking shack, dressed in but a bikini.

"What...What the hell?! Why haven't you busted her out yet?!!"

"It's heavily guarded even in the outskirts. This picture almost got us killed!"

"But how do we free her then?! Don't tell me you've given up!"

"Of course not! It's just-"

Both of them stood frozen in shock as they made out a distinct moaning from outside their house. Erena, who was closest to the door, looked through the peephole, drawing back quickly in shock.

"I-It's ten...at least ten of them...!"

Stumbling to her feet, Anju quickly grabbed one of the handguns that they had been given, quickly equipping it with a muffler.

"You better be good with that Shovel Honoka san. We only have six bullets left."

Nodding, Honoka grabbed her shovel and got into a protective stance, Anju standing back and pointing her gun at the door as the chair started to slowly being pushed back.
Grabbing a knife, Erena positioned herself behind the two. Outside they heard muffled thumps, as the door started to open. Gripping the handle tighter, Honoka faced the door with strained blue eyes, raising her weapon slowly for the inevitable crash that would follow as the door gave away.

However it never came. They watched in confusion as a hand, a live hand for that matter, snuck through and pushed the chair away, sliding the door open completely. Seeing who was standing in the doorway, Honoka wasn't sure if she was relieved or not that the dead had been killed for them. Sharp amber eyes pierced through her as their owner started almost fuming in rage. "Kousaka Honoka! What the hell do you think you're doing, running off like that in the dead of night?!" In the doorway stood a very, very pissed Sonoda Umi.

---

Nozomi sighed as she looked out of the car window, seeing the blue haired woman tower over Honoka, practically fuming. She would have pity for her, if not for the fact that she had brought this onto herself. Admittedly, once her disappearance had been discovered, panic had broken out. Umi and Kotori had immediately volunteered to help look for her and a search party had been organized, consisting of Nozomi, of course, Kotori, Umi, Eli, Kanan, Dia and Yoshiko. The first location they had searched was Honokas old house, where they then had found the freshly dug graves. Following from there, Kanan had spotted a large group of Zombies surrounding a house which led to them killing those off quickly. This led to their current situation, namely where Umi was screaming at a cowering Honoka. Nozomi couldn't make out much except bits and pieces like "You reckless."
"How dare you?!"
"Did you know how worried-"
She kept droning on for maybe ten minutes until she finally calmed down, thanks mostly to Kotoris constant soothing voice. Braking down, tears finally started spilling as the three reunited again. "Those three really are close eh?" Eli smiled as she observed the scene "Yeah. Much like Chika, Youand me I presume." "Oh? You don't seem that close"
Kanan smiled sadly "I started neglecting the two in favor of my fathers work." "Ah.."
Nozomi faltered "It was a mistake..just like how I drifted from Mari and Dia.."
The bluenette suddenly realized that, in fact, one of said people was in the car behind her. Quickly turning red, she glanced back at Dia, before turning back forwards. "A-A-Ah I mean-!"
"Im glad to hear that Kanan san" Dia smiled, tugging on her friends ponytail to get her attention. "Im sure Mari san will be happy to hear that as well"

---

In the meantime as the team in the car had had a small talk, Honoka and the rest had walked out
Nozomi quickly opened the door for the first three, but faltered as she saw the two former members of A Rise.
"Where's Kira san?"
The two looked down before Erena spoke up hesitantly.
"She was kidnapped by thugs who are operating a human quarantine a few miles from here. She is serving as a maid on the outskirts....we..we've already asked Sonoda san and Minami san but..we need approval from their leader too.."
Taking a deep breath her back straightened as she stared at the group with a pleading look.
"We would like to request your aid in helping to free Tsubasa. We know we don't deserve it but..for her sake and Honoka sans sake..please help us."
A sly smirk spread across the leaders face as her eyes grew alight.
"An infiltration into a highly secured quarantine while freeing a damsel in distress? That sounds like a lot of fun."

Chapter End Notes

Yep so i'm continuing. The next chapter will be up soon I hope
Nozomi parked the car just under 500 meters away, from where Anju had said that their target was. Getting out, she instructed Erena quickly on how to drive, so that she could stay behind and start the car up quickly, in case they needed to make a fast escape. She left Anju with a full handgun as well for her friends protection, as they did not have the luxury of leaving the motor on all the time, in order to drive away quickly.

Gas was scares and the noice would attract some very unpleasant attention.

"So everybody ready?"

Umi said, taking her bow out and notching in an arrow.

Beside her, Kotori nodded happily, unlocking the safety of her handgun and tracing the outline of a hidden knife under her skirt.

Honoka nodded determined, gripping the handle of her axe tightly. They had picked that up from a nearby Hardware store, along with further weapons during their search for Honoka.

Dia swung her arm, to which they had now attached a large blade nicely, as the wound had healed up enough. She wore a heavy but small brace which attached her blade to her arm.

That too, had been something they had accomplished in the store before.

In swinging it though, she did almost lob off Kanans head, who quickly parried it with her own Katanas blade.

(which Mari called a Kanantana)

Yoshiko on the other hand was staying behind in the car, as to keep an eye on the two A Rise members.

Nozomi smiled at Eli, who nodded.

"Well then. Let's head out!"

---

"Who are you?"

They arrived at the gate of an exterior makeshift gate, which was guarded by two heavy set and heavily armed men.

To look worn out and on deaths door, they had dirtied themselves on the way, now looking like just one big mess.

Nozomis hair stuck out at places and Kanans Ponytail had been undone, giving her a wild look.

"We seek refuge."

Umi, who all of them had chosen to be leader in the talking, as she was used to being formal and tactful (in everything but love of course) spoke up.

The guard wiped some sweat off his forehead, which was unusual as it was winter, then proceeded to stroke a stubbly chin.

"Refuge eh?"

He grabbed Umis chin, much to her and Kotoris annoyance and proceeded to look at her from different angles.

"I guess we could use some more womenfolk...they often die soon."

His colleague let out a hoarse laugh.

"Go in and have fun ladies."

Nozomi glared as she walked in, hoping to any god that would listen, that she could rip their throats open.

Nevertheless, they made it in unharmed, even with the hungry expression that both the guards had given them.
As the gate shut behind them, Dia let out a breath of relief.
"That went well...if you set aside the creepiness of those assholes."
The rest nodded, looking around warily and taking in their surroundings.
From what they could perceive, it looked like they were right back in Tokyo, before the outbreak took place.
The streets were bustling with activity, people didn't even glance into their direction.
Looking closer however, Nozomi started spotting more and more abnormalities.
Stores were predominantly weapons or...what seemed to be brothels.
Others were bars or food stores, however all the food was...rotting.
The purple haired woman stepped back to take a second look at a meat store, which had fresh meat in it.
"What the..."
Making her way through the crowd, she spotted a sight, that almost made her vomit all over the counter.
Behind the butcher, the meat was strung up.
That wasn't the nauseating part, she had been in a butchers shop before.
The nausea was caused by what kind of meat was there.
"Humans."
Quickly turning, she sprinted through the crowd to find the group, finding them rather fast as Elisa's blonde hair stood out against the dirty surroundings.
Catching up, she quickly caught her breath, feeling the sour bile in her throat.
"We need to find Tsubasa! And then get out!"
Kanan looked at her bewildered.
"What's wrong?"
"They sell meat here. Fresh meat"
"So?"
"There aren't any livestock in Tokyo Kanan. And I saw whole human body parts! These people are cannibals!"
Next to her, she could see Honoka's face pale.
"Alright. No time to waste. Find Tsubasa and then get out!"
---
As it turned out, finding the bar that Honoka's girlfriend worked, or was forced to work at, wasn't that hard to find.
It was the most populated and the loudest in the entire district, as far as Eli could concern.
Looking around, he brushed a strand of blonde hair out of her face.
"Do you see her?"
She muttered to Honoka, who had been scanning the crowd attentively, looking for a way to get to the counter intact.
Nozomi and Kanan had slid in beforehand, blending into the crowd with dark cloaks concealing them.
"Yeah. Let's squeeze through. Dia, Kotori, Umi. You follow but slowly. Hide your weapons. We want to avoid a confrontation if at all possible."
Nodding, the group dispersed into the mass of people, who apart from all the female waitresses, were male.
Squeezing her way through with Honoka, Eli followed a straight line to the counter, while the rest formed a circle along the wall.
Arriving at the bar counter, they were greeted by a worn out, hollow eyed Kira Tsubasa.
"Hello, what would you like to?"
She stopped short as she recognized them, a hopeful expression forming on her face.
"Honoka! What are you doing here?"
Eli made a shushing noise, hoping that the bartenders remark had gone unheard. As a heavy hand landed on her shoulder, she realized with a jolt, that that was not the case. "Hey now young ladies. How come our superstar waitress Kira san knows you by first name?"
"A-Ah.."
Honoka stuttered, words caught in her throat. The man smirked nastily and roared into the crowd.
"Fellas! We have a rescue attempt!"
Within seconds the crowd parted as a second voice rung out.
"I found a bitch to barter lives with kids."
Eli looked over, eyes dilating as she saw Nozomi in a headlock, knife pressed to her neck. "Everyone involved in this show yourselves or this waitress gets it!"
'He doesn't know Nozomi is with us'
Eli swallowed empty and got behind the bar quickly pulling Honoka with her and whipping her gun out.
"How about you let her go or I shoot you?"
Her hands clenched around the gun, her movements jittery, causing her adversary to laugh. "You don't have the guts blondie! Now all of you! There have to be more. Show yourself!"
Pressing the knife harder, he stepped forwards a bit.
"Sure.."
A voice broke through a few seconds of tense silence. Looking around for a second, the burly man realized that his captive was speaking, looking up at him with a deadly glint in her eyes, her pupils almost glowing under her purple bangs. "You..
He never got to finish his sentence as the next moment his arm laxed and he spew up blood. "It's only to bad for you that you were in the way and I did have the guts"
Eli watched in terrified awe as her friend retracted a knife from his stomach and kicked the man into a crowd of customers, the mass already reducing, due to most just being drunk survivors with no will to fight.
"Seems like stealth didn't work out...to bad, It would have spared a lot of you"
Her tone was deathly cold and held in mid air for a few moments, before a man behind her started laughing.
It was ragged and he looked very drunk as he pointed at her with a shaking finger. "Had the guts? Ha! He aint dead!"
Grabbing a knife from his belt he raised his voice. "Come on! Let's kill every damn woman in here!"
His announcement was fallowed by cheering as more raised their knives, readying for an attack. Nozomi stood into a corner, weapon raised, letting her eyes flit through the room. She could see Umi encircled, Kanan holding five men off with a gun and and Dia holding her bladed arm out protectively.
She only couldn't find Kotori, who she hoped had managed to hide for now.
But before anyone moved, there was a commotion from behind the counter, which resulted into a garbled scream. Looking over, she spotted Tsubasa being held at knifepoint by another male bartender, the man she had kicked over laying on the ground between them. "Back off from this fight or I will kill her!"
Honoka quickly grabbed the gun from Eli, eyes alight in hate, pointing it directly at the bartender, who barely flinched. "Your friend couldn't kill him there. What should make me think any different of you?"
The ginger took a step closer, which just so happened to land one foot planted square on the laying mans face which she then proceeded to grind into the ground. "Because she's my girlfriend!"
"Fucking Fag! Back the hell off!"
The man started sweating, backing away further while pulling a struggling Tsubasa.
"Release her!"
Her heal had ground through the mans eyeball, as he was now shrieking in pain.
"As if! You don't have the guts to kill! You're a kid!"
Eli flinched as she could see something visibly and very disturbingly break inside Honoka as she let out a shot, shooting through the Skull of the man under her feet, then pointing the gun at the bartender, making him stare straight down the barrel.
"I have lost everything. Do not take her away too."
And she shot, blood splattering onto her face.
The silence that followed was thick, as everyone, enemy and teammate alike, struggled to comprehend what had just transpired.
This was cut short however, as Honoka then pointed the gun at the crowd, prompting Kanan to raise hers again as well.
"I'll give all of you five seconds until we open fire and attack."
A nasty expression was plastered on the usually cheerful and loving gingers face, an expression that chilled Tsubasa to the bone.
"H-Honoka.."
"Five"
A few started filing out, mainly those who had expected a fun brawl, but had bitten off more than they could chew.
"Four"
Honoka slowly reloaded her magazine, watching as more and more started leaving the bar.
"Three"
At this point all the female staff had fled, the only ones still here were unconscious drunks on the floor and those who were determined to fight.
"Two"
Honoka took aim at one scrawny looking man, which caused him to leave in a hurry as well.
"One"
Narrowing her eyes, her lips curled into a bloodthirsty grin.
"Zero"

Chapter End Notes

Now that took some work. sorry its been a bit, had a full pile of exams as the semester finishes this friday. Let me know what you thought of this chapter
"Zero"
Her voice was followed by a thick silence as all eyes watched her twitching finger inch the trigger
towards a shot.
She halted at the small pressure point, taking in the few left. None of them had guns, but seemed
determined to fight.
Maybe they were drunk.
Maybe they desired death.
Honoka didn't care. They had stolen one of the last things precious to her and they were now going
to the pay the price.
Six shots rang out singly, each followed by a heavy thump or crack as six men fell, blood gushing
out of their forehead.
Honoka looked annoyed over to Kanan, who also possessed a gun.
"Will you shoot?"
Her question was more a command and came out harshly, making the navy haired woman shiver.
"I..I can't kill anyone.."
That was not the answer Honoka wanted.
She felt a bubbling rage build up in her, hot, driving and deadly.
"Shoot you damn thing! They're worthless!"
"I can't...I CANT!"
Tears were streaming out of Kanans eyes as she scanned the remaining men, six of them remained.
Just enough for her...for her to kill.
The gingers ice cold stare drilled into her as she slowly raised her gun.
"Do it!"
With a flinch, another six shots rang out, however, all that was to be heard after were cries of pain.
Looking around, Eli saw all six clutching their arms, blood flowing from them.
Honoka looked terribly displeased.
"The hell don't you get about killing?!!"
She drew her axe, getting away from behind the counter, now facing the men on hand to hand
combat.
Slowly, the Otonokizaka group drew their own melee weapons, or at least those that hadn't yet.
As Kanan was a better shot, she and Eli had exchanged weapons, leaving the blonde with a Katana
to fight with.
"Cmon boys! They're in our turf now!"
One of the men growled, wiping his bloody hand on his pants and pulling a knife.
"If we kill these ruckus makers, we'll get rewarded! But keep that one alive!"
He pointed at Nozomi, who blinked in bewilderment.
The men however seemed to understand and split up, the first facing Honoka, a bloodstained
hunting knife in his unharmed right hand.
One now stood opposite of Eli and Kanan, who now stood weaponless and was only shielded by
Eli, two faced Umi, as she still had a full bow and one more was now closing in on Nozomi.
The last one possessed a larger katana, similar to Elis weapon. Due to its long range, he had decided to pick off Dia. Kotori it seems, they had forgotten in the heat of the conflict, much to her own annoyance yet satisfaction as she took out her one shot handgun. With a drawled war cry of sorts, one charged at Honoka, swinging his knife randomly. The ginger quickly evaded his attacks, but was slowed down by the axe, which now proved to be more a burden. Catching Tsubasas eye gave her strength however, and as the next stab came, she slid onto the ground, knocking his feet away from the ground and cutting the back of one knee. "Should have run when you had the option" A sick grin spread across her face as she raised the axe, her body full of desire to smash the mans brains out. She could envision it, the screams of terror as she swung the axe down, the satisfying thud when it would land. But somehow..somehow that wasn't how she wanted him to end. No that was far to merciful of an end for a man who would harm her friends. Her breathing became ragged as she stared down at him, eyes alight in bloodlust as he whimpered below her, feeling his life seep away with the blood loss and pain. Honoka laughed. She laughed at how pathetic he was. How pathetic and worthless his life was. How powerful she felt, deciding his ugly fate. And at how much she would enjoy his kill the most. Raising her axe, she swung it down at his hand, chopping it off cleanly and making blood spurt onto her face. He howled in pain and clutched the stump tightly, as Honoka watched in sheer joy, licking the blood off of her blade. She was going to have so much fun. So much. So much. So much! Her laughing reached its peak as it grew still around her, but she didn't notice. She didn't notice her friends finish with their own attackers. She didn't notice Elis worried glances to Nozomi, who was staring in shock and something her friends couldn't place. She didn't notice Kotori crying at seeing her like this, nor did she notice Umi holding her friend tightly, to console her. She didn't notice anything. She was in her own world, where she was god, deciding over someone else's death, someone else's fate. She did notice powerful she felt when she broke his kneecaps in two, the look of despair plastered on his face as he looked at her and his face contorted in agony as she dragged up a wound on his stomach, slowly pulling out his entrails. All while laughing. All while smiling. All while feeling immense joy. And then it all stopped as he was shot in the head. Killed not by her, but by himself, holding a small one shot pistol. But before rage could overtake her, before she could ascend into another plain of dark desire, she was wretched out of her world by a slap to the face. She was now facing Nozomi, tears streaming down the woman's cheeks, her entire body trembling. She was screaming something. She was screaming something about not allowing her to go that path. She was screaming something about how she won't let anybody else walk it. Honoka couldn't soak it in. The senses of the real world flooded her again as she gazed at Tsubasa, only making out her soft
green eyes before falling unconscious.

---

Eli grunted as she pushed her attacker off herself. They had had a short fight, in which she had mostly evaded, before he flung himself onto her, impaling himself on her weapon. Reaching out to Kanans outstretched hand, she pulled herself up, wiping off any extra blood and dirt. "It was a shame he had to die.."

Kanans words dripped with remorse as she kneeled down to close his eyes. "Don't blame yourself about this in the future Eli. It was a necessary evil.."

Nodding, Eli took a deep breath, focusing on clearing her watery vision. She could see Umi, standing over the corpses of two men, a single arrow piercing both in the head. She nodded to them, wiping her forehead clean of blood splatter and bent down, closing her victims eyes as well.

Kanan and Eli walked up to her, dragging their attacker with them. "It's sad that they ended like this.."

Umi spoke up, tears welling up in her eyes. "I never.. I never thought i'd need to kill a human..those dead are one thing but..."

She trailed off. "Yeah..I know what you mean.."

Eli smiled sympathetically. "They were humans..with desires, emotions..and futures" "That we ripped away from them.."

They were ripped out of their solemn state as a wretched scream was heard from Nozomis and Dias corner. The purple haired girl and buried her knife in his chest, a wide smile spread across her face as she bent him over her knee, crushing his windpipe. He flopped to the ground. Dead.

And killed by someone Eli valued.

She wanted to throw up, to cry. That horrifying smile, her glint from before. She hated it. She hated how her friend killed.

The blonde had heard that Nozomi and Kotori had killed before but..seeing it was terrible. Next to them, Kotori had put her gun away and pulled her knife, killing three men who had attempted to enter the bar, with one strike to their throats.

All while letting out a hysterical laugh. While...while enjoying it.

"Kotori.."

Umi wanted to reach out to her, to hold her, to stop her from this killing. But in the moment, this is what they had to do. They had to kill, to survive themselves. Eli flinched as another cry was emitted by Dias adversary, but was surprised to see that she had only bit him.

She flinched as the brown haired woman ripped away a chunk of his skin. "D-Dia!"

Kanan shook her head in disbelief. As the man fled the scene, Die let go of the flesh she had been holding in her teeth, looking absolutely bewildered and terrified.
Had they had more time, they would have discussed this bizarre and gruesome event. They were cut off mid thought however by a laughter, that had in the midst of the fight been drowned down.

Now however, with no screams, no adrenaline filled fight, not even someone trying to enter, the laugh resounded chillingly around the room.

Nozomi looked over at Honoka as a wretched wail sounded from her victim.

"Honoka..."

She muttered, staring in shock as the girl started pulling and ripping out the mans entrails, flinging them around in a wild, insane frenzy.

Kotori broke down crying, Umi wrapping her arms around her protectively.

Dia and Kanan couldn't move and Tsubasa slowly inched herself towards her girlfriend.

"HONOKA!"

Nozomi screamed, over and over again, crying tears of desperation, but she was ignored.

As the man shot himself, and the power the ginger had felt was beginning to be replaced by rage, Nozomi rushed forward in a desperate attempt to stop her from going down that path.

She wouldn't, couldn't let Honoka be warped.

In a moments decision, she slapped her.

The slap hung in the air thickly for a moment, the ginger slowly turning to face her, her rage now focused on the purple haired woman.

"Honoka!"

She screamed again in her despair, attempting to convey her feelings to her.

Eli and the rest did nothing to intervene.

They couldn't.

What good could they do?

But it hurt to watch. It hurt to watch Nozomi in a desperate state. It hurt to see Honoka murderous.

It hurt badly.

"Honoka listen to me!"

Nozomi almost screeched, hoping that at least some would come through to her friend.

"Don't go there! Don't immerse yourself in it! Don't ever go there!"

Tears now flowed heavily down her cheeks, mixing into the blood on the ground.

"Listen to me! You can't ever give in to that! I won't let you..I can't let you! I won't allow any of my friends to walk down this path!"

She was starting to grow weak but pressed on, seeing the change in Honokas demeanor.

Her expression slowly softened as she looked around, maybe not taking it all in, maybe none of it.

It didn't matter though.

Nozomi had saved her from walking one of the most painful paths of life, that was nigh impossible to break out of.

"Don't...don't ever go there again Honoka. It's not meant for you.."

She looked at the faces of her friends, all staring at her in a mixture of bewilderment and disbelief...and in Eli she saw fear.

It stung her, but it would be dealt with later.

Putting on as encouraging of a smile as she could Nozomi quickly caught Honoka as she fell unconscious due to mental stress. Her eyes drifted over to Kotori, who whist fully caught her gaze.

"It's not meant for any of you"

She muttered, handing Honokas body to Kanan, who, with Elis help, lashed her to her back.

"Let's go home...we all need a break"

Tsubasa smiled and stroked Honokas cheek gently, smiling.

"Thanks everybody. I'll be within your debt forever."

Dia smiled wryly.

"Normally I would say, don't mention it but...this isn't quite as small that you could do that."

Laughing gently, pushing their worries aside for now, the group laughed softly as they exited the quarantine, Kotori slitting the guards throats for good measure after everybody had rounded a
corner.  
She smiled contently.  
"I might not have played a big role today...but at least Honoka chan is safe. I can't let her break.  
Ever."

---

A man, clad in an elegant suit, passed up and down in his office, looking out onto the human quarantine through the window.  
It was evening, but there was still plenty of light to illuminate his desk and the city below him.  
Near him crouched a figure, bleeding from his neck, clutching it desperately as he had been for the last few hours, since an ash haired girl had slit it with glee.  
"Tell me again how you couldn't beat these kids?!"  
Dark hair obscured the mans eyes as he demanded answers, infuriated by the first he had been given.  
"They were talented! And insane and.."  
He stopped to cough up blood.  
"And?"  
"There was this woman with them...we couldn't kill her yet"  
"Are you referring to that ginger?"  
A woman stepped forward from a shadow, where she had been intently listening.  
She was no older than 35, long dark hair bound into a braid at her side.  
A dark purple gown graced her figure nicely  
"No mam.."  
He held up a picture with shaking hands.  
"This is a picture from the security footage."  
The woman glanced at the photo then smiled gently at him.  
"Thank you for bringing us this information. Had it come sooner we could have dispatched peacekeepers."  
Her husband took out a well polished gun, turning around in his hand, as if to examen it.  
"Sadly however, we can't waste our recourses on wounded men.."  
His tone became cold, deathly cold.  
Before his subordinate could even comprehend his fate, he lay dead on the ground, one bullet straight through his head had killed him.  
Setting the muffler back down, the man kicked the body to the side and re holstered his weapon.  
"Look dear, purple hair, green eyes and a..very nice chest size"  
The woman giggled lightly as she brushed a strand of purple hair to the side, her green eyes glowing in the evening light.  
"Yes. It seems she has grown up to be quite a wonderfully murderous young woman."

Chapter End Notes

Yeah uh, took a bit sorry. Heart of ice will be soon, but i kinda lost my skript where i write the plot down so to make sure i dont mess up my plot line, i gotta find it first.  
Oops.  
Anyway, heres a longer chapter for the wait. tell me whatcha think
"Thank you for letting us stay here..again"
Tsubasa bowed deeply to the group, which were now standing at the doorsteps of Otonokizaka Highschool.
"Hey, there's no way I'm letting you out of my sight again"
Honoka smiled warmly.
She had woken up halfway through the car ride back, without any recollection of what had happened.
The group had quickly spun a much less interesting tale of how they had just snuck Tsubasa out.
All agreed, that she should not be told about the lives she had taken while on her murderous rampage.
"Now, let's get inside and treat any cuts or injuries people may have suffered."
Nozomi took out a key, unlocking the main and only door.
"Nyaaaaa you're back!"
Rin came bounding up to them, quickly jumping back as she caught sight of the ARise trio.
"Nyek! What are they doing here?!"
She quickly stood quickly back, standing protectively in front of Hanayo, who had just entered the scene.
"Relax Rin chan, we offered them to join us and they accepted."
"A-Are they trustworthy?"
Hanayo timidly voiced her thoughts from behind Rin.
"I do hope so..."
Kotori smiled menacingly.
"Worst case I dispose of them"
"We won't be of any concern to you. And we'll do out best to earn your trust as well."
Erena spoke in a calm tone, attempting to soothe their worries.
"Maybe it would help if we told them our story?"
Tsubasa smiled.
"It's actually quite interesting...and we don't understand the reason for half of the occurrences ourselves."
"What do you mean?"
"Gather the rest and we'll tell everybody. Do you have some sort of common room?"
"No, but come to think of it, that's a good idea. We should make one."
Nozomi brightened up.
"Gimme a sledgehammer and I'll do it"
"I'm almost scared to ask why you need a sledgehammer nya.."
"Thank god we don't have one"
---
"Well, now that everybody has managed to cram themselves into the entrance hall"
Erena gazed over at the group, who were all squeezed together tightly, hardly finding space to sit.
"Let's tell what happened."
Tsubasa spoke up.
"We had a concert on the day before that..you know all this started"
"It was exclusive as some of you might know. Many representatives of numerous highschools and colleges were there to view us, as they wanted to either buy our group for their own school, or offer
us scholarships.
"This may seem odd, but it made sense to them. Get an Idol in the school and people will join."
One could see Hanayo nodding furiously.
"Anyway, after it ended, we had some blackout. The smoke alarm rang and there was this weird smog in the air. We didn't breathe it in because it seemed to be a heavy gas and we were on stage, but we could hear the coughing of all the people below us."
Anju smiled sadly.
"We don't know what happened honestly. I wanted to help but yknow, what could I do? We were escorted out quickly by some weird guy in a uniform that had some weird cross symbol thingy on it and then just got..."
"Kicked out"
Tsubasa finished.
"What do you mean, zura?"
"We were kicked out. Like alley cats. Some woman with a weird accent told us we had done our job. Course we didn't really dwell on it alto greatly, weird things happen all the time in our business so yeah..we just assumed something had gone wrong and we'd be notified later."
"But that never happened as you might think."
"The next day this shit started happening. We managed to salvage things here and there and hunkered down for a while..until we had run out of food and even then we stayed."
"When we attacked we..we weren't in the best of mental health"
Nico scoffed. ("No shit")
"We were starving, thirsty and had been locked up for months. Thanks to your err..hospitality however, we did come too again."
Eli raised her hand.
"Yes?"
"How come Erena-san was so much more batshit insane than you?"
Erena looked away quietly, letting Anju answer.
"She..she insisted on giving me and Tsubasa her rations of food and drink..she slept less and took more watches..looking back we really should have stopped her."
"It kept you safe. That's the important part"
Tsubasa giggles something into the direction of "Gay" but it was overheard.
"So that's our story. It's not that exiting but..I hope you trust us more now"
Nozomi got up at this, holding a pen and paper, to everyones confusion.
"That's good and all but...for confirmation please draw the mans symbol will you? Perhaps we can verify it's validity."
Handing the paper to Anju, she looked at them expectantly.
"I'm not the best at art but...I'll do my best."
It took her a few minutes and some time consulting the other two, but after a bit they presented their drawing.
"This should be roughly what it looked like"
On the paper was a cross, circled by two roses that slowly turned into fanged creatures which in turn began devouring the cross.
"The hell ya mean not good"
Nico muttered.
"I can't even draw a face"
As the group crowded around ARise, a loud thump was heard at the back of the room. Turning on her heel, Eli found Nozomi kneeling on the ground, clutching her face tightly, shivering on her entire body.
"N-Nozomi!"
Running up to her, she noticed how her pupils were dilating and eyes growing dim.
"What the hell?! Maki! Get over here!"
The commotion had drawn the attention of the rest, who were now gazing worriedly at their leader,
who now began wheezing, gasping for air.
"It seems like she's having some sort of panic attack! But it's unusual, there's symptoms that
usually don't appear and I see no reason for it to occur!"
Maki struggled to grasp the occurrence.
"Nozomi! Nozomi listen to me!"
She grasped the purple haired woman's hand tightly, trying to do her best to divert her attention.
Her urging was to no avail however, as the raggedness of her breathing only increased, her grip on
her head becoming more and more of a scratching, a distraction of something even worse.
"No..."
She began to whimper, eyes beginning to flood with tears, much to the onlookers and especially
Elis dismay.
"I repressed..No! Go away!"
She fell to the floor, grasping onto her clothes, writhing as if shaking something terribly painful off.
Tears began to form in her shirt, her shoes got knocked off, almost hitting Yoshiko in the head.
"Nozomi!"
Nico now crouched next to her as well, trying to shake her to her senses.
"What do we do?!"
"I don't know..I've never seen anything like this!"
As they were debating frantically about what was to be done, she kept her monologue going,
seemingly completely unaware of her surroundings.
"Make it go!"
Nozomi began thrashing again, hitting anyone close to her.
Eli grunted as she caught a fist that almost hit her face.
"MAKE THEM GO!!"
She screamed raggedly, drawing one last breath before falling still.
Unconscious.
---

"How in hell...HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?!"
Enraged, a man ran through the halls, rushing towards the security room and slamming the door
open.
"How did we get an outbreak in the quarantine?!
He picked up a worker by the collar, slamming him against the wall.
"W-We don't know sir! All we know is it happened an hour after those kids escaped."
His voice was meek as he struggled to breathe under the man's grip.
"How could they infect an entire portion of the outer sectors?! There's hundreds of dead roaming
there!"
"W-We're working on finding out sir! Give us more time..!"
Letting go, the man turned to the two men standing behind him, sleek uniforms standing out
against the dusty background, a fancy cross like symbol adorning their chest.
"You said we won't get infected!"
"As long as no dead come inside that would be true. However, it seems you were breached."
"We have security footage from this entire perimeter. Nothing entered. The only way that this
happened was your damn gas!"
"Sir, we didn't leave any in Japan after our initial attack. This is not our organization's fault."
Storming out, the man ran quickly towards a weapons room, still fuming in rage at the man's
words.
Flinging the door open, he faced five men, who were currently playing cards on a table.
"Game times over! All of you have a job to do. The only way this happened was the kids attack.
Find them and bring them here!"
He handed them an address as he said that, with a house circled in red.
"Try waiting there for a week, in any luck they'll show up there."

---

Mari laid Nozomi down on her bed, gently placing her head onto a pillow. Maki and Eli were currently anxious to be useful, Eli out of worry and Maki had run off to research in the schools library about Nozomis condition. Maris room had just been closest to the purple haired so she had volunteered to carry her up. Heaving a sigh of relief, she took a look around. Many rooms had been left quite bland and were now adorned with trinkets, and so was Nozomis. A tarot deck stood on a desk, next to her schoolbag. A sketch pad lay next to it as well. Beside Nozomis bed was Elis, they had fashioned another due to her restless sleep. As she turned to leave she noticed an oddity of the room. The mirror, which had been mounted over the sink that was in the room, had been taken down and now was shoved under Nozomis bed. Crouching down, Mari saw the thin layer of dust adorn the screen of the mirror. "Must've been shoved down here a while ago."

She muttered, wondering why Nozomi would deem that necessary. Getting up, Maris gaze wandered over the top of Nozomis back, which was now exposed due to her laying on her side and her shirt being ripped. Sweeping away a few loose strands of hair, she felt her fingers run along a small crevice on her back. Double taking, Mari slid the shirt to the side slightly, breath hitching as she stared down at a confusing, yet weirdly terrifying sight. Her finger had been tracing along a burn. Not a natural burn or accidental burn but a symbol. A cross with roses and fanged beasts. Right there, on Nozomis back and just out of her viewpoint, hidden under her shirt, lie the symbol of the people that threw A Rise out. The symbol that had probably sent Nozomi in a wild frenzy. That very symbol was here, branded into the womans back with what must have been a branding iron. "What..what does this all mean?"

Chapter End Notes

Heres some actual lore coming to be now. Lets see where this rabbit hole leads
"Where are we daddy?"
A young girl, maybe ten years of age, stared up at her father in bewilderment.
"A place that you'll call home while I conduct business here."
He smiled at her, an almost hallow looking smile.
"Oh, like you did in Russia?"
"Just like that. I'm surprised you remember that"
"How could I forget! I met a friend there!"
She squeaked excitedly.
"Ah yes...the little blonde?"
"Yes! I really wanna see her again...it's been five years...I think."
Her father crouched down next to her and ruffled her hair.
"Next time we go to Russia darling. We can arrange a meeting then."
"When will that be?"
"Whenever work brings me there. Now, go with your uncle alright? He's gonna show you around."
He pointed to a person standing behind him, who quickly took the girls hand.
"Come with me, I'll show you all you need to know to take over your daddy's business when you're an adult."
"Whaaaaa"
The girl grinned happily, knowing very much so what her fathers business was.
She couldn't wait to get into it, her mommy and daddy had made it sound so so so exciting.
"I get to shoot a gun?!"

---

Eli closed the door to her room, wondering why Mari hadn't rejoined them but just run off to her room.
Glancing to Nozomis bed, she was relieved to see her friend peacefully sleeping on her back, a small smile plastered on her face.
It seemed like she was going to be alright.
She watched as she began to toss and turn a bit and giggled into her hand, amazed how she had just seen this girl kill.
'Ah..right'
Eli sighed and sat down onto her bed, her eyes still glued onto her friend.
"I can think of that later.."
She shook her head.
"As long as she's safe."

---

A girl, age twelve smiled as her knife it it's mark.
That made it twelve out of twelve targets.
Flicking some loose strands of hair away she stood up and smiled at her mother, who nodded in acknowledgment.
"Good job hun. Now, can you do moving targets?"
A girl, age thirteen, stood terrified in front of a branding iron.  
"Mom? Wh-what is that?"
Her eyes followed the flames licking the hot metal. 
"We want you to be officially part of our business darling."
Her mother smiled at her.
Now she could see the hollowness. 
And it scared her.  
It scared her more than the iron.
Shifting over to her father, she found the same complacent, unfaftering and meaningless smile. 
She hardly noticed as she was pushed forward.  
As her hair was parted behind her.  
She didn't notice until the red hot iron hit her skin. 
It was a searing pain, shooting through her entire being. 
Writhing, screaming, crying she tried to wind herself free, only to be restrained by two people. 
Her own parents and now, strangers. 
All she could do was keep screaming and scratching as the iron was held away. 
But the burn kept hurting. It kept tormenting. 
It kept torturing. 
And she could do nothing to stop it.  

--

The young girl, now fifteen years of age, stood over the body of a freshly killed man. 
She smiled a hollow smile and kicked the corpse once.  
His blue police hat rolled off and she picked it up, throwing it into the air. 
Using the rest of her bullets she shot it to shreds. 
She didn't care much about him per say, nor did she hate him. 
The shredding was simply for the police to find, that's what her parents had taught her at least. 
She'd forgotten any recollection of her childhood at this point. All up to training was lost. 
Any memory of friends and warmth. 
Forgotten. 
Turning to walk back home however, she was blown off her feet by a deafening explosion. 
Her vision became hazy as she hit a wall, she could feel her skull crack. 
That's when it all went dark.  

--

Eli jerked up in shock as Nozomi began screaming and thrashing, throwing off the pillow and sheets of the bed.  
"Nozomi?!!"
She rushed to her side, as Nozomi bolted upright, fear cursing through her eyes. 
She glanced around the room panicking, only for her eyes to land on Eli, who was doing her best to calm her down. 
"E-Elichi?"
Fear turned into confusion as she looked around the room again, relief spreading over her face. 
"Just a dream...just...a dream." 
She breathed dryly.  
It had been more than a dream and she knew it deep down. 
"Nozomi..?"
Green eyes quickly focused again as she had been spacing out.  
"You..you alright?"
"I'm fine Elichi, just a bad dream, eheh"
She waved off the blonde's worry with a gesture of her hand.
"That's not what I mean....You passed out screaming and crying. What happened?"
"Eh? That was just."
She trailed off.
Nozomi didn't even know herself what was up with that.
Maybe repressed trauma came back to life.
Old memories maybe.
She honestly didn't know.
"Yes?"
"Ah..medical problem?"
The blonde looked skeptical but decided to ask again when they were both calm.
"How long was I asleep for?"
"Uhh..hold on"
Eli checked her watch quickly.
"Twenty hours."
"What?!"
"Yeah..you should probably inform the rest that you're awake."
Nodding, Nozomi got up, brushing her hair behind her back in a fluid motion, tracing her burns outline.
'Why do they have to turn up now of all times?'

---

Nozomi now stood in front of the few members that were still awake, seeing as it was midnight. Those consisted of Maki, who had been researching in the library, Hanayo and Rin who had simply been on watch duty prior to this and Mari, who said she just couldn't sleep.
It had taken the leader quite some time to calm everybody down, although Mari still seemed to fidget nervously around her.
"Now...apart from dispelling worries, I also want to ask you something."
"Nya?"
"It occurred to me, that none of you have been back at your house since this started."
Nozomi quickly improvised, attempting to divert their attention.
"Would you be interested?"
"I don't think the drive down to my place would be practical so, no thank you"
Mari spoke up, a slight tremor lacing her usual high and energetic voice.
"I'd like to."
Maki's voice sounded from Nozomi's right side.
"I went briefly before but...who knows. Maybe I can..I can find mama and papa...and even if we don't, there might be medical supplies."
Nodding, Nozomi let her attention wander to the other first-years.
"And you guys?"
"I-I would like to but."
Hanayo's voice was timid as she looked at Rin cautiously.
"I don't.
That took them by surprise.
Nozomi had expected Rin to be very energetic but she seemed almost...mad.
"Rin chan! You need to. We talked about this!"
Hanayo spoke firmly.
"I don't want to go back!"
Rin's voice portrayed bubbling anger and sadness.
"I can't go back to that place!"
"Rin, your mama and papa might be alive though. Don't you want to check?"
Maki inquired.
"Those two can rot in hell for all I care."
"R-Rin! At least go back for supplies! We can be in and out in no time, I know where your
medication and clothes are. I can do it."
Hanayo held onto Rins shaking shoulders.
"I..We can get the meds at Makis house"
"They won't have that. This is prescribed medication."
"B-But I-
"Rin..Rin chan. You want that right?"
Hanayo countered, putting a weird emphasis on the honorific.
"I-I guess.."
"It's decided then."
Nozomi smiled, slightly bewildered.
"Get your weapons, we'll use the cover of night to get there in a car."
She held up her car keys, letting them twinkle in the hall lights.

Chapter End Notes

Aaaand heres some backstory and some rin implications.
Anybody guess whats her backstory?
"Woha."
The group stepped out of their car, staring up at the wreckage that used to be Makis house.
"It's like a tornado blew through it."
Maki muttered, pushing a rusted and gnawed gate out of the way, letting it clamer carelessly against the cobbled driveway.
"It wasn't this bad last time I was here."
The rest stood at the sidelines, not wanting to interrupt Makis grieving.
It was rare for the redhead to let out her feelings freely, but now one could clearly see tears roll down her cheeks, wetting the dirt below her feet.
She shook her head quickly, wiping the tears away.
"I can't cry. Mama and Papa raised me to be strong."
The pure thought of her parents however, only caused her heart to ache more.
It was as if something was grabbing it, and squeezing it hard, sending stabs of pain through her chest, whenever she thought of something she loved.
Her hand trailed the entrance to the house, gazing into the hallway that felt so familiar yet, now with blood soaking the wall and a maids dead corpse with a bullet through her head laing around, terrifiyng.
Motioning to her friends she stepped in, instinctively walking towards her parents room.
She knew they weren't there but...she knew she'd never rest unless she checked.
Looking back, she found Rin staring around, an absent look adorning her face. Hanayo had walked off towards the more medical oriented area that included it's own surgical room and Nozomi seemed to be looking out for any dead roaming around.
Her sapphire eyes kept glancing worriedly towards Rin however.
Ever since that weird fight with Hanayo she had been kindo of out of her element.
Shaking her head, Maki advanced into her parents room, almost throwing up at the sight.
Blood splattered the walls, organs were strewn across the floor.
Maki felt her last hope shatter at the sight.
It was to much. Absolutely to much.
After standing there rooted to the spot for what seemed like hours, she finally broke down.
Tears now streamed down her face, wretched hiccups escaped her lips as she stumbled over to the bed, only to find more blood.
She couldn't do this anymore.
She wanted them back.
She wanted all of them back.
Her maids and butlers, the comfort of the home and most of all...
"I want Mama and Papa back!"
She screeched, kicking over anything she could find.
She had been numb for the past months, never realizing what had truly happened.
But now it all came crashing down onto her, shattering any illusion left.
And now it all got let out in a fit of rage and grief, as she broke furniture, the bed, anything that reminded her of what had happened.
She felt warm bodies envelope her as she kept screaming, tears staining whomever was holding her.
She could make out comforting words and someone stroked her back rhythmically, letting her let it out.
And so she did. She cried for what seemed like hours. Every time she closed her eyes, she saw an image of her parents mangled bodies. Everytime she almost stopped, she looked up from her small cocoon, only to tear up all over again. Finally however, after what felt like hours, she managed to calm down. She was exhausted, her eyelids felt heavy as she closed them, falling into a deep sleep, finally finding a temporary rest from the torment that this world brought with it.

---

Nozomi smiled gently at her junior as she pushed the blood soaked sheets to the side, laying her down slowly. Maki had cried her heart out, understandably, at her parents apparent death. Making sure Maki was comfortably snuggled into a bed she was surely familiar, she let her gaze wander over to Rin and Hanayo, who stood at the entrance of the room. They had come fifteen minutes into Makis breakdown, and watched for the remaining half hour. "You can look around here if you're quiet. Have you found anything useful?"

Nodding, Hanayo took out a bottle of painkillers. "There's a whole box of these and similar items. I used a cellphone i found in that dead maids pocket to call the headmistress office. Kotori chan sent Mari to pick anything up, they should arrive soon. Although we don't need to encounter them, the more people on one spot, the more attention we get."

Hanayo half whispered, holding up a phone. "How did you unlock it?"
"Fingerprint, she...she shot herself recently. She never turned...i changed the password so now we can access it."

She smiled m, proud of herself for doing something of use. "Ah, good job Hanayo. I have a solar powered power bank in my bag at school that we can use. Although my phone, like everybody else's, is at home."

Nozomi walked around the room, opening and closing drawers, looking for anything of use. All she found was a few scalpels and some more bottles of medicine, the label of which didn't tell her anything.

"Ah.."

Rin uttered a small sound of surprise as she had absentmindedly kicked over a trashcan. "I'll pick that up"

She said timidly, almost in a Hanayo like manner. Nozomi looked at her confused, wondering what had happened with her change of behavior. Rin seemed to notice the strange look and quickly put on her cat like demeanor again, putting the few papers back into the trash can, stopping inly by the last one.

"Guys? I don't think...I don't think this is trash.."

She held up a small folded paper, quickly unfolding it, revealing a scrawled text in blue ink. "Dear Maki"

She read out loud, quickly shitting up again. "This is a letter from...her mom!"

She screamed, making Maki shoot up from her sleep.

"Wh-what?! What's going on?"

"Ah..Im sorry nya.."

"Maki chan..we found a letter from your mom"

Hanayo held out the paper as Maki scrambled to her feet, snatching it from her. "This..this is her handwriting...but fastened.."

She muttered, scanning the letter. "Could..could you read it out loud?"
Nozomi asked hesitantly.
The redhead nodded, clearing her throat, her voice only portraying a slight strain as she read.
"Dear Maki..I hope you find this and are doing well. We shouldn't be leaving any clues behind but
I can't let my only daughter be left without any reassurance of our survival. We don't know what is
going on, but it seems that the government is rounding up important individuals or wealthy
ones...the parents that is.."
Her breath hitched at the implication that her parents could be alive.
With renewed hope she kept reading.
"We are being brought off Japan and to Europe, at least that's what I have heard. I'm sorry to leave
you behind, we both wish you the best at surviving and we will be working for a cure in a safer
location.
Love, Mama"
---
Nozomi leaned against the car window while driving.
Normally she wouldn't but..well there weren't many things she could crash into on the road
currently.
Rin had given hesitant directions towards where her house was located, which was maybe ten
minutes around while winding along houses.
"I still..I still can't believe that your mom and dad just got saved by the government.."
"Me neither. This seems surreal. I mean I'm glad they're safe and all but...I'm starting to feel like
we're some protagonists in a story who magically find a cure before all the foreshadowed findings
of my parents get released..."
Nozomi laughed dryly.
"If we were a story, the author would be very cliché like to do that"
"All we'd need now is a pack of cannibals"
"Have them"
"Right. Well we would need some people with classic western white people names i guess..
Maki smiled slightly at the thought.
"Like Joe or Bob or something like that."
"Good luck finding those names in Japan. The most western name we have is Mari or Eli"
Hanayo spoke up, wanting to join the conversation.
"I guess those two aren't completely Japanese so that makes sense."
"Alright enough with the hypothetical chit chat, we're here."
Nozomi hopped out, locking the car when everybody followed.
"I have a house key nya.."
Rin sighed, fumbling with the keys.
The closer she got to the house, the more nervous both she and Hanayo seemed to become.
Letting herself in, Rin froze in the doorway, glancing around as if scared something or
more...someone would jump out.
When no immediate danger was present, she motioned to the rest that they could enter.
"Make sure there's nobody here."
"What if we find...your parents..?"
"Kill them"
Maki stumbled slightly at the pure hatred that was being emitted by the usually happy go lucky
girl.
Looking around, the redhead noticed a slight oddity.
"Hey, Rin?"
"Yeah?"
"Do you have a brother?"
Rin visibly froze up at the question.
"What? Why ask that?"
Maki picked up an action figure, that she often found in the "typical boy section"
of a store.
She quickly got distracted however by a piece of what seemed to be a fashion magazine.
It was hardly even a small paper however, and one could see it had been violently ripped apart.
"Well this room is full of boy things.."
Maki sighed and looked around.
"Which one is yours?"
"A-ah nya.."
Rin faltered.
She was saved an answer however at a large thump being heard in the other room, fallowed by a
strong slew of curse words.
"H-Hanayo?!"
Nozomi ran over to the living room, to find Hanayo crouched over the dead bodies of, judging by
the orange hair, Rins parents.
"Y-You really didn't hesitate"
"Rin said not to. Besides-"
She quickly stopped mid sentence, as if remembering something.
"Besides?"
"Nothing. Never mind."
She stood up, heading towards the bathroom, returning with a box of what seemed to be medical
supplies.
"These are your meds right?"
"Yep! Let's go now."
Rin urged, almost pushing Maki and Hanayo out of the house.
Nozomi turned to leave, as her eyes caught sight of something unusual.
Looking closer, she found that the corpses had gun shots through their heads, next to where
Hanayo had stabbed.
The implication was both confusing and disturbing.
Hanayo hadn't killed them. She had stabbed them only in order to distract from Maki asking Rin
more questions.
But why?

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry it's taking so long. I've been busy with work and battling anxiety attacks from
test and school and social anxiety and it's kinda stressful. I hope you enjoyed this
chapter anyway though no matter how late
A sharp click of the door lock was to be heard, before Hanayo opened the door, stepping into what used to be her house.
After just a few steps however, she stumbled back and crashed into Rin, covering her nose.
"It smells rotten"
She whispered briskly, dread creeping up on her as she composed herself again, preparing herself mentally for what was to come.
Holding up her small knife she rounded the corner, muscles tense, prepared to slice into anything that jumped up to her.
She could feel a bead of sweat roll down her back as her hair stood on ends.
Just one step she told herself.
Just one step, one slash and it would be over.
She wondered why she was so tense though. She already knew what was to be found in her parents room.
Pushing those thoughts aside however, she stepped around the corner, but slacked at the sight in front of her.
Tears pricked her eyes, but she ignored them. She had prepared herself for this moment.
That's what she kept telling herself anyway, as she crouched over her parents corpses.
They were dead, laying peacefully on their bed.
Unmoving, glassy eyes staring up to the ceiling, a bottle of pills lay next to them.
Her mothers hand clasped a small paper, which, after some hesitation, Hanayo slowly pried from her hand.
"Is-Is that a goodbye letter?"
Rins voice sounded softly next to her.
The gingers face was full of grief, as she reached out slowly, closing their eyes.
"I'm sorry Hanayo"
She whispered, wiping her own tears away, she embraced her friend, as her tears flowed freely, staining Rins shirt.
But it was a short cry, as she composed herself quickly.
"No. I can't cry. I prepared for this. I saw this already...I need to be strong for them."
She put on a smile, betraying her aching heart.
Next to her, Rin unfolded the letter slowly, that she had slipped from Hanayos hands.
"Kayochin...this is addressed to us."
Maki stopped digging through the closet as she heard that, turning to them.
"You both?"
They squeaked a bit, as if they had forgotten that Maki and Nozomi were in close vicinity.
"N-No just Kayochin...!"
Rin blurted out.
It was clear by Makis face that she didn't buy it, but she decided to keep quiet.
"I suggest you read it later, we need to get done here before nightfall, so we can make it to Nozomis. Hanayo, get some of your clothes and hygiene materials and put them in the car next to Rins."
Hanayo nodded, scuffling off to her own room.
"Rin, search the Kitchen with Nozomi."
Rin was only too happy to comply, as it got her out of the conversation.
As the two were gone, the redhead began to inspect every part of the room.
The closet had yielded nothing but clothes, some of which could be useful. Those she had folded neatly and put in a pile on the ground. The bedroom was rather barren as it was, and after checking underneath the bed, Maki let her attention wander to the only thing she hadn't looked inside. Approaching the nightstand, something quickly caught her eye. Unlike all other objects around, the surface of the stand didn't have any dust on it. As if it had recently been disturbed by something, or more precisely, someone. The thought flashed through her mind, that maybe it had been Hanayo's parents, but she dispelled that quickly. The flesh already had begun to rot, meaning that it had been a while since their suicide. And besides, the bottle cap had just as much dust on it as the rest of the room. "What does that mean then?" She muttered, reaching for the handle of the nightstand. To her disappointment, it was locked. That didn't pose much of a problem however, as she took out a hair pin, quickly picking the very rudimentary lock. "There" She placed the pin to the side and slowly opened the drawer, her breath hitching at the sight. "What the.." Reaching in, Maki pulled out a small, six shot revolver. It was old, almost an antique and weighed heavy in her hands. Holding it up, she discovered that only two cartridge spaces had no dust in them, as if two shots had been needed for a deed. The tip was drenched in blood, indicating a point blank shot. Pocketing the gun in her bag, Maki made her way over to the rest, her heart beating quickly. She had inspected the corpses, neither had shot wounds. The doors all showed no sign of being broken in either. Someone had let themselves in recently, with a key, after shooting two people presumably, to hide the gun inside the nightstand of Hanayo's parents. Said person must have ergo possessed both a house key and the drawer key. Dread filled her as she came to grasp on the only living person such a description would fit. Hanayo.

---

Maki lay on a mattress, next to Rin and Hanayo. Nozomi had taken the hard floor, as no mattresses were left, and they sure as shit wouldn't meddle with the corpses. The redhead couldn't sleep at all, her thoughts were still whirling with all possibilities about why Hanayo would have had a gun. A bloodstained gun. That she needed to hide. She was ripped out of her thoughts by hoarse whispers next to her. Though she really did want to sleep, and eavesdropping really wasn't her style, she needed to find out more. And who knows, maybe they really were talking about it? It would be the right circumstances after all.
Calming her breathing, she rolled over, as to be closer to the conversation. "You really did it?" Rins voice sounded almost distressed, yet it was laced with urgency and...gratitude! "I'm sorry, but I just...I had to!" "But it was dangerous" "Not if you ambush them and have a-" "Where is it? You didn't leave it did you?" "My dads nightstand. It should be safe there.."
Maki was now wide awake, heart pounding. She didn't know what "it" was, but she was almost 100% certain that Rin meant a murder and the gun.
"Kayochin...thank you."
Rin finally murmured after a pause.
"I wouldn't have been able to do it."
"Anything for you Rin chan. Even that"
After no more dialogue ensued, Maki finally fell into a very restless sleep.

---

Fire.
That's all she could see through the haze as she felt herself be dragged across the concrete.
The person was being gentle, but it still hurt as her feet scratched the pavement.
It was all a blur from then on, she was carried to a car, a girl was driving.
Passing through waking and unconscious state, the ride could have been one or eight hours long.
All she knew was that she was safe.
In a whirl of happenings, she now found herself on a bed.
The timeline made no sense, but maybe she was delusional. Who knows?
A gentle touch disturbs her, as she look up, she's facing the same girl as before.
Her redish hair had been tied into two braids, which framed her freckled face nicely.
Blue eyes shone delighted as her guest awoke, but there seemed to be a hard undertone.
They talked a lot after that.
At least thats what she thinks they did, maybe it was just a dream.
But she knew they grew close, they talked and had fun.
But then again.
Fire.
Everlasting fire, that brought destruction and devastation.
She had to flee, and watched as her savior was dragged off by her father.
His cruel eyes burned with hate, brighter than the flames around them.
So she was scared, scared more than she had ever been.
Running, she sped off, back into the darkness.
Back into the shadows of life, an unknown and unstable life awaiting her.
But she didn't care.
As long as she got away from that fire.

--

Nozomi woke up in a cold sweat with a jolt, her heart racing.
Just a nightmare. Just...just a nightmare.
She repeated to herself, shaking at the thought of that dream.
It didn't happen.
This wasn't reality.
She needed to believe that to keep her mental sanity.
She had fought hard for it and this time, she would keep it.
With those thoughts crowding her head, Nozomi laid her head back down and slowly drifted back to sleep.

--

"Nya? You lived alone?"
Rin wondered allowed, as she stepped into Nozomis former apartment.
"Yes. My parents were...absent. For most of my life."
Nozomi smiled. She had said that sentence so many times now, with that same complacent smile.
"That's sad..but I guess you are independent then."
"Big price to pay."
Nozomi retorted, walking down the hall.
"Look in the kitchen and bathrooms. My room should have my phone and a solar charged battery pack in it."
Hanayo smiled.
"Oh that's perfect!"
"We want to get back tonight so don't take to long alright?"
They nodded quickly, Rin setting off to the bedroom as she stopped dead.
A small radio sound could be heard from the living room fallowed by the voice of a young woman.
"Nozomi? The detector is picking up movement, is that you?"
A flash of recognition could be seen on the purple haired womans face as she pushed Maki to the side, to stand in the doorway of the living room, rooted to the spot.
On a small monitor, laying on the coffee table, a face was seen. The woman smiled widely at seeing Nozomi, her two braids of auburn hair shaking as she jumped up and down slightly.
Her blue eyes squinted into a closed eyed smile as she clasped her hands in delight. With heavily accented Japanese she greeted a long lost friend again.
"Hey Nozomi. Long time no see"

Chapter End Notes

Boy its been a bit. Hope you still enjoy the chapter tho. Anyone guess who the new girl is?
Sweat dripped down onto the floor as she kept swinging her bat. She quickly wiped it away, turquoise eyes straining from the hours of concentration. She couldn't give up though, not yet. She had to become stronger, no matter what. Throwing the bat away the young girl proceeded to repeatedly punch the straw dummy, which she had built last night and had almost completely demolished at this point. With one last kick, it broke in half, straw dirtying the floor around her. Finally sitting down, she smiled contently. Next time she would be able protect her sister, no matter what.

---

Nozomi inhaled sharply at the sight in front of her, quickly running towards the device, ignoring the confused looks that her friends sent her. "Emma!"
She beamed, only increasing the bystanders interest. "Who is that?"
Maki whispered to Hanayo, who only shrugged in return. Their attention was directed towards Nozomi again quickly, as their friend let out a slew of weird foreign words. Maki had no idea what language it was, she had never even heard anything similar. The girl on the screen opened her mouth to retort, but seemed to spot Rin in the background. "Ah Nozomi, we better converse in Japanese, your friends seem a bit confused." She pointed behind Nozomi, startling Rin a bit. "Ah right. Sorry about that guys."
Nozomi turned to them, holding up the device, letting her friend take in the small group. "Well, seems like you've been doing quite well on your own in this apocalypse. I must admit, I was kinda worried."
Her Japanese was broken and heavily accented, but understandable nonetheless. "Who is that nya?"
Rin asked the question they were all thinking. "Ah...this is Emma. She's an old friend from Switzerland, I met her on my travels. Her native languages are Italian and German, so don't fault her for her Japanese." "Cool cool but uh...that really doesn't explain how she's on a monitor here, in you're house." Maki looked at them, confusion mixed with suspicion. "I made this transmitter myself as a goodbye gift for Nozomi when she was forced to leave me."
"I-I wasn't forced! Just Visa problems!"
Nozomi piped up, almost too quickly. Emma seemed like she was about to continue with the explanation but stopped short, as a realization seemed to hit her. "Can I ask your name?"
She asked Maki cautiously. "Maki. Why?"
"Nishikino perhaps?"
The redhead halted for a moment, bewildered by what the girl just said. "How do you-"
"You look just like you're mom."
"How do you know her?!"
Maki almost screamed, she seemed seconds away from grabbing the monitor.
"They're here. I'm not in japan currently, I'm in Europe, though I can't say where exactly."
"They're...They're actually working on a cure then? Is this shit not happening where you are?"
Emma shook her head.
"It's only in japan. You're country it's...well it's an example."
Nozomi looked at the camera, suddenly way more interested in the conversation again.
"What do you mean?"
"As you are an island, a large terrorist organization has basically decided to gas you. Much of the outer parts of Japan are actually untouched, although people are fleeing of course. The main attack point was at a concert in Tokyo."
"A-Rise.."
Hanayo muttered.
"What is the goal of this organization? How did it even get into japan??"
Nozomi asked, causing a confused look to spread over Emmas face.
"Kommentier fals das verstahsch?"
[Don't you already know that?]
"Eh?"
Maki stared at her as Nozomi spoke back, Emma smiling again.
"Ah..didn't think of that. Anyway, they have connections in Tokyo, with a large crime organization that was founded only 19 years ago. They now control, with the help of the terrorists, a large part of inner Tokyo."
Rins eyes widened.
"Oh, that must be that Human Quarantine thingy."
"You were in it?!"
Emma almost screeched.
"Some of us. They had captured a friend."
Nozomi responded, rubbing the nape of her neck absentmindedly.
"Please don't go there again if you don't have to. They have incredible power currently."
"Of course, it looked like hell. What is the point of all this anyway?"
Emma looked down sadly.
"Blackmail. Basically world domination. They have set up bombs in every major city in Europe, Africa and the Americas, and basically are getting money to not set them off."
Hanayo nodded, taking down notes on her new phone.
"That means that they have the whole world in their grasp?"
"Sadly yes. Maybe not Iceland I guess or similar countries, but most of the world they do."
"But if my parents for instance, find a cure wouldn't that diminish their power by a giant factor? Certainly they have made progress by now."
The girl shook her head.
"They haven't, as they only have preexisting data to go off of. Even if they manage though...the terrorists would win."
Nozomi knew why at this point, it all fit in so perfectly.
"Because they also own the facilities that Makis parents are unknowingly working for?"
"Exactly. If a cure is found, they will detonate all the bombs and then a sub company of theirs will appear as savior of humanity, yet again giving them basically control of earth."
A moment of silence passed as those words hung heavily in the room.
"I probably don't need to tell you this, but you're probably the only non military people who know about this."
Makis head shot up at that.
"Hold on. I can get the blackmail part and even the working on a cure but...how pray tell do you know my parents and that the company they are researching for belongs to the terrorists? You said
before they would then look like saviors if they brought a cure, but that only works well if the public doesn't know they are also the bombers. So how do you know?"
Emma faltered for a moment, glancing down at Nozomi as she did so.
"That...I-I can not disclose that."
"That just puts you and what you said under incredible doubt."
Nozomi sighed, continuing to rub her neck, as if scratching something.
"I can vouch for her saying the truth. I trust her."
That doesn't-
Emma quickly diverted the subject, before Maki could even finish her sentences, much to her annoyance.
"By the way Nozomi, have you been taking your medicine?"
Nozomi shook her head, then motioned towards her friends, continuing in what Maki now assumed was german, although it sounded to rough to her ears. Maybe a dialect?
"De schiessdreck mus mer ned aluege, die sogenanti übersetzige sind richtig."
[I can't, in all the commotion I didn't have any in school, and the pack i got now here only lasts a month tops.]
Emma shook her head, looking worried.
"No good. Repression won't work like this."
She muttered, in Japanese again.
"Red selber eig ned, ha eh kollegin gfrögt das zübersetze."
[I know. I've been remembering for a while now, glimpses only though.]
Maki tapped her foot on the ground impatiently.
"Will you use a language we understand?"
Rin nodded to that.
"Cmon, it can't be that secret."
Nozomi smiled and quickly continued in their native tongue.
"Yes if course sorry. I was just testing if I could still speak the language, that's all."
Maki didn't buy that one bit, and by the looks of it, neither did Hanayo.
But before they had a chance to say anything, Emma seemed to see something behind them, raising her hand to point.
Just before she could utter a warning however, the monitor was shot out of Nozomis hand.
Thudding to the floor, the screen went black, all Maki could see before it shut off, was a sleeve, with the same logo stitched into it, as had sent Nozomi into a screaming panic.
She couldn't even be let to process that however, as the shooter spoke up.
He stood in the doorway, broad shouldered and muscular, at least a head taller than any of them.
Three more people, of the same physique stood behind him, all armed.
"Heh, seems like the boss was right. She really would come here."

---

Blood.
That's all she could see, as she sank her teeth into a screaming girls arm.
The girl squirmed and gasped for air, as her throat was restricted by her attackers grip.
She ripped a piece of her victims arm out, blood splattering across the walls, showering the corpses of a raven haired girl with a small bun and feather, and a small girls, whoms books had kept no refuge of the reality of dying.
She stared back down at the squirming redhead, who was clutching her arm in agony.
She didn't care about all that. All she cared about was, to eat.

Just before she dove down again however, a loud clang broke her from her dreams.
The woman sat up straight, looking around in confusion.
Her head hurt, which wasn't a surprise, as she had fallen unconscious and hit the ground.
God knows why, but it seemed to be happening more and more, and it scared her.
Not the fainting but the dreams.
They kept happening, terrorizing her sleep.
She couldn't sleep through the night since that one bite.
She had nightmares of killing, no worse, of eating her friends.
And it terrified her that those dreams could become reality.

Chapter End Notes

No, that aint an actual language and I can't speak german. I just entered some english phrases into a translator and then took some letters off and added a few xD
Aint I creative.
Anyhow tho, things are heating up again and shits about to really go down.
"Eli? What are you doing up so early, it's not your guard shift yet."
You looked at the blonde puzzled, locking the safety of her gun back on.
"I'm helping Nico cook some breakfast, it's been a bit since we've had something nice, and thanks to those pigeons that Umi shot, we can make some fresh meat and maybe even use some canned food."
Eli grinned happily, looking forward to the prospect of fresh food.
"How good of a cook are you?"
"Mediocre, why?"
Yous eyes lit up at that, her ever bright smile growing wider.
"I'll take over cooking if you take my watch! I'm a terrific cook."
The blonde let out a laugh and took Yous gun, positioning herself on the edge of the roof.
"Sure, but make sure to bring me a plate up here."
"Gotcha. I'll be back in half an hour, tops!"
As she ran off to the kitchen, Eli caught sight of Riko, who had music sheets spread out in front of her and seemed to be in deep thought.
Maki and her had become fast friends as their love of music connected them, and Eli had even heard them play instruments and sing together in the music room.
They had even started putting on small performances, as to keep the moral of the group up.
"Shocking how caring Maki really is.."
Eli muttered.
While she always insisted that the songs and performances weren't meant for fun and for other people, it was an easy lie to see through.
Noticing that she had been staring, she quickly looked away before Riko could take notice.
The sun slowly began creeping up from the horizon, meaning that the schoolhouse would soon be bustling with activity again.
Umi had set up a plan for everyone to follow, as to keep the institution running.
This included watches, clean up, hunting, washing, gardening and even training.
It felt almost...well normal was the wrong word, but it felt peaceful.
Most of the group were now more or less proficient with a small handgun and the bow, plus some even took up knives, as to use them in closed spaces.
Shockingly, Nico had turned out to be excellent in that, landing each stab or through directly in the targeted area.
Letting her mind wander, Eli found herself staring off into the distance, her gaze overlooking Tokyos ruins.
While everything was fine here, she fret for the wellbeing of the small group that had gone out to search for supplies.
The last time they had heard from them was three days ago, when they had called from the Nishikino residence.
Eli had rigged up a generator and solar panels for basic electricity, which now supported the headmasters phone and security cameras.
But after picking up medical supplies and food, the main group hadn't received any news from them anymore.
Eli shook her head, trying to dispel her worries.
They were fine, for sure.
They could fend for themselves amongst the dead, even Hanayo was alright.
Turns out, once you get over the initial shock of them, they're really easy to kill. The rotting bones get soft, so that even a crowbar can smash their heads in. No, they were fine. What other possible dangers were there?

---

"Let go of me you ass!"
Nozomi screamed for the utmost time, attempting to get her captors face between her nails. They had been tied inside a truck for what seemed to be three days straight and honestly, she had had enough. Throughout most of the night, one of the men had had to hold onto her, causing his arms and face to be scratched open.
"No can do milady."
One man sneered, looking up into the truck from his game of cards. "We've got orders to keep you here until the infestation in the quarantine is snuffed out and then to bring you to the boss. I've told ya that a thousand times."
His voice was gruff, and grated against Nozomis ears.
"And I've told you a thousand times to let us go, yet you don't listen either."
She growled, managing to slash across her captors face, causing a large gash over his eye.
Infuriated, he let her go, smacking her across the face.
"Well we don't need to listen, now do we? We're in charge!"
His heel met her stomach, causing her to double over in pain, tears threatening to spill.
Behind her, Hanayo and Rin whimpered, both grasping onto eachother and Maki for support.
"I've had enough now, I'm gonna beat some respect into this bitch!"
The man swung his fist, only to be met with a smack to the face with a large wood board.
"Grant you dumbass!"
The male, who had previously been outside playing cards now stood opposite of the guy, who turned out to be named Grant.
"We got strict orders not to hurt em. What about that is hard to understand?!!"
"The bitch was resisting, what else was I s'poseta do Jean?"
Behind him, Nozomi clambered up, cold fury overtaking her being. Without thinking, she flung herself onto Jean, using her tied hands as a means of cutting off his windpipe from behind.
The man let out a garbled scream, crashing backwards onto the ground, only narrowly avoiding crushing his attacker.
Grant flung himself at Nozomi, who only managed to sidestep thanks to Maki sticking out her foot and tripping him.
With a crash, the larger man landed on his boss, trapping him underneath and knocking the wind out of him.
Maki stared in horror as Nozomi the proceeded to clamber on top of Grant, strangling him with the rope and using her feet to crush Jeans windpipe.
The smaller one let out a shuttered gasp, before his eyes rolled to the back of his head, his skull cracking as it fell hard against a metal bar of the truck.
Seconds later, Grant fallowed to his death, having completely run out of oxygen.
Nozomi got up, spitting onto the corpses in distain, much to her friends absolute shock.
"Wh-what the fuck.."
Maki muttered, inching away from Nozomi slowly.
The commotion in the truck had not gone unnoticed however, as seconds later, two more men entered the truck, anger filling their demeanor.
"That does it! We're going to the quarantine. Now!"
"Holly crap You!"
Eli beamed as she took a bite out of her freshly made food.
"This is delicious!"
You grinned happily, saluting to her in her signature pose.
"Happy to see ya satisfied. I've gotten that reaction from everyone here!"
"I think we should drop your guard duties and just have you cook."
Eli joked, finishing quickly.
"Y'know what, I'm gonna go pitch that to Umi right away!"
You ran off, almost slipping on the roofs tiles.
She sped down the stairs, almost running into the wall.
"Woha there, don't hurt yourself."
Chika spoke up, hiding a small giggle behind her hand.
"What's the hurry?"
"I'm gonna petition to be put on cooking instead of watch."
Chika gave her the thumbs up at that.
"Nice! This mornings breakfast was the best we've had in a while!"
Encouraged, You ran on again, halting in a screeching stop as she caught sight of something in front of the front door.
Taking out her keys, everybody assigned for guard duty had a pair, she slowly unlocked the front, breath hitching as she took in the sight in front of her.
"H-Hanayo?"

---

"This one is fucking crazy I tell you."
Nozomi glared at a man, who was conversing with another one in front of what seemed to be a makeshift cell.
Behind her, she cast a worried look at Rin, who was clinging close to Maki, tears still streaming down her face.
After the kills, Hanayo had been wrenched from them, under much screaming and protest from Rin.
Her whereabouts were unknown to them, and they could only hope that she was alive.
Of course in their current situation, they had more bearing worries, namely their own survival as well.
Nozomi felt her chin be lifted up, and she was faced with a dirtied man, whose hallow eyes betrayed little emotion.
"How crazy can she be, she seems docile."
"Don't underestimate her. She killed Jean and Grant."
The mans eyes hardened as his grip on Nozomis chin increased, long fingernails bearing into her skin painfully.
"Shame. I liked those guys."
Nozomi struggled against her gag, wanting to bite his nasty fingers off.
"Well, she can't do much like this anyway."
The man got up, taking Nozomi by her shirt collar, his fingers tracing the nape of her neck slowly.
"I'll take her from here. Keep those two locked up."
He turned to leave, flinging Nozomi in front of him, who screamed into the gag, gazing desperately at Rin and Maki, who shrank back as two more men grabbed them.
"Do with them what you want. The boss won't mind."
The superior laughed nastily, as he ushered Nozomi off into a different direction, making sure to take any chance of a hit or kick.
Ruby applied the last disinfectant, along with the bandage. Hanayo lay unconscious on the makeshift hospital bed, her arms and legs bandaged up. Ruby had been tasked to take care of her, since she had been receiving training from Maki before they had disappeared.

You had rushed an unconscious Hanayo to her quickly, after finding her unconscious at the Otonoki doorsteps. How she got there without anyone noticing, nobody knew. She had had large gashes and cuts all across her body, prompting her to be brought to the infirmary immediately.

Turning back, Ruby washed excess blood off her hands, noticing suddenly, a small paper clamped in the older girl's hand. Slowly getting it out, she almost dropped the small pamphlet in shock, eliciting a sharp scream. "Ruby?!

Dia barged in, worry portrayed on her face. She was followed closely by You and Umi, who had been in the vicinity. With trembling hands, Ruby slowly turned the picture towards them, the group's breath hitching. "I-Is that..?"

"Nozomi.. Rin.. Maki..!"

Umi's throat felt dry as she gazed at the picture. It depicted Nozomi, Maki and Rin bloodied and beaten, tied up in what seemed to be the back of a truck. "There's a l-letter here.."

Ruby whispered softly, reading it out loud for the rest while doing her best to keep her voice steady. "D-Dear Otonoki. As you can see we have three of your members in our grasp. We'd gladly return two of them to you in exchange for some supplies...we're keeping the purple haired bitch however, she killed two of our own. That is nonnegotiable. If you want to save two of them, bring as much medicine as you can to Gate D of the human quarantine within 48 hours."

A long silence followed her words, finally broken as You whispered tensely. "What.. What do we do?"

---

Nozomi coughed as the smelly gag was removed, trying to get the foul stench out of her mouth. With that, her ropes were unbound as well and she turned to fight again. She was given little time for that however, as two heavily armed men opened a double door in front of her, a kick sending her sprawling onto the floor. Slowly getting up, she felt every fiber of her muscles aching, her stomach hurting from the kicks she had received prior to that.

Looking around, she found herself in a clean looking, office like room. As her gaze fell onto the large window, she found two figures looking down at her. A flicker of recognition resonated through her mind, followed by confusion and almost immediate fear. "No..!"

She burst out, trying to crawl backwards, away from them. This elicited a charming but cold laughter from the woman, who slowly walked up to the younger girl, kneeling down, as to be on eye level. "Stay away!"

Nozomi's voice was laced with terror, as she searched for a way out. A small, calming yet hollow smile spread across the woman's lips.
"How hurtful"
She grinned wickedly, lifting the now trembling girl's face up, as to meet her gaze.
"Is this really how you want to start off a family reunion?"

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this took so long, I worked on Heart of Ice and wicked love (If ya havent read those, check em out. Yes this is shameless self promotion).
I also had three weeks of only exams so yeah.

But guess who fucking passed her most important exams?
ME
Haha try taking weeks of exams with severe exam anxiety, it's fucking hell
"Come on Nozomi, is that how you want to start off?"
The man held out his hand to help her up, which Nozomi quickly slapped away.
"D-Don't come closer..!"
Panic filled her voice, which only made the woman's smile drop, forming into a frown.
"Yknow, I don't remember you being such a wimp...did you forget all your training?"
She stood up, pulling up an unwilling Nozomi along with her.
"I sense bewilderment coming from you..."
The man circled her slowly, taking the younger girl fully.
"Have you been taking memory repression drugs perhaps?"
Nozomi shook her head silently, unwilling to speak.
"You know those haven't been tested yet..."
He drawled out, continuing his prowl.
"The side affect could be traumatizing."
"After what I went through with you, any side affect is worth forgetting it."
Nozomi finally spoke through clenched teeth.
The woman laughed, green eyes reflecting light from the outside brilliantly.
"I see that some memories are slowly returning then."
Her hand traced the large desk, flicking away a speck of what seemed to be blood.
"Which would mean you haven't taken them in a while...the effects must be weaning."
Her voice grew cold as she took out a small knife, inching towards a trembling Nozomi.
"But you know, I've always been impatient."
A small slice was delivered to her captives cheek, causing barely a flinch.
"It seems body is beginning to remember as well...perfect! We can get right to work then!"
She gave a thumbs up to her husband, who took out a steel bar, raising it over his head.
"Don't worry Nozomi, we'll get you back to your normal self. Then we can be one happy family again."
He smiled a hollow smile, before bringing the bar down onto his daughters head, causing her to black out instantly, her body hitting the ground with a dull thud.

---

Nico surveyed the small group in front of her, twirling with one of her pigtails as distraction. As second in command, well unofficially that is, she had begun to organize a rescue group. It had been decided that the bulk of the group would remain in the school, in case of an attack. It was advantageous to dispatch a small group as well, as they would be harder to spot. Among said small group were Umi and Kotori, who had almost instantly volunteered to help and Eli of course. Of the newcomers, well newer than the primary colors trio, were You to drive, Mari in case You got hurt or at worst killed and for some reason.. Ruby.
You know, the little redhead who was scared of her shadow.
Yeah, she had volunteered to come for some reason and Nico just desperately hoped that she wouldn't mess up for all of them.
Well no, that would be judging her prematurely actually, but it still didn't fit right with her. No matter though, Nico thought as she began loading materials into the car. They had to focus on the task at hand.
It was up to her as leader to bring everyone home.
And preferably not in a body bag.

---

The first thing she felt was how cold it was.
It was frigid, like someone had forgotten to turn the heating on.
Her first thought was how dumb she had been for leaving her jacket at home, which seemed like an odd thought to have, though she couldn't place why.
As her senses came back, she soon realized she had way worse problems than cold however.
Rope had been slung tightly around both arms, legs and even her torso.
The only body part to freely move was her head and honestly?
That wasn't a good sign.
"Ah, you're finally awake darling."
A soft voice almost purred from outside her view.
Looking up, she found her mother, holding a small, golden knife.
"We're gonna wake you soon if you hadn't."
Nozomi swallowed empty at that, only fretting to imagine what that meant.
She was trembling now, not of cold but of fear.
Alright also of cold to be honest, but mainly she was just terrified.
"You know, I'm disappointed that you have become so soft."
Her father spoke up from behind her mother, picking up a small wooden bat.
"We had trained you for so long and what do you give us in return?"
Nozomi watched horrified as the bat swung down onto her hand, causing waves of pain to curse through her as she bit her lip to distract from the pain.
"You leave us and become a goddamn softie!"
The bat swung down again and again, as his rage finally took hold of him, his entire demeanor changing from calm to raging in an instant.
"You insolent brat!"
Nozomi felt something crack in her knuckles, finally letting out a scream of agony.
It hurt badly and she could see blood dripping down her right hand.
"Now now darling, don't break anything."
Her mother stepped forwards, grasping her husbands arms tightly.
As he calmed down, her attention was fixed on Nozomi again however, which was very undesirable.
"I agree with him, you know...we should have tracked you down way sooner."
She walked forward, stopping right in front of the trembling girl.
"But don't worry one bit, by tomorrow, you'll remember who you truly are!"

---

"Rin, please stop pacing, you're making me nervous."
Maki spoke up after what had been thirty minutes of non stop pacing.
"If nervous is your only problem right now, you're lucky."
Rin muttered, speeding up her pace.
"That's not what I-
"I know I know...I know you're just as worried about Kayochin and Nozomi as I am."
She finally sat down, although her fingers were still twitching.
"I just hope the two of them are alright.."
Maki muttered, sitting down onto her cot.
They had been locked into what seemed to once have been an office.
There was a sink, fridge and office chair.
Newly added had also been two beds for inmates, namely them.
No window was to be seen, the only light came from the small desk lamp. They sat around silently again, like it had been before, the only difference being the absence of Rins feet shuffling.

That silence was torn through brutally however as a large, pain filled scream echoed through the room, minutes later followed by more, ever more screaming.

"No..

She breathed out, almost scared of recognizing the owner of said screams.

"There's no way...!"

She got up, pounding on the door furiously in a vain attempt to make them stop the screaming.

"Stop it! Leave her alone you bastards!"

She screamed, relentlessly kicking the door now.

Her please fell to deaf ears however, or maybe were genuinely not heard as Nozomis screams, it was definitelly Nozomi, filled the room.

Sinking down to the ground, she joined Rin as she covered her ears, doing her best to not hear her friends wretched wails.

Chapter End Notes

Heres some major toujou family problems for ya

also can I just say: PRIDE IS FUCKING GREAT

There done, thanks for listening
"Alright, everyone know the plan?"
Nico spoke up after what had been ten tense minutes of a car drive.
Umi nodded solemnly, gripping her bow tightly.
"We discussed it at length before departing, so I'd assume we all remember it."
Nico sighed as she slouched into her front seat.
You was driving and it had been decided that she would stay behind in the car for safety purposes.
Well car, it was a large pick up truck that they had found with keys in the ignition.
Someone had almost made an escape from the terrors, but very clearly didn't.
Thankfully, the Pick-up seated up to seven people, so they weren't squeezed alto tightly.
"I just wanted to break the silence, it's depressing."
You looked back at Mari, who flashed her a small grin.
"Well then, time for a game!"
Next to her, Kotori let out a slow groan.
"Let's do a quiz."
Mari continued, seemingly unbothered by the clear rejection from her neighbor.
"What goes on four feet in the morning, two at noon and three in the evening?"
"Isn't that the old riddle that the Sphinx asked Oedipus?"
Umi inquired, interest mildly raised.
"Because if so, the answer is a human."
You laughed at that.
"Yeah that's what you would think. But nope, Maris quizzes are always incredibly dumb. The answer is probably something like a dinosaur that morphs into three different forms each day or something."
The blonde lit up at that.
"That's exactly it! Nice going!"
"How in the world would we guess that?"
Umi dead-panned.
"Hey, it's meant to be dumb and funny so you would've gotten something in that order."
"I was thinking of human torture experiments...yknow like the ones we had in history class."
Kotori muttered, causing Mari to try to scoot as far away from her as possible, which resulted in Ruby being practically smooshed against the car door.
"Yeah uh, no such answers thanks."
"You said be creative."
"I meant in a fun way obviously!"
"Well fine, it's a boggart."
"Oh, you like Harry Potter?"
Ruby squealed from the last row.
"Duh, who doesn't?"
"Twilight fans? Hanamaru once mentioned how they hated Harry Potter for being better."
"I think they hate it because they insist twilight is better but the rest of the world tells them off."
Kotori grinned, clearly enjoying bashing another big book franchise.
"I think twilight has some merits to it, from a satanic point of view. But Harry Potter is far better of course."
Yoshiko piped up from the back of the car.
Wait.
Yoshiko piped up?
Nico slowly turned around, facing the self proclaimed fallen angel who sported a mischievous grin. "Sorry, did I forget to mention that I'm also coming along?"

---

Maki groaned as she lifted her head, the screams having finally abated. The two of them had curled up against each other in the end, desperate to shut out the screaming. She didn't know how long it had lasted, but it must have been a few hours at the very least. Feeling tear stains on her cheek, the redhead walked over to the small sink, splashing her face with water. Thank god the plumbing worked.
"Maki...why did it stop?"
Rin spoke up, stretching her sore body. "I don't know. But it's good that it did."
Maki replied, turning off the tap with a small squeak. "I'm not so sure.."
The ginger muttered, bending down to touch her tows. "What if they stopped because.. you know.." She trailed off, sitting onto the small cot. Maki knew what she meant, but he wouldn't give in to that thought so quickly. "There's no way Rin. They wouldn't go through all the trouble to get us, just to kill her."
Rin let out a small snort, quickly wiping her nose. "Nozomi is strong, no way she would die so fast.."
The redhead knew her words were hallow but...well what other choice did she have than cheer up her friend? "I-I hope you're right.. I really do."

---

"Y-Y-Yoshiko?!"
Ruby stammered, gazing into the back of the Pick up in astonishment. "What are you doing there?"
Nico barked, undoing her seatbelt to look behind her. (Don't do that ever, bad idea) "Well I was sleeping here and then suddenly the car starts. I wanted to stay quiet first but I thought I should know what we're going out for."
You let out a curt sigh. "Weren't you on guard duty?"
"Ek!"
Yoshiko ducked down at that, in the worst and most cowardly way possible to avoid confrontation. You know, the type of ducking behind a wall that you would do when someone is filming you as you call the police on a little girl selling water. "I-I may have felt sleepy while on it."
"Yoshiko..."
Mari shook her head, reaching through the broken back window to grab Yoshikos collar. "I guess she's on the team now. Come in."
In one swift pull, and a garbled scream, the 'fallen angel' landed right on Kotoris lap, who looked very displeased. "How did you pull her in like this?! I'm not even in the right direction!"
She barked, grunting in pain as Yoshiko did her best to get up. "What talent does this wanabe demon even have?"
"Hey I'm a real fallen angel!"
"Shut up Yoshiko." Mari spoke up, in a half teasing manner.
"She's good with smoke bombs and general distractions. And she has really bad luck which can sometimes work in her favor. Sorta."
The last part was almost silent and felt like it may have diminished the quality of the first. Just slightly though.
"Distractions? Like how?"
"You know, the fallen angel. Seriously, it takes like 0.5 seconds for her to somehow put on an outfit and make up."
You spoke up, swerving as she almost hit a dead child.
"Seems slightly like someone just is too lazy to write how Yoshiko has a backpack."
Mari winked into a random direction, causing Nico to look very confused.
"What are you doing?"
"I hope that's where the camera is. I'm doing a fourth wall break."
And with that, Nico officially gave up trying to have a coherent conversation with that woman.

---

Maki looked up as the door clicked, unsure on a plan of attack.
As they had no clock and no daylight, she had no idea on how long it had been since the screaming stopped.
Her thoughts were interrupted as a well built man, given a bit of a make over he would have been handsome, stepped in.
He held two orange-ish suits which he threw onto the ground in front of them.
"Here. These are your new Prison garbs. Shove your current things through the food flap once you've changed."
With that, the door clamped shut behind him again.
"Y-You change first, I'll look away."
Rin pipped up as she took one of the jumpsuits.
"We can change together, I don't mind. We're both girls after all."
Rin lit up at that, but her smile fell as quickly as it came on, almost as if her happy thoughts had been struck down with a hammer.
"Y-Yeah. I'll change too then!"
She stumbled over her words, quickly turning around to change.
Maki shrugged as she quickly undressed down to her underwear, and pulled on the scruffy overall.
Her skin disliked the fabric the moment it touched it.
Having been born rich, she had never had to deal with any bad cloth, heck even her school uniform had been made special for her on her dads request.
"This itches."
She muttered, glancing over to Rin who now had the bottom part on and now pulled off her blazer and shirt.
Maki was about to look away when something peculiar caught her eye.
Something that was very, very worrisome if it was what she thought it was.
"Rin.."
She watched as Rin jumped, startled at being addressed so suddenly. She must have been in deep thought.
"Rin are those..belt lashes?"
Maki kept her voice low, hoping she wasn't treading onto real thin ice.
"Wh-What?!"
The ginger squeaked, turning to her. Maki noticed she wasn't wearing a bra.
She wasn't staring, but she just happened to notice.
"N-No it's just..birth marks! Y-yeah!"
The redhead wasn't convinced at that, but she didn't want to pry any further. At this point it was clear that Rin was hiding something, but she wouldn't figure it out if she was forceful.
Rin apparently realized at that, that she was not, in fact, wearing a bra and quickly covered what breasts she had with her hands.
As her fingers collided with the outer parts of the breast area however, she let out a small grunt of pain.
"If..if you say so."
Maki looked away, more confused than ever at this point.
After a few moments of silence she looked back, to find Rin in the jumpsuit.
"Hey Rin?"
She approached cautiously, hoping to at least get some last information.
"If you ever need to talk about anything...I'll listen"
A broad smile spread across the cat like girls face as she nodded.
"If I find the courage I will."

---

"How much longer?"
Umi inquired. Her body was becoming stiff at this point. The drive had seemed a lot shorter last time.
"Almost there. We have to drive all the way around to get to the HQ and prison so it probably seems a bit longer than before."
"How do you know that?"
"Tsubasa gave me a rough draft of what the place looks like."
You halted in front of a large block of buildings at that.
"Here we are. This is as close as it gets without being spotted. You'll need to get through this building block to get in but it won't be heavily armed."
Mari nodded, jumping out.
"Let's get this over with then."
Nico muttered, getting out alongside Yoshiko, Umi and Kotori.
Just seconds later Ruby fallowed, who had taken the time to shake a sleeping Eli awake first.
"Wait why is Yoshiko here?"
The blonde muttered, still half asleep.
"Long story. I'll explain if we get outa this alive."
Nico gave the thumbs up to You, who the drove off. They had deemed it safest for her to drive a kilometer away and to check every hour or so rather than risk getting seen.
"Well then, let's get going."

Chapter End Notes

Sorry this may seem a bit duller than usual.
I've added new hints about Rins backstory and small hint, there's two stories technically.
Only read if ya want, requires caring for me as human:
I hope I can update soon again but I'm feeling kinda demotivated here. My mom found
the stories and even though I'm of age and will within like two years have my own
place (at least for a bit) She had to sit me down and talk all about it. so much for
hiding depression and aggressive behavior in stories and so much for a private space
where I can write what I want.

I'll still update but yeah, may be a bit. Sorry, I'll try to get on it again soon

(to reiterate its not a hiatus)
Mari jumped in through an open window, cursing under her breath as she felt a small cut on her hand.

Landing lightly, she waved her hand, motioning for the rest to follow as she advanced slowly, crouching down for minimal attention.

The perimeter of the quarantine was guarded for sure, so extra caution was in place. Behind her, the blonde heard the rest land on the ground as well, following in her footsteps.

"Eli, Nico. Take a lead that way."

Mari pointed in one direction, going in the other.

"Yoshiko, come with me. Kotori and Umi too, Ruby, go with those two."

She whispered briskly as she slowly inched forwards through the abandoned apartment.

Glass shards littered the floor, so she had to go to great lengths to evade any such noise arousing objects.

"Halt!"

After getting through halfway, she stuck up her hand as voices wafted over to her.

"People.."

Yoshiko grimaced as she gripped what seemed to be a bomb.

"I'll get them"

She dashed forward, before anyone could say anything, Mari attempted grasp only managed to graze the hem of her skirt.

"You little-!"

Cursing under her breath she got up, only to feel a gentle grip on her shoulder.

"Let her go, she's been preparing for this."

Kotori smiled gently as she stood up, covering her nose.

"Don't breathe for the next minute, I think I know what she's planning."

Honestly, Mari was confused.

But as Kotori motioned again and finally pinched the blonde's nose closed herself, she relented and held her breath.

As the ash haired was clamping her air off, Mari's first reaction had not really been relax though so now she barely had any air to spare.

Thankfully, not even a few seconds later, multiple loud thuds were heard in the next room, followed by a victorious cheering.

"Yes! Sleep you bastards!"

Rounding the corner, Mari found a group of five men on the ground, snoring their asses off.

Next to them lay the small bomb, which was smoking slightly.

"Holly shit.."

Mari muttered as she stepped over the bodies, towards her junior.

"How did you do this?"

Yoshiko grinned at her, clearly very proud of her achievement.

"I've been making my old smoke bombs into sleep gas bombs with the stuff in the chemistry room. Zuramaru and Ruby been helping me!"

Mari grinned at that, smacking Yoshiko on the back.

"Nice job! We need more inventions like th-

A sickening crunch behind her caught the blonde mid sentence.

"Wh-What was that?"

She almost squeaked, turning around as a small stream of blood pooled at her feet.
"K-Kotori!"
Mari screamed, as she found the ash haired kneeling over one of the men, her fingers in his eye sockets.
"What? I killed him."
She looked at their appalled faces with a confused look as she wiped her fingers on the dead mans pants.
"If they wake up they'll raise alarm. And trapping them anywhere leads to chance of escape."
Umi shook her head behind them, striding behind one of the men.
"As much as I hate to admit it...she has a point."
Lifting up his face she swiftly turned it, causing an uncomfortable snap.
"I-I can't kill people."
Mari muttered aghast.
"Especially not like this."
Yoshiko looked irritated by now as she stepped in between the remaining bodies and the two.
"I made this bomb so I don't need to kill!"
An unusual..well no, what used to be an unusual smile and now had become to be a chilling normality, spread across Kotoris face.
"You don't have to. Makes it more for me anyway."
She lifted her fingers up and licked the last drops of blood off, that hadn't been wiped away.
"Now step aside." Yoshiko looked like she was about to object, but refrained as she caught a subtle shake of Umis head.
Thank god she wasn't as dense as previously thought.
"Thank you"
Kotori smiled sweetly as she pushed past her junior, gathering the three bodies together, heads touching in a tandem.
"There, easier to kill."
She grabbed a knife, plunging it into one mans eye, before using her fingers to scoop the other out.
"Hm. red. Much like Nicos but..nah hers are nicer." She threw it away, causing Yoshiko to scramble behind Mari, who was already looking away in disgust.
Two more stabs later and they heard a sickening squelch followed by a small pleased squeal.
"It's still beating!"
Kotori grinned in delight as she ran up to them, holding a bleeding heart in her outstretched hand.
"I think I'm gonna throw up.."
Mari muttered silently as she looked away, feeling very queazy.
"S-Same..!"
Yoshiko fallowed up on her word at that, spewing what was in her out onto one of the dead corpses.
"Such wimps. Umis fine with it."
"I allow it, I don't enjoy it."
"Same thing."
Kotori giggled.
The blue haired woman looked away sadly, wondering if she should attempt to stop this decent or if it was best left alone as they did need such a fighter.
---
"Hey Maki?"
Rin muttered, sitting up from her cot.
"Hm?"
"Why did they give me a boy uniform?"
She turned the tag around, pointing at the "male" part.
"Yours is female."
"How do you know?"
Rin stuck her hand out, snatching the tag off the uniform.
"Because it was out and almost falling off."
"Oh"
Maki didn't really know what to say to that.
"Do you...do you think that they think I'm a boy?"
Maki could make out a certain strain in Rins voice as she asked that.
"I mean you kinda have a male build but...to me you're clearly female."
Rin seemed to perk up at that, despite the circumstances.
"I-I should inform them then that I need a different one!"
Maki kicked her feet up, laying on the bed, feet rested against the wall.
At home she always had to wear a dress, so this was a position she could never lay in.
"Not that it matters you know."

---

"Get off me!"
Dia snapped awake as she felt a sharp slap to her face, falling backwards as she did so.
In front of her she spotted, quite a lot to her own surprise, a very scared and disheveled looking Hanamaru.
"How-Wait what?"
She fumbled with her words, unsure how the hell she had gotten there.
"Wasn't I just sleeping?"
"I honestly don't know what you were doing before, but you walked up to me and almost bit me!"
Hanamaru almost screamed, scrambling to pick up her books.
"Twilight? I thought you hated that."
Dia let out, trying to process what her friend had just said.
"Kanan said we needed firewood zura."

---

Riko sighed as she put down a sheet of music, her fingers aching from attempting to come up with something.
For the last few weeks, Umi, Maki and her had sat together to create uplifting songs, in order to keep up moral.
She herself didn't want to sing old songs that Aquours had created, as that would just cause everyone to wish the old ways back.
Well more so than already.
But with Eli, the other two had been able to get some fun songs and choreographies together.
They had actually planned to perform, with Riko providing the music but...well that wasn't going to work now, was it.
And they had even amassed a collection of works to sing with the others too.
It was supposed to be happy.
Today was supposed to be happy.
For what must be the millionth time, she felt tears streaming down her cheeks, wetting the sheet paper below her.
These were supposed to be happy songs.
Make people laugh, give them hope!
And yet...
She shook her head, gathering the papers together.
She would keep writing later, for now, she felt like a completely different song.
One she had been working on for the Guilty Kiss subunit, although they may not be completely alright with some of it's lyrics.
She laughed lightly as she picked up the folder and took out an electric guitar.
With ample time, she had learned to play many instruments and for today, she needed something more violently played with more intense lyrics.
She needed to think of some very special people too and this expressed her feelings best.
Yeah alright, that was probably worrisome but whatever.
Making sure the door to the music room was closed she opened the folder and took out a few papers, lining them on a music stand.
She had used some very special ink for the name and so, as said "ink" was highly hard to obtain, the letters were faint.
However, they were clearly enough and spelled out, if a bit scrawled out,
"Strawberry Trapper"

---

"Literally nobody was on our side."
Nico sighed in relief as they rounded the corner, finding the rest of the group.
"Why is there puke on the ground?"
She mused, stepping over it slowly.
"Yoshiko threw up when I killed some people."
Kotori replied nonchalantly.
Nodding curtly, the raven haired opened up the window, and stepped out onto an emergency ladder.
"I think we're in the perimeter now. Hide as many weapons on your person and try to blend in. Here we are regular citizens."
Ruby nodded, clambering out as well.
"Doesn't it seem weird that only like, five people were guarding the closest part to the centre?"
Eli quipped up.
"Indeed. But we can't exactly turn back either now can we? Rin, Maki and Nozomi need us."

---

"I feel really out of place."
Kotori adjusted her uniform, getting very, very sick after the fifth attempt of someone grabbing her ass.
(for the record, five men now have broken fingers)
"And god these guys are assholes here."
Umi slid behind her friend quickly, shooting passer-bys a death glare.
"Guys halt."
Mari held up her hand, causing the rest to stop.
"I feel like we're here."
She pointed at a building, which was adorned with a giant golden "HQ"
"...wonder where you get that feeling"
Yoshiko muttered half bemused, half frightened.
"How exactly do we get in?"
Eli wondered allowed, gazing at a very well guarded entrance.
"There's probably a back entrance."
Kotori muttered, dashing off through the crowd.
"H-Hey! Wait up!"
Umi barked, running after her.
"She's quite a hassle it seems."
Mari sighed, grabbing onto Yoshiko and running after them.
"See? Told ya there's a back entrance. And only three guards!"
The ash haired cheered, pointing from behind a wall.
"Great. How do we get aro-where's Ruby?"
Yoshiko began, stopping and looking around.
"Oh my god. We left Ruby!"
Umi quickly clamped her hand around Maris mouth.
"Shush. They'll hear us."
Eli sighed, grabbing hold of the two Aquours members.
"We can get her later. She's timid, not dumb. Alright? We don't have time to get her."
After a few minutes, in which Umi held both their mouths closed, they finally relented.
"Good. Now..."
Nico grabbed ahold of Elis blazer, who let out a surprised yelp as the blazer was ripped down, revealing a large amount of cleavage.
"Nico! What the hell?!"
She hissed quietly.
"I think I get it."
Mari grabbed her own shirt, doing the same. In addition, she quickly pulled up the length of her skirt.
"Eli, you and I are now horny sisters, looking for a fun time with security guards!"
She grinned, pointing at Umi.
"Prepare to fire as soon as we distract them."
"I thought you have something against killing?"
The archer retorted.
"I do, but this is urgent."
Maris usually perky voice had lowered significantly as she put on a more serious demeanor.
"Now cmon Eli. Let's do this!"
---
"Damnit.."
Rin grumbled, rubbing her fist.
She had been banging the door for a solid hour and had yet to get an answer.
"Maybe try saying why you want it open?"
Maki suggested, unsure of why this was of such big importance.
"Open up! I want a female uniform!"
Rin shouted at that, kicking the iron door.
Yes, bad idea, she landed on the floor, clutching her foot.
"Owwww!"
Rin whined, as Maki gave her a half hearted pat on the head.
Before Rin could complain, or purr at that gesture, they heard the door unlock with a silent klick.
"No way that worked..."
Maki muttered, getting off the bed and helping Rin up.
"Yeah sorry Rin chan, we aint got any more female ones for now."
A voice sounded behind the door, as a very, very bloody hand wrapped itself around the door, pushing it open.
"Not that it really matters anymore does it? Put these on again, it'll leave a better impact."
Rin looked up aghast as the door finally opened, feeling very inclined to scurry behind Maki, who stood terrified in front of the pile of their old school uniforms.
"Cmon, I aint got all day yknow?"
The womans voice dropped to deathly cold levels at that, as her eyes took on a much less pleasant
"We have some....'friends' to kill."

Chapter End Notes

back to it again. ill get heart of ice finished soon!

I hope ya foundthis chapter good
No..

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Eli did not want to do this.
She. Did. Not. Want. To. Do. This.
Yet somehow she found herself being dragged along by Mari, who seemed perfectly complacent in showing off a large part of her boobs.
She had put on a playful grin as she strode forward, making sure to put a nice sway into her hips.
"Hey guys!"
She squealed, as they stood in front of two very confused looking men.
"Hi-Hi?"
Eli could feel their stare land directly on her chest and god she wanted to button up again.
"So my sister and I wanna have a bito fun an-and y'all are the firs good lookin guys we've found."
Mari slurred, letting go of Eli's hand and wrapping her arms around the one dudes waist.
If Eli was honest, they weren't attractive at all. Both were a muscular build, had multiple small scars, stubbly chins and short cropped hair. All in all she just thought they looked like boxes.
But maybe she was a bit biased.
No she definitely was.
"Fun? What kinda fun are you thinking of Ladies?"
Eli was surprised at how fast they had caught the bait. Maybe it was because generally there seemed to be a larger amount of men than women in the Quarantine?
"Yknowww.."
Mari drawled out slowly, her eyes motioning for Eli to join in.
"Fun"
Eli gave herself a mental kick, finally getting in on the action.
All she had to do was get the two standing in a perfect shot line afterall.
"In this place there ain't much of it and we don't wanna only do it with one person."
"Y-Yeah, we want to do it together."
Goddamnit this was embarrassing.
"Together eh? You Ladies sure?"
One guy grinned through his crooked jaw, adjusting his bulletproof vest.
Eli reached out her arm and, with a lot of disgust, pulled the guy closer, looking up to him in a playfully innocent matter.
"As sure as can be"
She glanced over at Mari, who had slowly danced herself with her victim closer to the shotline.
Before either of the two guards could retort, a muffled grunt was emitted by both, as they slumped down, blood splattering the ground.
"Eww"
Eli groaned, wiping blood off her face.
"Ew? You mean fantastic!"
Kotori's happy voice spoke up as she knelt down, pulling the single arrow from their two skulls.
"Umi shot perfectly!"
"It did work out as planned."
Mari sighed, using her shirt to clean her face of blood.
"And thank god too. I hated being close to those smelly asses."
"You seemed to be fine with it."
Mari shrugged, opening the door to the building.
"What can I say? I'm good at acting."
"Or actually horny"
Kotori remarked, laughing at the uncharacteristic blush that spread across Maris face.
"N-No! Not for him anyway!"
"Hm?"
Nico sported a giant grin as she caught onto the not exactly subtle implications.
"For whom then?"
"Ka-None of your business!"
Behind them, Kotori cautiously kicked one of the mens crotch.
"Oh my god they died with a boner."
Behind her, cold and determined Umi suddenly blushed an inhumane shade of red.

---

"Rin, this isn't normal."
Maki whispered to her so briskly, that the ginger barely caught it.
Looking back, she only nodded as response, as not to aggravate their companion.
She really didn't want to die. Not like this, not here and not by, what she thought was a friends, hand.
"Hey Hey no talking you two."
A sweet voice broke their little conversation.
"You're more useful alive than dead, but one of you will do as well."

---

"Holly crap that was nice!"
Riko jumped as a ginger bound in, hands clapping wildly.
"H-Honoka san! Don't scare me like that!"
She uttered, feeling flustered at the sudden and aggressive praise.
"Scare? You're the one scary here. Those lyrics gave me the chills."
Honoka acted as if she was cold, a very dorkish display.
"D-Did they now?"
Riko noticed that the lock had not been in it's place.
Meaning that people could hear her outside.
Crap.
"Yeah! Like that part of...I forgot what the exact lyrics were but it was scary! But also really exiting."
She laughed sheepishly, scratching the back of her neck.
"Well it's just something I threw together last minute. Nothing big"
The redhead waved her off.
"But I'm glad you liked it. If Umi, Maki and Eli were here, we would be able to put on a concert."
Honokas spirit seemed to shoot beyond the roof at that.
"A concert?! A Rise will be thrilled! We gotta make a big one, to lift everyones spirits! Oh I gotta go tell Tsubasa."

---

"Good evening."
Umi nodded at one of the men walking down the aisle.
Once they were in, no sneaking had been needed at all.
She assumed that this was because it wasn't an official Organization, so any newly recruited underlings didn't posses uniforms.
"Hello."
A woman greeted them cheerfully, green eyes glistening.
She sounded familiar, but Umi couldn't take another look, as they moved on briskly. "Did she seem familiar?"
"Kinda...but I've never met her before. But she does resemble Nozomi a lot."
Nico laughed wryly. "Watch, it's gonna be her mom or something."
"Hey don't jinx it."
Kotori muttered as she gazed at a floor plan. "Well, I'm gonna assume that this is the Prison."
She pointed her finger at a floor that had been crossed out as offices and now, in what appeared to be blood, had scrawled "Containment Facility" "Man, quite the flair for drama I see."
Nico groaned as the ash haired licked her finger, swiping some blood away and put it in her mouth. "What is she doing?"
Yoshiko wondered aloud. "Hmm...it's not even human blood..disappointing."
"Sh- She can tell the difference."
Mari muttered, unsure whether to be intrigued or disgusted. "Heh, I've developed quite a taste for human blood. It's really good...though I wonder what the flesh tastes like."
Kotori trailed off, leaving the rest with very shocked faces. Noticing that, she smiled sweetly. "Just kidding~"

---

"I really don't like this!"
Maki struggled against leather restraints, as her feet were strapped down to the legs of a chair. Rin was standing in the corner, whimpering as a gun was pointed straight at her face. "Yknow what Maki chan?"
Green eyes gleamed in previously unknown malice as their captor pulled the strap tighter, causing Maki to feel her blood pulse in her leg. "I don't care."

---

"Where are they?"
You wondered, as she drove to the meeting place for what felt like the thousandth time that day. A lot could go wrong on this mission and god she hoped it didn't. "They're fine...Yeah definitely!"
She definitely wasn't convinced but, better than nothing. What was she if not optimistic right? Well...hella possessive and sometimes the dumb ass comic relief whom's only line was "Yousoro" but...yeah she was optimistic. Definitely. And they were fine too. Just as fine as she was happy with her role as side character even in her own life. Yeah. Fine.

---

Kotori looked around, unsure of whether they were in the right place or not. No guards, no cameras. Nothing. "Is this..is this the right place?"
Umi gripped her bow tightly as she placed her hands on the door.
"I share your skeptic...but where else should we go?"
"I don't know but...I'm getting a bad feeling about this."
"Miss Murderer is getting a bad feeling?"
Mari muttered curtly under her breath.
"Hey, I'm human yknow."
"I for one think we shouldn't back down...but if even Kotori has a bad feeling..."
Yoshiko mussed as she discreetly hid behind Mari and Eli.
"I don't care how bad it is back there. I want to save my friends!"
Nico stormed forward, grasping the door handle firmly, giving Umi a challenging glare.
"Would you allow?"
The blue haired stepped away solemnly.
"Go ahead. I can't muster the courage to do it but I know you can."
"I'll open it then."
Nico was about to press the door open, as a hand wrapped around hers.
"No. We will."
Nico gazed into hard, determined blue eyes, nodding at her friend.
She could see how scared Eli was, but behind that bubbled a burning determination.
Slowly, they pushed forward, opening the door wide.
Nico's breath hitched as her eyes fell on what awaited them.
She knew she had said she didn't care how bad it would be but...
But this wasn't what she was expecting at all.
In front of them, blooddrenched and covered in injuries, holding a bloodied knife and a six shot revolver and sporting a wicked smile stood a woman they knew all too well.
Next to her, Nico could hear a garbled word, resembling an anguished.
"No"
Nico felt her throat drye up as she croaked out one small phrase.
"Nozomi.."

Chapter End Notes

And here we are! I'd like to say happy bday to my girlfriend and thanks for Potato for reminding me I gotta write.
(I'm on vacation so it slipped my mind)

Anyway, do tell whatcha thought
"Sounds like our daughter has made quite the impression."
His wife laughed the remark, staring at the group from one of the security camera feeds.
"You know, I walked past them before...I wanted to size them up."
"And?"
Her husband leaned back in his chair, green eyes glistening in the sunlight.
"Well, they are not normal teens for sure but, that was to be expected. Anyone who has survived for these months will have some sort of talent...so nothing truly special...They had the usuals you need in a group. The archer, the brains, the weirdo."
"You've gotten better at reading people"
He got a lighthearted kick in response.
"Hey I've always been good."
"Sure you have. Anyway, I'm assuming you wouldn't have brought any of this up unless you had found something interesting?"
A bemused smile adorned his face as he took out a small pistol, cleaning the muzzle.
"You assume correctly. One of them could be a great asset."
"Which one?"
"The one with that weird bow in her hair...you can see her potential just in the way she carries herself...even now, she's hiding"
She pointed a long slender finger to the monitor, as to prove her point.
"But look at her body. In every second she could whip that handgun out and kill whoever she had to...although I also sense some weird hesitation from her. But I'm sure that could be trained off."
"Not that I would doubt you Love, but body posture is little to go on."
His wife smiled mischievously as she got up, strapping on a small dagger to her waist.
"Well then, let me prove my point to you."
As she strode out of the room, the man snatched a small device, and gave through one clear order.
"Nozomi, you can make your move."

---

Hanayo set down the duster, sighing to herself.
She felt useless in the situation.
Absolutely useless.
When they had been kidnapped she had been useless.
When she was tied up she had been useless.
When she had been bedbound in the infirmary she had been useless.
Even now, she had only been allowed to do petty jobs such as dusting off the place.
"I hate this..."
She muttered to herself.
In these cases, Rin would always be there to comfort her and help her but...
Rin wasn't here.
Rin may even be dead.
"No."
Hanayo shook her head to clear her thoughts.
"Rin has already gone through hell. This won't even phase her. She's a strong girl...unlike me."
The timid girl affirmed Rins safety to herself, although not sure how well it worked.
Maybe continuing the dust job would get her mind off of things.
Probably not, but who knows right?
Her focus shifted to the small table in between the two beds.
She was currently in Elis and Nozomis room, cleaning it as best she could in her current state.
On the desk was prominently a small stack of Tarot cards, which probably belonged to the more spiritual girl.
Hanayo had never seen her do a reading, but she did know that Nozomi cherished them dearly.
She better keep them in a good shape then for when Nozomi returns.
Which she would of course.
Definitely.
Just as she picked up one card, she felt a searing pain in her hand as the card sliced through her skin like butter.
"Ouch!"
Letting the card go, she clutched her hand and confirmed it to be a minor injury.
Thank god.
The metallic clatter of the dropped card caught her attention again as she looked at it in bewilderment.
"Are these even real cards..?"
---

"Nice to see such a large group has come to my aid."
The purple haired girl let out a small laugh, her grin wavering as it slowly switched from terrifying to just outright 'this person has to be locked up' insane.
"Nozomi.."
Eli breathed again, unsure at what to think of all this.
On the one hand, they had found her, on the other...
This wasn't Nozomi.
Not the way they had known her.
"Ah, I'm sorry I should have probably changed before coming to confront y'all. It's just that I had a few things to do beforehand."
Nozomi continued, fiddling with her blood-drenched skirt and squeezing out a large portion of said red liquid.
"What is going on here?"
Umi whispered briskly, notching an arrow.
It seems though, as if it wasn't whispered quite quietly enough, as Nozomi picked up on it.
"What's going on here, is that we're gonna play a real fun game."
She laughed again, holding up what seemed to be a small remote.
"This is terrifyingly similar to saw isn't it?"
Mari muttered, Kotori nodding in response.
"Nozomi what are you talking about? Where are Rin and Maki? We have to get out of here before they know we are here!"
Eli uttered, her voice strained from the pure tension that enveloped the situation.
"Oh Elichi, that's pretty naive of you. Haven't you caught on yet?"
Nozomi brought her left hand up, giving the group a good look at what looked to be a very fresh burn.
"That symbol.."
Yoshiko stuttered out, her eyes fallowing the cross, roses and fanged beasts.
"Nozomi-What is all this?"
Nico felt desperation creep up on her, that she desperately fought to keep away.
"It means I've finally woken up from a multiple year long dream."
Nozomi cackled, clicking one button on the remote.
On the right of her, a light sprang to life behind a glass case, lighting up the sight before them.
"Rin...!"
"Maki!"
The group screamed in unison, aghast at the spectacle.
The two were strapped to two wooden, blood drenched chairs, a microphone to their mouth.
Large outlets protruded from the walls, making Elis stomach sink lower than she thought was even
possible.
The two were trapped in a gas chamber.
In a gas chamber to which one of her, at this point best, friends had the controls to.
And at that moment, the group watched a wicked smile spread across Nozomis face again, as
another button was pressed.
A second later, loud gargling was to be heard from the stereo as the two began convulsing,
desperately gasping for air.
The despairing sounds of their dying friends soon mixed together with the echoing malicious laugh,
creating a good impression of what hell looks like.
"Now then!"
Nozomi screamed, her entire demeanor completely exhilarated.
"Let the game begin!"

---

"Woha that is some heat."
Kanan laughed, pulling her face away from the makeshift grill quickly.
"Well I'm trying to cook meat here. Gotta have lots of heat. Also it's cold, were somewhere
in...January I think?"
Yous face became quizzicality at that.
She had absolutely no idea what day of the week or even what month it was.
Hell at this point they had probably reached a new year too!
"Time is a construct, zura. We are all seeing that now."
Hanamaru smiled gleefully as she watched her donated stack of books burn in the stove.
"Yknow Hanamaru, I'm seriously surprised you donated books to be burnt."
The grayish haired girl grunted as she took up a large pile of dead pigeons and slapped them down
on the counter.
(It used to be a bunch of school desks. But now it's a counter. Totally clean obviously. As all
school desks are.)
"Need some help plucking them?"
Kanan asked, snatching herself a smaller bird and plucking it within seconds.
"Sure. Keep the feathers, we're gonna wash them and use them as stuffing for makeshift
mattresses."
You grinned as she began plucking a larger pigeon, stopping as she saw the smaller girl next to
them quivering a bit.
"Ah, sorry Hanamaru, you don't have to wat-"
"Burn! Yes! Be destroyed by the pits of hell!"
"Wh-what the hell?"
You muttered, letting her gaze wander to the nearly fully burnt books.
"Man she really hates twilight."

---

"Everything okay Hanayo?"
Dia poked her head into the doorway, having heard a small cry of pain.
"Yes I'm fine...I just cut myself on Nozomis cards."
"On her cards? How did you manage that?"
Hanayo shrugged, holding up a card, weighing it as she did so.
"They're metallic for some reason. And sharp. Really sharp."
"Huh. That's ever so slightly weird."
Dia muttered, taking the card to examine it herself.
"Great, you picked death. That's a absolutely fabulous omen."
Hanayo laughed lightly at that.
"I think it actually symbolizes a new awakening or beginning or something. Nothing to worry about."
Dia smiled wryly, clanking the card against her blade.
"Yeah metal...and sharp as you said. Hanayo, would you step out of the way?"
The olive haired looked confused at that, but complied nonetheless.
With one swift throw, Dia flung the card across the room, which ebbed itself in Nozomis vacant bed.
"Holly shit..."
"What?"
"These are disguised throwing knives!"
---
"Stop it! Nozomi what are you-what kind of game?!"
Eli screamed, her insides getting torn apart as she watched her friends slowly suffocate right in front of her.
Her adversary let out a harsh bark of laughter, raising her knife into the air.
"The games rules are simple. Every moment you aren't attacking me, these two get choked. Every attack that fails gets them choked. And every attack that hurts me, gets them shocked by just enough voltage to be very uncomfortable."
A large grin spread across her face as she watched the look of horror overtake her friends faces.
"Doesn't that mean.."
Nico croaked out, not wanting to realize the implications.
"That's right Nicochi. It's time for one of my absolute favorite games!"
A knife flew through the air, ebbing itself in the, now suddenly locked, doorway behind them.
"Time for a game where you place your very life on the line! The absolute game of life and death!"

Chapter End Notes

Now were getting into some lore aint we?

(also this is nozomi based in this instance but I haven't forgotten about Rin or Dia or Riko or Hanayo or Kotori. Yes Im not done with Kotori either, I only glossed over her before.)
You drummed her fingers on the dashboard as she drove past the pick up spot again. Something had gone wrong. She just knew it. And it frustrated her that she could do absolutely nothing but wait. She wasn't even useful, hell she was using fuel for this. "No I'm done with this. I'm doing something."
She grit her teeth as she drove the car into a small niche between houses and got out, her guard immediately going up as she made sure that her handgun and butchers knife were fastened to her belt securely. Reaching back into the car, she quickly retrieved her backpack and started to pull things out. She'd rearrange it later, but now she really didn't have the time for a meticulous search. "Ah found it."
She smiled as she pulled out a small pump and hose. "This'll do fine."
Walking to the back of the car, she took out two empty gas containers. "I'll only be gone for a bit. I hope the area hasn't been looted yet."
She had no idea who she was talking to but it didn't matter. If she didn't talk, she'd most likely go insane and we really don't want that.

---

Nozomis grin grew wider as she saw the reluctance of the group in front of her. "Not that I care, but I should remind you that you have maybe another ten seconds before those two run out of oxygen completely."
She glanced at the two tied up girls, the rest following her gaze. "Stop this! There has to be another way!"
Nico stepped up, desperation lacing her voice. Her adversary tilted her head in mock contemplation, while turning off the gas. No need to kill them just yet after all. "Well, I guess you could-"
"Gha!"
Rins voice sounded through the loudspeakers. For the first time in this encounter, Nico could sense her adversary was surprised. "Rin? You should be unconscious like Maki!"
She hissed, raising the remote threateningly to which the ginger, to everyone's surprise let out a bark of laughter. "You think I'm scared of that? I've had much worse. Go ahead, choke us again, I'll feel just like at home!"
"Wh-What exactly is she talking about?"
Umi muttered, unsure of what to make of the situation. "No idea.."
Kotori whispered back tersely. It seemed that this situation was even getting to her. "R-Rin! I wouldn't aggravate her...!"
Eli spoke up, a hint of hope in her voice however, at seeing the gingers resilience. "What's she gonna do? Makis unconscious, she can't hurt her."
A low growl escaped the purple haired woman as she pushed another button, making Rins body convulse in agony, but to everyone's surprise, not a single sound escaped her but a small, strained laugh.
"That's just a bit harder than a taser. I can take that any day! I have been taking it every day in fact!"
Rin spit out, wrenching against the restraints in an energy unknown to the rest.
"No seriously, what is going on?"
Nico wondered allowed, not sure if this was good or bad.
"You little brat!"
Nozomi screamed, her composure completely slipping.
"I'll fucking kill you!"
She swiftly took out a small gun, aiming what seemed to be directly at the unfazed gingers head.
"No way you will."
She kept wrenching at the leather restraints and to the onlookers horror, this in turn began wrenching open her skin.
Nico quickly snuck a peak at what seemed to be the unconscious redhead, who seemed to be not so much unconscious as thought.
"What is she..."
Nico wondered as she watched the redhead slowly tip her chair backwards.
A large crash sounded through the rooms, as the chair shattered, amplified by the microphones.
"Nice one Maki!"
Rin jeered, as the redhead shot up and pushed Rins chair out of the way, a split second before a shot rang out, fallowed by crashing glass.
In a flurry, Umi felt something whiz past her and after everything had settled down, she could see what.
"Kotori..!"
"Let go of me you bitch!"
Kotori had the older girl in a weird headlock, a knife pressed to her neck.
"Not happening"
She hissed, snatching the remote away from her adversary and throwing it to her group.
Despite how she was acting, Umi noticed the knife hovering just slightly above Nozomis skin and her grip was..
Well it was almost gentle compared to her usual brutality.
"Rin! Maki! Get out of there!"
Eli ran over to the two, helping a shaking Maki out, who quickly hid behind her friends.
"Rin are you okay?"
The blonde inquired worriedly.
"I'm fine. I've had worse."
Rins voice was suddenly shaking as she clambered out.
"We need to get out now!"
Yoshiko screamed above the commotion.
"I really hate to be the one to ask this but-"
Kotori grunted as she wrestled Nzoomi to the ground who had sent multiple stabs in her direction.
"What exactly do we do with Nozomi?"
"Take her. What kind of question is that?"
Eli spoke up quickly, feeling a surge of fear at the prospect of leaving the purple haired woman behind.
"Eli, I really get your will to take her back but she is currently attempting to kill us!"
The ash haired let out in a strained voice, blood dripping from her arm, where a knife had finally landed on it's mark.
In the split second of her slip of concentration, Nozomi had wrenched herself free.
"It seems"
She panted, clutching the side of her torso.
"I may have forgotten more training than I realize."

"Nozomi snap out of it!"
Eli screamed, taking a step towards her, only to be held back by a stern grip on her shoulder.
Looking back, she found Umi, a desperate look on her face.
"I did! I snapped out of the damn peaceful daze that I had been in with you."
A ragged laugh escaped her lips as she recovered her pistol from the ground.
"And I have to kill you to finally return to what I used to be."
"I don't-"
Eli was cut off by a soft chuckle that resounded from behind them.
"My darling daughter was groomed to take over our business. That's why she can't have any ties to you people."
Looking behind them, Eli had to take a double take at the woman.
She looked like an exact copy of Nozomi, just with slightly older features and a much, much more murderous demeanor.
"We jinxed it.."
Nico muttered aghast, her head swiveling between the two women.
"What are you doing here? You said I should do this alone!"
Nozomi spoke up, rage overtaking her face.
"You don't have this under control anymore. It seems I overestimated how much you could still do. I take full responsibility for that."
Her voice was mature and calm, yet carried a very distinct tone with it.
"But Mother-"
"I'll handle this."
Her mother voice had grown cold as strode towards her daughter, sending her flying with a violent kick to her stomach.
"Nozomi!"
Eli gasped, flinging herself at the older woman in a frenzy, only to find herself being thrown onto the purple haired girl.
"Fuck!"
"Get off me!"
Nozomi grunted in disgust, flinging the blonde off her.
Eli caught a hint of tears in Nozomis eyes before she wiped them away quickly.
"Get out."
Her mother growled, pushing the blonde towards the group roughly.
Eli groaned as she slammed into Umi, who caught her swiftly.
"You okay?"
The blonde grimaced as she stood up, feeling her side become sore.
"Not really."
Umi gave her a sympathetic and worried look, before fixating back to the front.
"Do you have wax in your ears?"
Nozomis mother barked at them.
"I said get out!"
She roughly pushed her daughter towards them.
"She'll lead you out."

---

"I see you weren't able to test your theory."
Her husband laughed lightly as his wife returned, murder in her eyes.
"Hey, if our daughter would be more competent I could have."
The man smiled and got up, rubbing her shoulders gently.
"Maybe you don't have to. If you really deem that girl a threat, you should give her a small
handicap."
"I would prefer to persuade her to join but... yeah I don't think that's going to happen."
She turned around and pecked her husband on the cheek.
"Thanks for the idea sweety."

---

"Where are we going?"
Umi demanded as they followed Nozomi through the building.
"Out."
She replied tersely.
This was all so wrong. So, so wrong.
That thought kept ringing through Elís head.
What had happened for Nozomi to become this?
"Hey! We still have to find Ruby!"
Nico protested as she placed herself in front of her friend.
"She'll be found and we'll send her to you."
The purple haired replied coolly, pushing past them.
"If she makes it that is. Who knows who's found her."
The mere thought of what that could mean sent shivers down the groups spine.
"Why let us out anyway?"
Kotori inquired.
"I'm going to assume my mother would prefer me to kill you all at a later date."
Another shiver.
"Why?"
Nozomi turned to Nico, picking her up by her collar and hoisting her into the air.
"Because I have to kill anything and anyone that binds me to that soft life I had before!"
She threw the raven haired to the ground nonchalantly and strode forwards again.
"Now come on. Or I'll dispose of you in another way."
Behind her, the group followed her silently, with the exception of Mari and Yoshiko who seemed to
be in deep discussions about Rubys possible whereabouts.

---

"Okay, that went well."
You smiled, placing two large gas filled bottles into the back of the car.
Not only had she filled those, she had refueled the car and found three cans of beans in what must
have been someone's personal stash.
Seeing as there had been a Zombie right next to it, she assumed that person had been bit and died.
She had noticed about the corpse, after smashing it's head open of course, that it seemed to have,
what appeared to be something plant like growing inside of it.
But she had shrugged it off quickly.
Who had ever heard of a plant Zombie?

---

"Alright. Find your own way from here."
Nozomi turned to leave as they arrived what appeared to be the front gate.
"Wait!"
Eli grabbed her friends arm, feeling the woman stiffen under her touch.
"Come with us!"
A few moments of silence passed before the purple haired replied.
"I can't."
"What do you mean? Just come-"
"They'll hunt me down."
A hint of desperation laced Nozomis voice as she still refused to meet their gazes.
"Nozomi?"
Nico spoke up, almost hopeful.
"Wait what am I saying?"
The older girl ripped herself free from Elis grasp, turning to fave them again.
"Don't mess with me like that! Get out!"
Eli stood silent, shocked at what had just transpired.
"Eli."
Mari spoke up, motioning to go.
"Come on. We can get her at a later date."
"Oh you wont need to do that. She'll come to you, don't worry."
Nozomi jumped as a hand wrapped itself around her wrist.
"Mother!"
"Nozomi dear, could you step aside, I have one small thing to attend to."
Nozomi nodded, an unsure look overtaking her.
"What do you want?"
"Payment."
The woman replied bluntly.
"Payment for letting you live."
Kotori scoffed, stepping towards the older one threateningly.
"And in what currency would that be?"
A coy smile spread across Ms Toujous face as she protruded a knife.
"Your blood."
A shocked silence fallowed that, as Umi stepped in between them.
"No way in hell!"
She growled, eliciting a light but taunting laugh from Nozomis mother.
"Well then, you can't leave. The moment you step out of those gates we'll gun you down."
"Then take me. Take my blood."
Umi burst out, sweat beads forming on her neck.
This woman was absolutely insane.
"No no, I want hers."
Kotori pushed past the blue haired woman who sputtered in protest.
"Kotori-!"
"It's fine Umi chan, If it's the only way, I'll do it."
She smiled sweetly, but her voice betrayed fear.
"Ah, nice to see someone is reasonable."
Ms Toujou got closer, raising the knife.
"Now, this won't take long if you stay still."
Before anyone could react, and before anyone could even comprehend what had just happened, Kotori let out a wretched scream, blood spewing out of her left eye.
Umi screamed in shock as she rushed forward, but was stopped by a gun pointed at her.
"I'm not done yet."
Nozomis mother grinned as she ripped the knife out of Kotoris eye-socket, who fell to the ground, grasping her eye.
"Shit! Fuck! That hurts!"
"Well it's about to hurt a lot more."
The woman let out a cackle, green eyes gleaming in malice as she grabbed Kotoris wrist and
yanked her upwards.  
"I think I'll just kill you. Eliminates a whole threat."
She raised the gun, having dropped the knife to the floor and replaced it with a much more lethal weapon.
"No!"
Before she could pull the trigger, Nozomi's mother was tackled from behind by.
"Nozomi?!"
"Run! Please run!"
She screamed, struggling to keep her mother down.
Eli felt herself being grabbed by Yoshiko, who pulled her away from Nozomi.
Looking around she saw everyone running away, Kotori unconscious in Umis arms.
"Shoot them!"
The leader screamed, motioning towards the guards on the lookouts.
The two men nodded, raising their guns.
Before either of them could pull their individual triggers however, they both sank to their knees, blood gushing out of their heads.
"I did it!"
A new voice jeered.
Looking up, Eli caught a whiff of red hair.
"Ruby?"
Yoshiko called out hopefully.
"Yep!"
The small redhead jumped down from a small building beside them.
"Let's go!"
They began running again, hoping to catch You on her hourly drive by.
"Where the fuck are you going?!"
Eli heard Nozomi scream behind them and looking back, she could see cold fury overtake her friend.
"Fucking run. I'll kill you all next time!"
She screamed at them, before the gates closed behind them.
---

"Nozomi. What the fuck was that?"
Her parents loomed before her back in the office, her mother was fuming.
"I don't know! I just-I jumped at you and-"
"Enough."
Her father broke her off, walking towards her briskly and slamming her against the wall.
Nozomi felt something crunch, which really couldn't be good.
"You have a day to prove to us that you really are dedicated to killing them."
He let go, letting her slump to the floor.
"A day. Or we will have to redo your retraining all over again."
He took out a small branding iron, pressing its cold surface against his daughter's other hand.
"And nobody wants that right?"

Chapter End Notes

Yo a longer chapter here!
Kotori has lost an eye and Nozomi seems to be showing split personalities plus Rin
has had some shitty ass past

Stick with me for more while I torture my favorite girls

yeah it hurts
"Ah! I see the car!"
Yukiho bolted upright as her friend screamed that, snatching Alisa's binoculars out of her hands and focusing on a car, that seemed to be driving almost too fast, even with the nonexistent road obstacles.
"You're right!"
She handed the lenses back, swinging herself off the rather tall roof perch and landing on rooftop.
Landing, she felt a jolt shoot through her bones, cringing at impact.
"I told you not to do that."
Alisa bent over the railing, her upper body completely off the roof.
She had figured out how to snake her leg around a support barrier securely in order to hang like that.
"And I told you not to do that, yet here we are."
Yukiho laughed as she sped off the roof, leaving the young blonde to simply shake her head as she got back to her post and focused back on lookout.
"I do hope they aren't attracting any Zombies with that noise.."
She muttered, while instinctively unlocking the safety of her small handgun.
Well small for handguns, it was still almost too big for her petite hands to be quite honest.
Not that it mattered, she'd grow into it.
She hoped.
Honestly, she felt much more like she would be of more use as the person pulling the strings and less as a foot-soldier.
"Heh, me in high position and Nozomi as right hand...that would be kinda funny."
She giggled to herself, thinking of various ways on how that could unfold.
One particular one popped into her head after a few minutes, since her mind had begun to wander.
Yknow, how it does when you are like super super bored.
"Oh Jesus no."
She shook it off quickly.
"Why would I ever kidnap them?"
Seriously what a weird idea.
One would have to be really macabre to think of something like that.
Besides, she had no idea how to use sedatives.
Or electronic bracelets.
Yeah that was just a weird idea.
And yet, somehow she felt like she had a special connection to it.

---

"I smell blood."
Dia spoke up from where she was working with Kanan.
"You do? All I smell is myself. Seriously we have to all take a bath some time soon. A bubble bath preferably."
She laughed to herself.
No way would that ever be possible, every water reserve at this point went to food and drink.
You never know when the water supply cuts short after all.
"Well yes we do. But seriously, I smell blood. And it's..."
She trailed off, her gaze trailed to her hand.
Well actually her blade.
It was still so weird to think about.
She did not have a second hand. She. Did. Not. Have. A. Second. Hand.
Seriously that hurt her mind to think about.
"It’s?"
Kanan spoke up, unsure of what to make of her friends lack of concentration.
"Tantalizing.."
Dia murmured, feeling a craving overtake her body.
The feeling was familiar, she had felt this way before.
Right in the midst of that battle in the quarantine, she had smelled all that blood, she had tasted all that blood.
In the midst of that battle she had..
She had fucking bit someone!
"Are you serious? That bite isn't getting to you after all right?"
The blue haired woman half joked as she took a precautions step away.
"I...I don't know."
Dia almost whispered to herself, trying to fight back the urge as memories began to flood her.
"His neck did...it did taste good."
"Okay then.."
Kanan laughed nervously at the very uncharacteristic look that was overtaking her friend.
"Maybe we should get this checked ou-"
"Kanan! The blood is closer! The person is bleeding badly, you have to get the medical supplies ready!"
Dia cut in, grabbing the hem of Kanans shirt.
The diver would, under any other circumstances ask questions, but in this case, she would have to do that later.
"I'm on it."

---

The doors to the school burst open, as Yukiho only barely managed to unlock them in time before
Umi slammed them apart.
"Umi what-"
"We need to get Kotori into the infirmary! Now!"
"Kotori? What is-Oh my god!"
Honoka almost screamed as she rounded the corner and saw the unconscious ash haired, who was currently being carried inside by Eli.
She had blood covering her face that seemed to originate from her closed left eye.
Maki was right next to her, a panicked look on her face.
"Oh my god is right. Get her to the infirmary."
Looking forward, Maki saw, much to her surprise, a hospital bed with all the medical supplies of the school piled onto it.
Behind it was Kanan, a strained look adorning her as she pushed the whole thing.
"I'll one up you."
She grunted, bringing it to a halt and letting the rest of the group past her, as they went to keep people on their positions instead of watching.
"I got the infirmary to her."
"How did you-"
Eli started but was cut off by Maki scooping up Kotori and placing her onto the bed, right after Kanan had cleared it.
"Questions later. I have to get this done or she could die."
She grateful accepted a pair of latex gloves that Kanan had handed her.
"And honestly, I'm not actually sure what to do so any ideas are welcome."
"Is the eye save-able?"
Eli questioned, wiping her bloodied hands on her jeans.
"See that hole?"
Maki had opened the stabbed eye and was pointing at the oozing wound.
"I'd prefer not."
The blonde choked out.
"Does that look save-able?"
Eli shook her head and excused herself quickly, the sight having been too much for her.
Maki then turned to the only two people remaining, everyone else had been ushered out by Kanan so that she could have privacy.
"I think you can both agree that taking the eye out is my only option right?"
Nico and Umi nodded solemnly.
"Do whatever you have to. Just keep her alive."
The redhead smiled sympathetically at Umi.
"Of course I will. You have my word on that."
She then addressed the raven haired girl.
"You know how to sow right? Go and make a makeshift eyepatch. I don't care how, just do it!"
Nico nodded in response and sped off, unsure on how to proceed with the eyepatch.
"Umi. You have to hold Kotori arms above her head!"
"What-Why?"
Umi stuttered as she grabbed hold of her friends hands, holding them together above her head.
"She may wake up. I can't have her struggling!"
The archer was clearly nervous as she tightened her grip.
"L-Let's get this over with."
Maki nodded, her hands visibly shaking as they approached Kotoris bleeding eyeball.
"I so wish we had sedatives.."
She muttered under her breath.
"Ready?"
Her eyes met Umis, who nodded nervously.
"This better go well."
The redhead pushed down around the eyeball, feeling disgust overcome her as she reached the end of the eye-socket.
"Keep it together Maki."
She slowly pulled, feeling the tendants that connected the eye to its socket slowly ripping.
God it was a terrible feeling.
Blood was flowing freely as she kept pulling and things did not get easier when an ear splitting scream echoed from the walls.
"Kotori!"
Umi gasped, her grip tightening on the girl who had woken up, under what must have been incredible pain.
"Kotori you have to relax!"
Maki spit out, keeping her grasp on the eyeball firm.
For the first time since she and the ash haired had met, she saw her scared.
Her other eye was wide in panic, her entire face contorted in incredible agony as she kept pulling.
"Kotori I'm so sorry."
She grimaced as the girl kept screaming, each sound of terror and pain weakening her resolve.
No she had to get through this.
Just one pull.
"Just one more pull!"
Kotori kept screaming, her fingernails bearing themselves into Umis tense hand.
Maki stood panting beside her, holding a bleeding eyeball.
"Holly fuck."
"Maki! We need to calm her down!"
Umi finally let go of her friend's hand, causing Kotori to almost fall off the bed in a frenzy of agony.
It hurt to watch her.
It hurt that she had to hurt her even more.
"Umi I still have to do something!"
The redhead poured disinfectant onto a rag, holding Kotori head down gruffly, causing the ash haired to begin clawing at her hand as the stinging rag hit its mark repeatedly.
"Fuck I need her quiet!"
Umi nodded, placing her hand around Kotori's mouth and nose.
"I'm so sorry Kotori."
The girl kept scratching, clawing at her attackers.
Drunk of pain, she couldn't think.
All she could do was feel as her head was being torn apart by what felt like a hot iron rod in her eye.
A few seconds and a last shuddering gasp later and Kotori fell unconscious again.
Maki wiped away the sweat on her forehead and nodded at the archer thankfully, doing her best to tend to the wound correctly now.

---

Nozomi groaned as she dabbed at minor wounds that were scattered across her body.
The fight with her friends. No, she corrected herself, fight with her enemies had bashed her up more than expected and her parents beating really did hurt a lot.
And now she had all of...well at this point all of 20 hours to prove that she was dedicated to killing her enemies.
God fucking damnit.
How do you even prove that?

---

"Ugh."
Kotori groaned as she nestled herself further into her bed, not wanting to wake up just yet.
She felt a pounding pain on her face, but chose to ignore it.
She hadn't slept this long in a while and she didn't want to disturb it now that she was getting a good rest.
But god that hurt.
It stung, bit and she wanted to scratch it.
Like scratch it badly because fuck it hurt.
But she couldn't raise her hands.
"What the fuck?"
Her eyes flung open as she realized she couldn't move an inch.
Correction her eye.
Oh my god that hurt.
She couldn't see out of her left eye.
Hell she couldn't even feel if she had a left eye.
Kotori felt panic slowly creep onto her as she wrenched at the restraints binding her wrists.
"K-Kotori! She's awake, strap her free!"
The ash haired heard the panicked voice of what she assumed was...Umi?
But why couldn't she see her?
"Umi?"
Kotori focused on quelling the slowly rising panic in her chest, trying to remind herself that if Umi
was here, she was surely safe.
Out of her left view she finally saw the blue haired girl as she stepped into her vision, who wore an extremely relieved look.
"Thank god you're alive. You were out for so long, we thought you'd not make it."
Memories of the last events flooded Kotori's brain as she realized what had led her to being strapped down to a bed with what felt like an eye patch attached to her head.
"Umi..I don't have an eye anymore right?"
The archer shook her head solemnly.
"No, I'm sorry."
A sad smile spread across Kotori's face.
"Hey, if it was the price I had to pay to get out of there...yeah it's worth it. Besides, now I have a badass eyepatch!"
She tried to lighten the mood, doing her best to smile through the pain.
Because fuck it hurt.
The wound hurt.
Her face hurt.
And it hurt that Umi had seen her in such a vulnerable state.
Wasn't she supposed to be stronger than this?

---

"Mother, Father."
Nozomi entered the small office, a stern look on her face.
She had needed another four hours, but now she was certain of a plan that would work. Probably.
"Ah Nozomi. Have you come to prove your resolve to us?"
The purple haired girl nodded, placing a city plan onto their desk.
"I've tracked the water system through this district. You should own the facilities to shut down their water supply, yes?"
Her mother nodded, a small smile adorning her lips.
"Yes indeed."
Nozomi rolled up the papers and headed for the door.
"I'll go give the order for shut down then."
"Is that all you have up your sleeve? That won't do too much."
Her father noted, a testing tone in his voice.
"No actually, there is one more thing."
Her parents gazed at Nozomi curiously, genuinely interested in what their daughter had thought up.
"I want to get myself bit."

Chapter End Notes

Yoooo this story is now a year and three days old and I really think my writing has improved!
I hope.
You tell me

But seriously I do need to rewrite the first batch of chapters
"Are you sure about this?"
Nozomi nodded, a look of determination coming over her as she faced her parents.
"Yes. I have to test this idea, although I am pretty positive it will work."
Her mother smiled pleasantly.
"I think I know where our daughter is coming from. If done correctly, I think this could give her a large boost in her power."
Her husband looked hesitant at first, not because he really cared about Nozomi herself per say, but it would not look good if their own daughter died because of a bite.
"I'll do it correctly mother, don't you worry."
With those words, the young girl exited the room, far more nervous than she would care to admit.

---

"How's the eye doing?"
Maki approached the ash haired girl cautiously.
She had given her and Umi time to talk, but she did have to check on her.
"Just fine."
Makis eyebrows shot up in surprise.
"I mean, apart from the fact that it isn't there."
A small grin was plastered on Kotoris face as she laughed cheekily.
"Amazing how many facades you can put up, even with that pain."
Maki walked over to the door, making sure it was securely locked.
"But drop it. I know you wanted to look strong in front of Umi, but you don't have to be in front of me."
Kotoris smile fell, replaced by a much more agonized expression.
"It-It hurts. It hurts a lot."
The redhead smiled gently as she sat down next to her wounded friend.
"I know. It'll hurt for a while too, I suggest you don't go along on any missions in the next few weeks."
A look of relief spread across Kotoris face, quickly replaced by a scowl.
"Well that sucks. I like being out there."
"Do you honestly?"
Maki had dropped any tsundere act at this point, looking at her patient sincerely.
"Of course I do! I get to completely let go of myself! Kill as much as I want."
The redhead nodded and got up, heading for the door and unlocking it.
"Maybe you aren't ready to open up just yet then. Do come talk to me when you are alright?"
She turned to leave, only to step back in for a last word.
"I really do care about you, yknow? We all do. So at some point, drop that facade for us okay?"

---

Umi dropped her bow onto her bed nonchalantly and sunk into it next to her weapon.
This had been a long day.
Like a long long day.
She really hadn't processed everything, just two weeks ago everyone was living happily and now they had Nozomi as enemy and Kotori did not have a second eye.
Although, thinking of the ash haired, that's probably one of the lesser problems she had with her.
"How am I even supposed to process all of this? I've known Kotori for ages yet..."
She trailed off.
Things had been so hectic lately, that she never had had time to think.
But now, reality hit her like a brick.
"She tried to kill herself..!"
Umi sucked in air through her teeth, sitting up in a bolt of panic.
"Why have we not talked about this more?!!"
She groaned, hitting herself mentally.
"How could we-Oh my god she kills people too!"
Umi felt her chest closing, she couldn't get any air.
Panic began to set in as sweat broke out on her back.
How the hell had she not realized this before.
She tried to break free from those thoughts, going back to what her history teacher had said.
"Sometimes, when an event is too traumatic or terrible, a numbness will set in that will later crash
down with full force. Such as the soldiers in world war 2..",
The last of the thought was cut off as she gripped the bed, parts of it splintering under contact as
her knuckles became white.
She stumbled to her feet, slowly easing back.
Or not.
Standing up only caused a pounding in her head to begin, she felt it pressing on her brain.
Fuck this was bad.
Her vision was becoming blurry as she stumbled towards Kotoris bed, doing her best to get there
before she blacked out.
One last time she tried taking a breath of air, but her lungs, her body wouldn't comply.
In one heavy crash she landed on the ground, her head hitting Kotoris bed at the edge, causing her
to pass out completely.

---

"Okay, now for the hard part."
Nozomi equipped a large knife and handgun to her belt, having switched out the school uniform
for a tank top and shorts.
It was her parents idea to keep her freezing in the now weaning cold, as it "built character"
The girl scoffed at that, but she didn't have much of a choice in the matter.
So here she was, barely clothed in what felt to her like freezing weather.
Well it probably wasn't, but in such attire, anything under 15 Celsius feels freezing.
Nozomi mentally counted down what she had still to do.
She had ordered the shut down of water and power in the district that Otonokizaka roughly lay, she
had taken her medication, she had equipped herself properly and had packed out everything she
would need.
Now came the scary part.

---

Dia turned around to quick footsteps and barely managed to keep herself from falling backwards as
a smaller figure enveloped her in a tight hug.
"R-Ruby?"
She looked at her younger sister in bewilderment, thankful that she had unstrapped the blade for
now.
Otherwise Ruby might as well have become a pork chop just now.
"I did it!"
The younger girl squeaked, gazing up at her big sister with exited eyes.
"I helped them!"
A gentle smile spread across Dias face as she ruffled her little sisters hair.
"Well of course, you've been training after all."
"H-How do you know that?"
Dia laughed at that.
"I notice every little thing about you. Gotta make sure you're safe after all."
Ruby faked a pout, turning away from her big sister.
"Sounds stalkerish."
"You know what I mean."
Dia pulled her little sister closer, relishing the feeling of closeness.
(In a sisterly way, get your mind away from that!)
"So how did you help?"
"I shot some bad guys that were gonna hurt them! Right through the eyes!"
Wait what?
"Shot? You killed someone?"
Her younger sister turned around at the glummer voice that Dia was using.
"Yeah, I saved everyone."
A frown was plastered on Dias face at that.
"Was it necessary?"
"That or Kotori gets killed!"
A low exhale escaped the older ones lips as she pat her little sisters head.
"Then good job Ruby."
Ruby looked up at her sister, a bit of disappointment lacing her features.
Why wasn't her big sis proud of her?
Before she could ask that however, a new voice entered the scene.
"Dia. We really have to talk."
Looking behind them, Dia saw Kanan and Mari, both looking incredibly worried.
"Now."
---

"Okay part one is done."
Nozomi wiped some sweat from her brow.
Even with the temperature, moving sure heated one up.
Her foot ground into the face of a captured Zombie as she placed handcuffs around both its arms.
"Don't want you giving me too much trouble."
She had picked an isolated one, inside of a locked apartment.
His skin was not yet very rotten and the clothes had barely any blood.
This one was very fresh, he had died only hours ago.
All the better for her, she didn't need a very strong infection to spread in her body.
Holding up her finger, she inspected her left hand.
She didn't need the top segment of her pinky finger anyway.
Yeah, it was useless.
Definitely useless.
"Oh god this is terrifying."
She muttered, twiddling with a small bright blue ribbon tied around her wrist.
She always did that when nervous, as far back as she could remember, it was tied around her wrist.
She used to easily slip in and out of it, but by now her hand was too big.
She seriously had no idea where it had come from, maybe it was a friendship bracelet she had received from someone as a child.
Course, she hadn't exactly ever met any kids her age growing up, so the thought seemed a bit far off.
Not that it mattered really.
It helped calm her down, that's all that counted.
"The blue really reminds me of Elichis eyes."
She muttered, instantly shaking her head at the thought.
"No don't think of her!"
Right.
She had to think of the task at hand.
Literally.
The task was her hand.
"Here goes nothing."
She placed the knife on a counter near her with disinfectant, bandages and painkillers.
"This is so gonna hurt."
Taking a few deep breaths she released the dead under her foot, holding her left pinky in front of its face.
"This better work."
---
"Eli."
The blonde sat up in her bed quickly, having dozed off.
"Yeah?"
She beckoned Hanayo inside and made space for her to sit.
"What is it?"
Hanayo smiled shyly as she made herself comfortable, taking out a phone and what seemed to be Nozomis Tarot cards.
"While you guys were gone I did some snooping in Nozomis things, cuz yknow, why would she be the only one that they wouldn't release right?"
Right.
Nobody else knew about how she had turned on them.
"And I found her phone and her cards and...well let's start with her cards."
Hanayo seemed to take notice of Elis uneasiness but chose to ignore it.
She took out a single card, holding it up to the light.
"What about them?"
Hanayo smiled wryly as she threw the card against the now closed door, Eli wincing slightly as it ebbed itself inside it deeply.
"H-Holly fuck."
She had definitely not expected that.
"They are hidden knives. I don't know why she has them but yeah...knives,"
The olive haired girl placed them aside and took out Nozomis phone.
"This is less macabre. It's just that she hid it from us, she said she had it at home. Yet here it is, fully charged at school."
"What are you getting at?"
Eli questioned, although she was sure what it was.
"She's hiding something. And...well I also want you to try to unlock her phone. It's a long shot, but from all of us, you know her the best."
"What am I supposed to do? Guess passwords?"
Eli replied, a little too gruffly as Hanayo shrank back at the harsh tone.
"I'm sorry. I'll do my best, but no promises."
Eli took the phone and placed it onto her side table.
"Also Hanayo, we know what she's hiding...we'll update everyone soon but for now, you should probably go talk to Rin. She's been through hell. The entire car ride home she was shacking and saying something of the likes of "Why me" so she may need some help."
A shocked look overtook Hanayo as she bolted upright.  
"Oh my god Rin! I have to go to her!"

---

"What is it?"
Dia locked the door behind her, sitting opposite of her two friends.  
"We're worried about you. About what that bite is doing to you."
Kanan started off, squeezing Maris hand for support.  
"Kanan said you said someone's neck tasted good and you smelled Kotoris blood....Dia that isn't normal."
The brown haired woman nodded solemnly as she retrieved her blade from under her bed.  
"I know it isn't. I know sleep walking while dreaming of eating people isn't. I know getting an enticing feeling when smelling blood isn't."  
She turned around, desperation beginning to creep up in her voice.  
"But what am I supposed to do about it?!"
She flung the blade to the wall, letting it ebb itself in it.  
"I'm turning into one of them and I can't do shit!"
She screamed at them, tears spilling over at this point.  
"Dia..."
Mari muttered aghast as she rushed forward to embrace her trembling friend.  
"I'm so sorry! It's my fault, I should have been the one to be bit! Not you!"
Kanan joined in, doing her best to calm down the two of them.  
"This was nobody's fault. It happens. Look we have her blood samples and Maki ran tests on it a while ago. Maybe if we analyze the results, we can fond a cure?"
Mari stepped back, wiping her eyes clean.  
"It's a long shot but...hell let's try."  
Dia smiled sadly.  
"Yeah, I'm not going down without a fight."

---

"Rin?"
Hanayo rounded a corner, panting heavily.  
She had searched the whole school for her friend and their old classroom was the last place on her list.  
Turning around, she heard sniffles coming from...  
The closet?  
Slowly approaching, she wrapped her hand around the handle and pulled one door open slowly.  
"Rin chan?"
Looking down, she found the ginger, tears streaming down her face.  
"Oh my god, Rin!"
She quickly pulled the young girl out of the cramped closet, out onto the floor, cradling her as she cried into her chest.  
She didn't want to ask anything.  
This wasn't a rare thing to happen, they had established a routine by now.  
Rin would cry and once she felt like it, talk to her.  
Lifting Rins blouse slowly, Hanayo couldn't help but steal a glance at the numerous scars on her friends back.  
She clearly remembered the first day that Rin came crying to her house, her back bleeding like mad.  
The little girl had been just six when her parents had decided to punish her for wanting to be herself.
Hanayo remembered watching her own mother clean and bandage Rin, she remembered how by the second time, not even a week later, she had requested to be taught how to treat the wounds herself.

Her parents had gone to court, but the judge had accepted bribes from the Hoshizoras and had ruled in their favor, despite clear evidence.

Hanayo traced her shoulder, feeling her own injury.

The one time she had been over at Rins house, she had stepped in the way of the lashing.

That was the second court case that they had lost.

The third had been filed just a day before all this shit went down...but obviously Rins parents had never come to justice.

Not through court that was.

Hanayo had made sure that they would never hurt Rin again.

And she felt absolutely no remorse for what she had done.

Hanayo felt the sobbing cease slowly and she propped Rins head up slightly, looking into her reddened eyes.

"Feeling better?"

"A bit."

Rin muttered, wiping her eyes on Hanayos shirt.

"Want to talk about what happened?"

The ginger shook her head silently.

That was fine, Hanayo wouldn't push it.

Rin would tell her on her own terms and she could wait until then.

"Hey Kayochin?"

"Hm?"

Rin looked at her friend, uncertainty spread across her face.

"Should I tell them?"

Hanayo didn't know what to say.

This wasn't her decision to make, it was Rins.

She should decide when or if she wanted to come out to the rest of the group.

She opened her mouth to speak, but was cut off by another person, who had pushed the door open and now stood quizzically in the entryway, twiddling her red hair in nervousness.

"Tell us what?"

---

Umi groaned as she rubbed her head.

She must've been out for at least an hour and her head pounded.

"Damnit."

She grit her teeth, trying to stop her head from aching.

To no avail of course.

Grappling with the beds supports, she tried to pull herself up, but her concentration was diverted as she felt something under Kotoris bed.

"Huh?"

She got onto her knees, intrigue overtaking her as she reached under the bed (keep in mind these beds are modified school desks, basically the legs have just been shortened so there is a lot of space) her fingers grazing what seemed to be Paper?

Cardboard maybe?

"What the crap?"

She exhaled, taking ahold of an edge and pulling out the rather heavy cardboard from under the bed.
She grimaced as her hand touched something slimy but she kept pulling, until the cardboard was fully out. The first thing she saw made her want to throw up. Preserved organs, in small jars and even a not so fresh heart, not preserved, were fixated to the board. They all had small name tags and the places that did not have organs, they had hairs or...clothing? "What is this...?" Umi wondered, wiping her hand clean hastily as she realized the slimy thing had been a heart. What was Kotori doing? Was this some sort of grotesque trophy board? She picked up one jar, having a bit of trouble detaching it as it had been fixated with glue. "Boy one, first attack on Otonki." She read aloud, thinking back to the story which Nozomi had told, about them getting attacked by other high schoolers. That was the first kill then. But why did she have his eye? In a jar? Looking over the board, she found the title and she could swear her heart stopped beating as she read it. Or it speed up incredibly. Honestly, she didn't care. All her attention was directed to the neat writing on the top of the gruesome board. "Rest in piece.." Her eye caught onto smaller writing below it, a small sense of relief spreading through her. "I'm sorry.." Before she could keep analyzing the...memorial? Yeah it had to be a memorial. Before she could form any new ideas to what she was presented with, a newcomer disturbed her. A very frightening newcomer at that. "Umi chan...you shouldn't have seen that.."

---

Okay that did hurt. A bit. Nozomi withdrew her finger, looking at the bite curiously. It wasn't deep, nor did it look particularly dangerous. But looks could deceive, as is so often the case. Trying to quell the panic rising in her chest, for now there was no going back, she sent a bullet through the Zombies brain. She remembered the first she had killed, in the school. She had been so scared, terrified of killing. The memory repression drugs really had done their jobs well, she had no problem killing anymore. Her finger began tingling uncomfortably, reminding her of the situation she was in. "Fuck it. Let's do this." She said aloud to herself, placing her left hand on the marble countertop, curling it into a fist, sans her pinky finger. Her right hand wrapped itself around the cool handle of the knife. "Okay." She muttered, raising the knife. "Okayokayokay" She shook her head to clear her mind and aligned the blade to the upper segment.
"Don't get soft now!"
She raised her weapon, doing her best to keep the blade steady.
"Three, two....ONE!"
With the last word, she swung the knife down towards her finger with all her might, her heart pace quickening to an unhealthy rhythm as she watched the knife slowly descend onto her finger, inches away from cutting it away.

Chapter End Notes

Kotori, Rin and Nozomi sure seem to have a lot going on don't they

Let's see where the rabbit hole leads
A wretched scream filled the empty apartment, as Nozomi watched what used to be the last segment of her finger roll off the countertop. A searing pain spread through her hand and she could feel the countertop become slippery with her own blood.
"Fuck!"
She breathed through her teeth, doing her best not to pass out. She couldn't, she'd had worse pain before right?
Yeah, yeah the burn was worse. She could do this. She had to.
With a shaking hand she grabbed the disinfectant and in a very ungraceful manner basically poured half of it onto her finger. This only caused the pain to spike, as she groaned in pain.
"One last thing...come on Nozomi!"
Grappling with the bandages, she wrapped it very unprofessionally around her finger. That didn't matter, she'd have it done correctly as soon as she was back at the quarantine. This was just temporary.
She hoped.
Finishing up, she quickly packed all her belongings back into her backpack and threw herself onto the nearby sofa. Thank god that she had locked the door before starting all this. Otherwise, she'd have a lot of Zombies to deal with now.
"Although..."
She smiled slightly, recalling the reason she had even put herself through this ordeal. "I shouldn't have to worry about that anymore."

---

"K-Kotori!"
Umi bolted up, voice betraying almost unnecessary panic. "I thought you're in the infirmary!"
The ash haired held up a small preserved jar, that contained what seemed to be her stabbed eyeball.
"I was going to bring this to my room first...I want to throw it at Nozomis mom."
Umi nodded slowly, sitting onto her own bed for some mental protection. Home turf always felt better.
"Kotori....what is that?"
She hesitantly pointed at the gruesome collection of various organs that littered the cardboard. Kotoris face fell instantly as she shoved it back under the bed, blocking Umis view with her body. "Nothing for you to worry about."
The archer shook her head.
this time she would get through to Kotori, no matter what. "No. Answer the question."
Kotori tensed up visibly at the gruffer tone, but didn't seem to acknowledge it in any other way. "Just...a miniature grave yard. I like keeping track of my victims."
Umi shook her head, holding up the jar with the dead boys eye. "The label seems unnecessary if you are just counting them. Same goes for preserving body parts or stealing clothing. If you simply wanted to keep track, you could just write them down."
She placed the jar on Kotoris nightstand, cautiously observing every change of demeanor that her friend was going through.
"So I prefer to collect their innards. Can't I do that?"
Okay so that wasn't a good answer.
The blue haired girl shook her head, slowly reaching out to hold Kotoris hand, as to calm her trembling.
"Kotori..please tell the truth. I'm-I'm really worried about you."
She smiled at her gently, trying not to grimace at the amount of force Kotori was currently executing on her hand.
"Umi please.."
She turned away, a small snort indicating the onset of tears.
"Please just let this go.."
"No! You've been hiding so much I-I can't take this anymore!"
She let out, letting desperation get the better of her in the situation.
"Ever since we reunited, you haven't been yourself! You haven't been the Kotori I knew before!"
She felt tears prickle her eyes as she finally said, what she had been wanting to say for months.
"You've suddenly become brutal! This isn't healthy, This isn't you!"
She heaved, her heart hammering like mad.
Looking up, she noticed Kotori had turned around to face her, tears spilling out from beneath the eye patch (it looked disturbing) and her intact eye.
"Umi stop..!"
Her voice was as strained as Umis as she spoke up.
"Please stop.."
The blue haired girl clutched onto her hand tighter, determined not to let go this time.
"You can't keep this up! Please just..be yourself again."
Kotori shook her head vigorously.
"No! I can't!"
She wretched her hand free from Umis, stumbling back in excess force.
"I have to stay strong!"
With that, she stormed out, leaving a tearful and confused Umi behind.
"What does this have to do with strength..?"

---

"Maki?"
Mari slid the door to the infirmary open, noticing it was empty.
"Great, now we gotta find them ourselves."
She muttered, entering the room.
"It can't be that hard to find, how many blood samples does Maki have after all."
Kanan made her way to the desk, riffling through the small pile of papers.
"You realize we probably can't read them though right?"
Dia cut in, sitting onto the one available bed.
The other one belonged to Kotori, although why she wasn't here, who knew.
"Hey I can totally read it....just not understand it."
Mari smiled cheekily at the other two as she kept filing through, what seemed to be pages ripped out from school books.
They all focused on the eye and its functionality or on hands and how to amputate them.
"This school came prepared."
She muttered, trying to make sure not to make a mess.
They weren't trying to hide what they were up to, but they also didn't want to make a giant mess.
"Ah!"
Kanan exclaimed, holding up two papers.
"I think I may have found something."
Mari hurried to her side, squinting at the small text.
"I have no idea what these numbers mean."
Kanan deadpaned as she starred at the paper in front of them.
"Same."
Mari muttered and inspected the paper closer.
"I should've payed more attention to bio class in school."
Kanan let out an almost sorrowful laughter.
"I should've been more in school."
Dia groaned, snatching the paper for herself.
"It's not that hard. All this says is what is in my blood. All we have to do is get a result from my current blood, and the numbers the change will be what we're most likely looking for."
She looked at her two friends, who simply stared at her in awe.
"What? Unlike you two, I actually payed attention in class."
---
"Tell us what?"
Maki cut into their conversation sharply, looking down at them accusingly.
Hanayo instinctively placed herself between Rin and Maki, glaring at her with an uncharacteristic intensity that was honestly, pretty unnerving.
"Maki, what are you doing eavesdropping on us?"
The redhead backed away slightly, seriously worried at the change in Hanayos usual calm demeanor.
"I had some things to discuss with you. Both of you."
She rummaged inside her bag, watching Hanayos and Rins faces contort to surprise as she pulled out an old revolver.
Maki silently thanked Ruby for recovering most of their belongings from the quarantine, if she hadn't, this would have become very complicated.
"Where...Where did you get that from?"
The olive haired asked cautiously.
"I'm sure you know where. It was in your parents nightstand. I noticed that there didn't seem to be any dust near the handle, so I decided to figure out why and tadah. I found a fucking blood covered weapon."
She pointed the gun at the two, to illustrate the bloodied muzzle.
"Then I overhear you two talking about doing something, and that Rins parents corpses had never turned."
She began tinkering with the unloaded gun, evidently nervous.
"And both of them had bullet holes through their skulls that indicate a point blank range."
Hanayo stood up, a very infuriated look adorning her.
"What are you attempting to blame us with here?"
The redhead backed away slightly, but stayed determined to get to the bottom of this.
"Let me finish. I'm not insinuating that you killed them in cold blood. Quite the contrary, I'm absolutely positive that you didn't."
Maki knelt down next to Rin, keeping her movements slow, as not to frighten the two.
"Hanayo killed your parents to protect you didn't she?"
Rin seemed frozen at the question, neither denying nor affirming it.
Behind her, Maki heard Hanayo sigh as she placed herself in between the two again.
"Let's say I did. So what?"
"I'd go on to my next question. Why?"
Rin finally spoke up from behind her friend, her voice devoid of its usual energy. "They were terrible people, that's why."
"Rin, you don't have to-"
Hanayo started but was cut off.
"No, she's got a good guess by now. I'm sure she saw my back when I was changing."
Maki nodded numbly as Rin traced down a scar that ran across her shoulder.
"Kayochin killed them for me. I wasn't strong enough to do it...but I'm very grateful that she did."
The redhead extended to gun towards Hanayo at that, smiling gently.
"I get it...well as much as I can...but I do have one more question."
Hanayo accepted the revolver, tucking it awkwardly into her back pocket.
"A-And you don't have to answer this, if you don't want to."
Maki continued, hoping she wasn't about to tread into explosive territory.
"But, why did they hurt you?"
Rin stared straight ahead, unblinking for what felt like hours before she finally spoke.
"Because.."
She stopped, wiping her eyes clean of tears.
"Because I didn't want to be-no. Because I wasn't their little boy."

---

"Nico?"
Umi entered Nicos bedroom, after having knocked once first to signal her arrival.
She found the raven haired girl on the bed, her face pressed into the pillow, seemingly asleep.
"How does anyone sleep like that...I'd smother myself on accident..."
She muttered, turning to leave.
"I'm not sleeping"
Came Nicos muffled voice as she sat up, rubbing her very tired looking eyes.
"I mean I was trying to, but that can wait. What do you want?"
She yawned, stretching her sore limbs.
"I wanted to talk about Kotori. About what happened while I wasn't here."
Umi sat down on Makis bed, noting that every room had switched to the double bed system.
She'd have to ask someone later as to how and when that happened.
"I'm..I'm going to assume you mean, how she went from sweet and gentle to downright evil?"
The blue haired girl nodded, kneading the makeshift mattress below her.
Nico let out a sigh, her bratty outside all but dropped.
"It's my fault. I shouldn't have allowed it."
Umi cocked her head at that, unsure of what Nico meant.
"After we found the principles room completely drenched in blood, Kotori broke down. She went berserk on the still remaining dead in the school....which isn't abnormal you know? I used my grief as well when I was getting my siblings out...problem is, she then decided she needed to be stronger."
Umi nodded slowly, gradually beginning to grasp the core of the issue.
"Strength."
"Yeah. She swore that next time anyone she cared about was in danger, she would be strong enough to protect them...problem is, her perception of it has been warped I fear. She practiced so hard, building muscle and stamina, killing and dissecting Zombies, that she's forgotten what other aspects being strong holds."
The archer felt her body become tense, as Nico kept talking.
"She only holds the violence dear to her. I don't know what she is truly thinking, but to the outside world, she is playing a demon."
Umi thought back at the cardboard, nodding her head softly.
"Yeah...but she feels regret."
"How do you-"
"Nevermind."
Umi bolt up in a hurry, heading for the door.
"I need to find Kotori."
She didn't care if that had come over rude.
Last time she and Kotori had had an argument, her friend had jumped off the freaking roof.
She sped through the school, checking in on every room that she crossed.
She ran in on a brief scene of Maki, Rin and Hanayo which didn't look pleasant, but she was sure they hadn't noticed her. They seemed in real deep in their discussion.
She had checked in on Kanan, Mari and Dia, as they were discussing something but yet again, too deep in discussion.
The only people to notice her were Honoka and Tsubasa and the two had such a flustered look on their faces, Umi really didn't want to know what they had been doing.
But damn it, No Kotori to be found anywhere.
That's where a sickening realization hit her.
"Holly crap she is on the roof again."
Umi muttered as she closed the last, non occupied room.
Panic began to set in as she raced up the staircase, flinging the door open and stumbling onto the roof, breathing heavily.
"Kotori?"
She heard a suppressed sniffle from on top one of the look out posts.
Quickly clambering the ladder, she was greeted by a sight that made her heart drop.
Kotoris eye was red and puffy, her face stained with tears.
"Kotori..."
The ash haired looked up in shock at being addressed, quickly attempting to cover up her current state without messing with tear stained eye patch.
"I-I didn't expect to be disturbed up here..."
She muttered, failing completely to stop the tears from flowing freely down her cheeks.
Umi nodded blankly, uncertain on how to proceed with this.
Last time they had been on the roof together...lets just say Umi had to be a lot more careful with her words than usual.
"I know what you're thinking."
Kotori shook her head lightly as she spoke, as if to get rid of her thoughts.
"I'm not up here to jump. I just happened to have shift."
Oh thank god.
Umi heaved a sigh of relief as she fully swung herself onto the roof, sitting down next to her friend.
"Don't ever do that again."
Kotori smiled sadly as she looked away.
"I can try. But currently, I don't know if my mental health has the capability of promising that."
"I guess I'll have to take that then."
Umi muttered, feeling incredibly awkward.
Before, she had wanted to find Kotori at all costs, but she hadn't exactly thought through what she was going to say to her.
How does one approach this subject in the first place?
"Hey, Umi?"
Kotori spoke up meekly.
"Why can't I be strong?"
The archer stared at her friend questioningly, prompting an explanation.
"I mean...I trained so hard to be strong! I built up muscle like mad I-I trained to kill those Zombies with no remorse a-and I thought I could do that with humans too..!"
She sighed, gazing up at the sky in an attempt to stop her eye from tearing up again.
"But I can't. I put up this facade of killing but...my heart breaks with each human life I take."
Umi knew that she shouldn't feel relief at her friends anguish but she did.
A glimmer of hope was sparked inside her as Kotori spoke, hope that she could get her friend back.
"But I forced myself to keep killing. I set up a small memorial under my bed, I pray for each of
their souls every night before sleeping...I always dread having to kill again.
She kept on talking uninterrupted, her voice cracking at some points.
But Umi didn't want to stop her at this point, she had to hear it all.
"But I still do it. I still kill, I laugh in my victims faces as I kill them, I smile as I rip out their hearts.
All while I feel like my soul is slowly dying inside."
She finally faced Umi as she kept wiping away her never ending tears.
"But lately I've noticed a change and-Umi I'm scared. I-I'm starting not to feel guilty! I know, I've
been working towards that but-Now that I have it...God I'm terrified! I'm losing my humanity, I'm
losing myself!"
She began to talk faster, constantly interrupting herself as she began to shake, her entire body a
panicky mess.
Unsure if this was a good idea, Umi reached out, pulling the ash haired into a tight embrace where
she wept into her shoulder.
"Umi I need help!"
She whispered desperately as she clutched onto her friend.
"I don't want to be strong if that's what it takes! I-I want to stay human!"
For the first time in the exchange, Umi decided to speak up at that.
Her voice betrayed a certain uncertainty, but she persisted nonetheless.
"You don't have to lose your humanity to be strong."
She reluctantly pushed her sobbing friend off her enough to be facing her eye to eye.
"Kotori, you've been strong for as long as I've known you. Strength isn't measured by how many
people you can kill, or by how much muscle you have."
"But then how-?"
Umi interrupted her, knowing what question was to come.
"Strength is facing consequences of your actions. Strength is being able to relish human life, to
value everyone, even the people you are fighting. You're strong willed, you always have been.
In important matters you've never been a push over, even if you tended to seem like that. You
always thought for yourself, you always took other peoples feelings into consideration. That is
strength Kotori. You were strong enough to make decisions, that had negative impacts, like
helping your mother leave your father. You were strong enough to carry the consequences of that."
Umi grasped onto Kotoris shoulders firmly as she stared into her caramel eyes determined.
"Kotori, you are stronger than anyone I have ever known. I've admired you for your endearing and
kind personality from the moment I've met you and it hurts to see you become so warped by this
world."
She held Kotoris hands now, trying to seem as sincere as possible, trying her best to make her
feelings reach Kotori.
"If you'll open up to me from now on, if you promise not to put up all these facades, I promise I
will do my very best to help you."
---

"Oh ew"
Alisa muttered as she wiped off some blood, while making her way to the bathroom, feeling grimy
after having to stab one of her sisters old teachers straight through the head.
She and Yukiho had been slowly clearing the last part of the school grounds, trying to make a safe
outside space as well, that they could grow crops on.
It was a long and endearing process, but it would be worth it if they managed it.
Turning on the tap, she was surprised to see not water running.
"What the.."
She muttered, quickly turning on and off the rest of the taps that were in the bathroom, only to find
the same results.
Oh this wasn't good.
They had all known this day was going to come but...
Fuck.
"The water isn't running anymore."

Chapter End Notes

I cried writing this, have a nice day

Also fuck Kavanaugh, what the fuck is America doing what the shitting fuck
Alisa burst through the door, startling her roommate.
"We...!"
She breathed out through clenched teeth.
"We have a serious problem!"
Yukiho looked at her, worry spreading across her face.
"A problem?"
Alisa nodded, flicking the lightswitch on and off.
Yukiho noticed that the lights did not turn on however.
"Uho."
"Uho is right. We're already running out of food, losing power is a disaster."
The young Kousaka head towards the door, motioning Alisa to follow her.
"Cmon, we have to tell Nico."

---

Makis face shifted from confusion, to epiphany in a second.
"Oh my god.."
She muttered, feeling guilt crawl up on her.
"I-Im so sorry, I didn't want to force you to out yourself like that!"
She stuttered, fumbling over her words as the realization set in.
This explained so many things!
How Rin didn't need tampons, her insecurities about the male uniform she had been given in the quarantine, even and most importantly, the need for special medication.
"No no! I-It's fine, I should tell everyone anyway."
Rin quickly deflected, looking almost terrified at the prospect.
She finally got up, helping Hanayo stand as well.
"What? Why?"
Hanayo inquired tentatively as she wiped away a few sole tears from her eyes.
"I can't keep lying to everyone."
Maki shook her head, taking Rins hand in her own.
"I know your parents must have drilled this into you but I can tell you with one hundred percent medical certainty, that you aren't lying by transitioning."
Hanayo reached out to clasp the gingers other hand, smiling gently at her.
"I told you that before, remember? It's your choice if you want to come out, but not for one second are you allowed to think that you're lying."
"Besides, we're in the apocalypse. You're free to be whatever you want, who's gonna stop you?"
Maki added with a small grin.
A small smile spread across Rins face as her eyes glazed over again.
"Thanks. Both of you. I'll tell them when I'm ready."
Hanayo stepped forward, embracing her trembling friend.
"Only if you want to. There's no reason to do so, we're not going to judge you either way."
"Yeah."
Maki affirmed, stepping out of the classroom to leave the two some peace.
"We aren't your parents. Ironic to say, this is a safe place here."
She closed the door behind her, truly wishing she could stay and make sure Rin was alright.
But in this world, time was a luxury that she did not possess.
She had to get back to work.
Back in the classroom, Rin had collapsed into her friends chest again, tears of happiness overtaking her.
Hanayo pat her back soothingly, whispering every word as not to upset her friend.
"I told you Maki would understand Rin. Just like everyone else will. If you decide to tell them that is."
The ginger looked up, bright smile starting to plaster itself on her face.
"So you truly think everyone will accept me as a girl?"
The olive haired girl let out a small giggle as she planted a soft kiss on the younger ones forehead
"I know they will."

---

"Nico!"
Yukiho almost rammed down the door to their "HQ".
It was just another classroom really, but they had declared it their headquarters.
Nico jumped up, clearly having been asleep.
Yukiho didn't blame her, at this point, everyone slept at every moment off.
"Wh-Wha..?"
Nico muttered sleepily as she rubbed the sleep out of her eyes.
God she could use some coffee.
"The power and water are out."
Alisa finally arrived panting in the doorway, having struggled to keep up with her friend.
"I checked all the bathrooms before telling Yukiho. Water and power. Gone!"
Nico groaned, resisting the urge to smash her head against the wooden table.
"Of fucking course it is. Just when we need it the most."
She shook her head, getting up and pushing the chair back in it's place.
"Let's go check how much food we have, worst case, a last minute squad will have to be assembled to go out and salvage."
She strode past the young girls, heading down to the kitchen.
Well, makeshift kitchen.
Currently, Erena and Anju were managing it, they had finally been fully incorporated into the team.
Turns out, the both of them are amazing cooks!
And amazingly horny.
Nico vividly remembered walking on the two doing some...not so kid safe activities.
They were fucking eachothers brains out.
Fitting metaphor for an apocalypse, Nico had to remember that.
Her brain truly was brilliant.
Not that anyone would ever admit that to her face, but she was sure that they knew it.

---

"How the hell should I know the code?"
Eli wondered allowed, laying down on her bed and praying she won't fall asleep.
For the last hour she had plugged in words, because of course Nozomi wouldn't have a number pad. Way too fucking simple.
It seemed though, that she had modified the phone, because no matter how many times she tried, she was not confronted with a blocked phone.
Only a small message that popped up after ten tries periodically that read
"Forgot again?"
Which great, now Nozomi was taunting her when she wasn't even there.
The blonde groaned in frustration.
She had tried everything, from "Tarot" up until "1234". How should she guess the password of someone she had known for all of like, three months. Okay maybe she should, they had lived with each other. But Eli had never seen her unlock her phone, mainly because she had hidden it from them. Holding the phone up, she examined the lock screen. She hadn't payed any attention to it before, but it was pretty weird. It wasn't your typical selfie, fanart or picture of your pet. It was a picture of what seemed to be Nico and Eli talking to each other. Meaning, to get this, Nozomi must have snuck around, taken the picture and left, without either of them noticing. Which was kinda creepy. And then putting that as lock screen. Very creepy. A thought struck Eli. Maybe the picture had something to do with the password? "Pretty stupid but let's see..." She pressed the keypad, trying both Nicos and her own name. To no avail. Of course it wasn't that easy. "Why would she even use her friends names.." Friends. No, they were enemies now. In Nozomis mind at least it seemed. Eli resented it. But she couldn't let anger and grief take over her. Not in this environment, not at this time. "One more try." It was desperate. It was so stupid. But she had to try one last connection with the lockscreen. "Friends" The phone unlocked.

---

"Anju, Erena."
Nico startled the two, who were currently plucking a really small bird. Like, maybe it could have been made into one chicken nugget. Maybe. "What's up?"

Anju turned around, wiping some blood off on her pants. "Is this about the lights and water not working? Cuz we've noticed. I'm pretty sure everyone has." Erena inquired, placing the bird into a small bag of other pathetically sized plucked birds. "Partially. With no water and power, we have to know what food we have left." Yukiho spoke up, striding over to a counter and picking up a small notebook. "It's documented in here right?"
The two cooks nodded yes. "We don't have much, I can tell you that. Everyone is hungry." God di Nico know that to be true. Her last meal had been yesterday at noon and she knew Honoka had been refusing food altogether, making sure everyone else ate first. When it came down to it, she wouldn't be a bad leader. Apart from that one time she went ballistic of course.
Thank god she doesn't remember that.
"This'll last us like, four more days tops."
Yukiho concluded in a solemn voice, saying what everyone had been fearing.
"We have to go out for more."

---

"Even newborn birds
Will someday flutter into the sky
On their large, strong wings.....hey that actually sounds pretty cool!"
Maki heard Honokas enthusiastic voice waft through the hall.
An excited applause sounded right afterwards, fallowed by Chikas voice.
"Woha, didn't think you could be so articulate!"
Rikos laughter, yes Riko and Maki had spent enough time together to be able to recognize eachothers laughter, fallowed suit.
"Are you insulting or complimenting her?"
Curiosity peaked, Maki knocked gently on the half open door and stepped in, taking in the small group in front of her.
Honoka was laying on the ground, her head on Tsubasas lap.
Chika was in a similar position, except on Rikos lap and You sat on top of the piano chair, leaning against it with an almost glum look on her face.
"What's going on here?"
Riko smiled and held up a notebook that had a few lines of lyrics scrawled on it.
"Writing a song. We all need something uplifting in these times. I was thinking of matching it to the rhythm we created the other day."
A small smile crept up on Makis lips as she entered the room and sat down next to the group.
She really needed something fun to do.

---

"Yknow, I aint gotta be a doctor to know that this shit."
Mari pointed to a formula on the lab results.
"Isn't supposed to be in our blood. That shit is organic matter."
Kanan and Dia just stared at Mari with a surprised expression.
Since when was she this smart?
Or knew anything about biology?
"What? I'm not stupid yknow."
"Is this the same Mari who asked me what a swan was?"
"I forgot okay? Stop using that against me!"
The blonde huffed, snatching the results.
"Besides, I've seen this formula before, so I know what it is."
Wait what?
Dia and Kanan blinked at eachother in confusion.
"Why do you-"
Mari cut off her friends quickly, obviously knowing this question would come.
"It's been hanging in my dads office for around five years no-oh fuck.."
As she spoke, Mari seemed to have a very painful realization.
"G-Guys?"
She whispered tersely, not wanting to even utter the possibility of this being true.
But it had to be.
Why else would her dad have been saved?
Why else would he have had so many weapons?
Why else would he have known what this chemical was?
It all made terrifying sense now.
"I think..."
She tried to steady her voice before continuing.
"I think my dad was in on this...!"

---

Eli didn't believe it.
That had been the passcode.
Something so simple.
Had they really meant that much to her?
Browsing around to keep her mind off those thoughts, she opened the music app, where she found nothing but heavy metal, which didn't fit Nozomi at all.
Or actually maybe it did.
It's a gray area.
Going back to the Home screen, she looked around for games and found none, the background picture here was a given by Apple.
Very boring really.
Tapping the photos app, she sucked her breath in as se found countless of sneak photos, not just of her, but of everyone.
Going to folders, all the pictures of them had been labeled "Precious".
This hurt.
She couldn't look at it.
Scrolling down quickly, she hit a folder all the way on the bottom, with the name "Video diary".
Desperate to distract herself, she opened it up, only to find a lot of videos, all that featured Nozomi.
Scrolling to the first, which had been recorded almost two years ago, she pressed play on a Nozomi, who looked significantly younger.
She had much shorter hair, and bandages all over her body.
Pressing up the volume, Nozomis gentle voice was to be heard.
"So uh..Emma told me to do video logs to jog my memory, so here we are. I just got away from my parents, well I mean, Emma dragged me away from burning rubble a few weeks ago and I'm now on memory repression drugs. So I'm gonna try to document it....jeez this is awkward aint it uh....guess that's all for today! I remember everything in a daze and I don't want to know more!
That's the update for today."
The video cut off, leaving Eli in an awed state.
That and a very, very emotional state.
This happy, cheerful kid, who was nervously twidling her thumbs in the video, was the same woman who was trying to kill them.
Going back to albums, she found one titled "Please watch."
The date was just a few days after Eli had joined the group.
When had Nozomi even recorded that?
Curiosity peaked, Eli pressed play and a more mature sounding Nozomi started speaking.
"Hi Elichi..or whoever is watching this, although odds are it's you. I left my phone in my room after all. If you're watching this...I'm sorry for hiding my phone."
Nozomi shook her head, wiping a small tear that had been forming in her eye off her face.
"No, if you're watching this, my parents have either killed me or captured me. So I'm sorry for hiding what I was, no, who I was from you...I don't know what I'm up to at the point of when you're seeing this, or if I'm even alive. Truth is, part of me hopes I'm not...."
A short silence fallowed as she readjust the phone to focus on her again.
"I'm sorry you had to find out you elected a murderer as leader. Truth is, I've been killing long before all of this shit. My first was when I was just ten I believe. But I digress."
She toyed with a small bright blue band around her wrist. It kind of seemed familiar actually.

"I just want to clear some things up, in case my parents have attempted to...reprogram me. I've seen them do it before to deserters, so that's probably my fate if I'm caught. I can't say if it'll have worked or not but...well the only help I can give emotionally if that has happened is that I can guarantee you I don't mean anything I say."

She kept twiddling and fidgeting with the wristband, it seemed like a nervous tick.

"Knowing my parents, if they reprogrammed me successfully, I am currently attempting to kill all of you. This will sound stupid but...don't let me. Obvious I know. But do anything to stop me. If you have to."

Nozomi took a deep breath before continuing.

"Kill me."

The video ended and Eli realized that she was crying.

 Tears streamed down her face and she tried to distract herself again.

She had to numb it. She had to.

Pressing play on the second video of the folder, she noted the date couldn't be more than two weeks ago.

"Elichi I'm so sorry."

Nozomi was crying, the camera angle was all frenzied and unfocused.

The blondes heart wrenched at the sight.

"To all of you, I'm so sorry. My parents are coming, I know they are. They're behind all of this, they have to be! I'm sorry I dragged you into all this...I'm going to go suggest to go out tomorrow with a small group, I'm going to my house. They'll be waiting for me, I'm sure. I won't let anyone of ours die but...well I'm sure this will be the last thing you'll see of me where I'm not attempting to kill you."

The sniffling stopped for a moment as Nozomi caught her breath.

"I just want you to know...all of you, I care for all of you deeply. Otonokizaka was the first and only family I had and even if it was forged in such terrible times, even though it was short, I loved it. I don't want to go. Part of me wishes that any one of you would walk in through the door right now and stop me! I don't want to go!"

The video showed the phone falling and hit the ground and for the next five minutes or so, only Nozomis crying was to be heard.

It hurt so badly to watch, to know she could have helped all the way back then.

Finally, the terrible crying abated as the phone was picked up.

"I'm sorry, I can't go losing composure now. All of you, stay safe. And don't listen to me. Anything I say is a lie. I care about all of you! And Elichi...I know I'm going to be targeting you specifically at some point. My parents will want me to eliminate the person I cared about most. Don't let me succeed. Please, for the love of all gods, don't let me succeed in anything I try."

The video ended with the phone being shut off, not bothering to actually stop it herself.

Eli clicked it off as well, rolling up into a fetal position on the bed.

She couldn't take this anymore.

She didn't want to believe any of the terrible things Nozomi had already.

Killed at ten?
Who the hell does that?
Was how she is now, really how she had been all her life?

Was that the real her?
She shook her head, knowing that couldn't be it.

Or at least, hoping dearly that couldn't be it.

No, the real Nozomi was the one that they had all known here.

Calm, gentle, motherly, if sometimes incredibly brutal.

But never undeserved.
That was her.
Not cruel or heartless.
Thinking back to the quarantine, she remembered Nozomi saving Kotori's life.
The real Nozomi was still there.
And she would get her back.

---

"Zuramaru?"
Yoshiko called out again, wandering the bottom floor of the school.
This was the first moment since their return that was more or less calm, and she really wanted to inform Hanamaru that the sleep bombs had been effective.
But for some reason, she couldn't find her anywhere.
She had checked all the rooms and staircases of the top two floors and the roofs.
To no avail.
Panic was starting to creep up on her.
Something was wrong, she had known Hanamaru long enough to be able to sense that.
Or maybe it was her fallen angel powers.
Yeah must be that.
Reaching the library, her last hope, she reached for the door but found it locked.
Which it definitely shouldn't be.
Maybe Hanamaru didn't want to be disturbed when reading?
Knocking, Yoshiko waited in front of the door patiently.
After a minute of silence, she knocked again.
"Zuramaru? You in there?"
Again no response.
But this was the last room of the floor.
Where the hell was she?

---

Hanamaru finally managed to pry the fingers off her mouth, that had been gagging her for the last five minutes as Yoshiko attempted to open the door and then knocked twice.
She had even called out before leaving.
All while Hanamaru could do absolutely nothing to signal she was inside.
Just minutes before, while she had been immersed in a book, someone had snuck in, locked the door, brought down the blinds in a crash and finally, tackled her.
What person was so adept at kidnapping?
A hiss of pain followed as she forced the hand away, realizing she had gotten blood on her own.
But not her blood.
Stumbling back, as far away from her assailter, she crashed into a bookshelf, nearly causing it to collapse.
"Wh-Who are you?"
Hanamaru shakily asked, searching the dark room for an exit.
The windows were no longer an option, the blinds and the boards outside were pretty Maru proof.
And the door was locked.
This wasn't good.
"Cmon, who am I gonna be?"
The voice was completely relaxed, if a bit strained.
And it also seemed extremely familiar.
But why would she be visiting her of all people?
"Nozomi...!"
She pressed out, looking at her adversary's hand, wondering what on earth all the blood on her own
stemmed from.
She recoiled at the sight, which seemed to amuse Nozomi.
"Ah, yes my hand is kinda terrifying. But trust me when I say, it was completely worth it."
Hanamaru didn't know what to say.
She had never been confrontational nor very brave.
The real world was not her domain.
"I can see that you're wondering why I'm here."
Nozomi strode forward, almost kneeling down to be on Hanamarus eye level.
(Almost. She wasn't the tiny.)
Her eyes were kind, not at all how she had expected them to be.
Not how Ruby had described them.
Even so, while she (like everyone else at Otonoki at this point) knew Nozomi was out for them, this was the first time facing her in this new character.
And oddly enough, it wasn't as terrifying as she had thought it would be.
"You can relax yknow, I aint here to hurt you."
Somehow, Hanamaru doubted that.
But something about how Nozomi carried herself, seemed to inspire confidence in her.
But it had to be acting.
She had to keep her guard up.
"Then what are you here for?"
Hanamaru was surprised how brave she sounded.
A small giggle was her response as Nozomi pulled up two chairs from the near reading corner and sat down, Hanamaru following suit, if out of pure instinct.
"I just simply thought, we could be beneficial to eachother."
Wait now what did that mean.
---
"Yknow, maybe change this tooo.."
Maki scratched out some of Rikos notes, much to her protest and replaced it with her own.
"This. We repeat Start Dash twice, following it with instrumental first before the next part."
After a moment of contemplation, Riko nodded slowly.
"That actually makes sense, let me fix it on the next page."
She quickly flipped the page over, correcting the course of the song.
Maki was about to ask Tsubasa for help, but as she turned around, she found her and Honoka fast asleep.
Not surprisingly of course.
Chika had added onto the lyrics from time to time, but surprisingly, most had come from Honoka (little did she know, Honoka had peeked in Umis note book).
You hadn't participated much, probably because when she did, Chika would often cut her off.
Which was weird.
And pretty rude too.
"You, what do you think we should do?"
The ash haired girl looked up in surprise at being addressed.
"Me? I-I don't write songs, I'm more of a seamstress."
She muttered, looking at Chika and Riko, almost expecting them to interfere.
When they didn't she continued.
"I mean...I don't want to but in but...here."
Maki handed her the song and pencil.
"How about we change the middle part here and focus the instrumental here?"
She pointed to various regions on the paper.
"Hmm.."
Maki took it back, making the necessary adjustments. "Not a bad Idea actually!"
A small smile played on Yous lips as Chika spoke up. "Hey good job! Now, what do you think Riko?"
The small moment of glory had ended.

---

"Beneficial to eachother?"
Hanamaru repeated Nozomis words in confusion. "You don't want me to-"
"Nono, not at all. You don't need to betray them per say.."
A questioning and very skeptical look fellowed that. "I just want some general information or help. I'll tell you when of course."
Maru shook her head, disbelief evident. "Why in the world would I do that, zura."
"As a thank you. I've shut off electricity and water here. You'll soon become very important, having lived in a place similar to these conditions."
Nozomi winked cheerfully as she brought the shutters up. "You don't have to answer me now, I'll give you time."
Before she could open a window to escape through a neatly cut hole in the timbers blocking the window, Hanamaru strode forward, tackling the taller (and stronger) girl in a moment of confidence.
"Oh, someone's become confident."
A small smirk played on Nozomis lips as she made no effort to struggle. "What do you gain out of coming to me now? What do you gain by even contacting me?! You know I won't betray anyone!"
Nozomi let out a laugh, a very condescending laugh. "Because I know you don't have the guts to tell anyone about this."
Her voice had grown deathly cold, and for the first time, Maru witnessed what Ruby had meant. "I'm playing with all of you, starting with you. You won't warn anyone, even if you wanted to you couldn't."
"Why-"
Hanamaru felt herself be flung across the library, hitting the floor hardly. Looking up, she found Nozomi looming over her, a blood chilling smile plastered on her face. "I've hidden a bomb inside this school before I came to see you. If I ever even catch wind of you betraying, someones room goes Kaboom."
She laughed, picking up the terrified girl by her collar. "And trust me I'll know. You're not the only one I'm going to approach. One of you will wear down I promise you that. And she'll get the prize of surviving the coming massacre."
She threw Hanamaru against the wall, who crashed to the ground with a thud. Taking a moment to catch her breath and knowing this might very well kill her, Maru decided to speak up. "Liar."
She stood up, facing Nozomi proudly, despite her anxiousness. "If you truly wanted to kill us all, you'd have done so already. You saved Kotoris life, putting your own at risk."
Maru saw with delight as the smile faded from Nozomis face. "You could just kill me now. But you won't. The old you is still holding you back."
She ran at Nozomi, sending a punch in her direction which to her shock, landed straight on its mark and sent her adversary sprawling.
Getting up, Nozomi glared at the younger girl, taking out a small knife.
"You dare."
She snarled, but was cut off by Maru.
"Yes I dare. I'm not scared of you Nozomi! I know you won't hurt me."
What Nozomi did not need to know was that Hanamaru was like, really stinking close to peeing her pants here.
With another growl, the older girl turned and headed for the window, opening it and climbing out slowly.
"You can count yourself lucky today, I have better things to do."
She swung herself out, leaving Hanamaru panting and teary eyed as she closed the window.
This was about as much as the young girl could handle.
Meaning that a simple knock on the door just moments later, sent her unconscious.

---

"Ruby?"
Kotori knocked on Rubys door, opening it after a muffled grunt was to be heard. Ruby was laying on the floor, probably having fallen from a push up position.
So she was still trying to get stronger.
At seeing Kotori, Ruby quickly scuttled upright to greet her.
"Can I come in?"
Kotori asked cautiously.
Confused, Ruby nodded and sat on her bed, leaving some space for her senior who happily sat beside her.
Kotoris eye was red, Ruby noted, which was unusual.
She hadn't ever seen Kotori cry once since joining the group.
"Is something wrong?"
The redhead asked cautiously.
"I...I heard you've been training to be strong."
Kotori began, watching Rubys features morph into an almost panicked look.
"J-Just a bit...I let my big sis get in trouble. I won't let anything happen to her again!"
The scarred face was gone, replaced by determination.
A small smile played on Kotoris lips.
"That's some good spirit."
The smile dropped slightly as her voice became more solemn.
"But Ruby, please don't kill again."
"Huh?"
"I'm thankful you saved us, that you saved me, but don't use deadly force again. Not unless you absolutely have to. Try to maim or seriously injure, not kill."
Ruby spoke up in confusion.
"But you kill all the time."
Ouch, maybe that had not been the right thing to say.
Kotori looked at her, her eye betraying hurt.
"I know. And I was very wrong to do so. Ruby, I am here to stop you before you go any farther down this road. You can not lose who you are, just to be strong."
The small redhead shook her head.
"No, I have to be strong whatever it takes!"
"Ruby."
Kotori gripped the younger girls shoulders tightly.
"Ruby listen to me. You are strong already. Do not kill again, it will consume you. Learn to treasure human life."
She let go, realizing she was hurting the young girl with her grip.
"Don't regard others lives with disdain like I did. Don't make the same mistakes as I did."
She stood up, not wanting to cry again today.
"I'm sorry, I'll come talk again later...I'm not in the best mental state right now..
She muttered as she rushed out of the room, slamming the door behind her.

---

You closed the door to the music room behind her.
Chika, Riko and Maki were still at it, but she was done.
Done with being a third wheel.
Every time she started talking, had an idea, hell asked a question, she would be cut off.
She wasn't mad at the two, not at all.
She just came to see that she wasn't wanted in the trio anymore.
So why stay right?
Walking along the corridor, she tried to occupy her mind with something else.
She was probably just over analyzing this, but it still hurt.
Finally finding an empty classroom, she pried away some loose timber, in order to stare out of the window.
This was calming.
The soft sway of the trees could almost lull her into thinking the room was swaying, just like a boat.
That's where she felt the safest.
Closing her eyes, she imagined herself on her fathers boat, a part of the crew, like everyone else.
Nobody disrespected her there, everyone took her seriously.
But the sweet daydream could only last so long, because of course she couldn't have something nice every now and then.
She heard someone sprinting off to somewhere and opening her eyes, she saw, very clearly, green eyes and purple hair.
"What the hell is she doing here?"
Grasping with the window, she swung it open and herself out, thankful that she was on the first floor.
Hoping Nozomi hadn't seen her, she ran after her.
And she was gaining ground.
Not to brag, but she had really kept herself in shape since this all started.
Nozomi had run into some brush on the side of the schools perimeter.
Which seemed like a trap.
But what choice did she have?
You quickly fallowed, very sure Nozomi was just out of her vision.
Giving up, she could at least keep some dignity.
She would never win against her adversary in a fight, from what she had collected, Nozomi was better trained than most military generals.
And she barely knew greenbelt judo.
This would have to be solved differently.
"I just walked right into your trap, didn't I?"
She finally uttered, feeling a sharp blade suddenly pressed against her neck from what seemed to be...
from above?
Looking up, Nozomi had locked her feet around a trees branch and was dangling off.
But in a flurried motion, in which the knife barely seemed to move from her throat, Nozomi had planted herself behind You, who while fearful, couldn't do much to object.
"Perceptive of You"
Nozomi laughed at the wordplay, making You seriously start wondering if this was the same rage filled woman she had been told about.
"I actually was hoping to talk to you, although I didn't expect it to be so soon."
Her casual tone was actually almost relaxing.
But he couldn't be deceived.
"Talk to me? What the hell for?"
She heard a small giggle behind her.
"Ouh watch your language will you? We're on school property, you might get detention."
Okay this was getting aggravating.
What did Nozomi want from her?
"Cut the shit, I've heard what you've done."
"Huh."
Nozomi's demeanor changed instantly as You felt the blade digging into her neck, causing a sharp
pain and multiple beads of blood.
"I guess I'll get right to it then."
Her voice was cold, and really, really terrifying.
"I noticed that while you were with us, you always seemed to be pushed to second place."
"That's not-"
You tried to rebuke, but was literally cut off as she felt the knife dig deeper.
Not enough to truly hurt, well it did a bit, just not enough to cause her to cry out.
"Just now, you were alone thinking about it, weren't you?"
You stayed silent as she felt the pressure on her neck lessen, allowing her to speak.
But what was she supposed to say?
"I thought so."
Nozomi continued, Yous silence confirming her suspicions.
"What does that have to do with anything?"
The ash haired finally spoke up.
"I find it disgusting how someone so strong and talented is wasting away as a side character."
Nozomi retorted, her voice having eerily returned back to normal.
"The fuck you do."
You growled, starting to see why the rest disliked her (yknow appart from attempted murder)
"Hey Hey, no need for hostility here, I haven't hurt you."
Haha. Funny.
"Your knife is inside my neck."
The pressure disappeared altogether, technically meaning she could run for it.
But honestly, this was probably a test and would she decide to run, Nozomi would catch her with
ease.
"Fair enough, but back to topic. I really think you could do better."
"Okay, and what would your solution be? Desertion?"
You asked skeptically.
"Well if you put it that bluntly, yes."
Wait, was she serious?
"Why the fuck would I-"
"Unlike your group, I'll respect you, pay attention to you, give you a purpose. Reason enough is it
not?"
"Wow, you are not being subtle."
The ash haired groaned, leaning against the tree.
The offer was enticing, if this weren't a matter of life and death.
"I find that hiding my intent always leads to dumb and avoidable conflicts."
Please do not let that be a reference to all the unnecessary complications in sitcoms.
"Well I can tell you, I'm loyal to them."
"But why be loyal to someone who doesn't care about you? You, I get your...infatuation with Riko
and Chika, but look at the facts. They don't want you."
Ouch, that hurt.
You felt rage slowly bubble up inside her, knowing Nozomi was probably right.
"Fuck off! I'll die before I betray them!"
"Maybe don't make it such an ultimatum, okay? If you change your mind, I'll visit the same place and time right here, next week."
Nozomi winked, walking off towards the school wall and jumping onto it with ease.
"Stay safe until then will you?"
With those last words, she jumped off, leaving a bleeding and furious You behind.

---

"Hanamaru?!
Dia called out frantically after hearing a thud behind the locked door.
The third years had wanted to look up the formula that Mari recognized, but didn't know what it meant, so they had headed to the library, only to find it locked.
Obviously, Mari had gone ahead and knocked, but what they had not expected, was something hitting the ground hard just moments later.
"Hanamaru, are you okay?"
Mari banged on the door again, receiving not response.
"Fuck it, I'm breaking open the door."
Kanan muttered as Mari stepped aside, leaving Kanan ample space to kick in the sliding door.
"One!"
First kick. She felt splinters where her foot had landed.
"Two!"
Second kick. The door burst open halfway, the lock undone.
But it couldn't be slid in this angle.
"Three!"
Third ones the charm, the door crashed to the ground, missing Hanamaru, who was laying on the ground in an awkward position, by maybe an inch.
"Hanamaru?!
The three chorused as they rushed to the unconscious girls side.
After checking her pulse, they all breathed a sigh of relief.
"Oh thank god.."
Dia muttered.
"She probably passed out from all the stress we've been under. I've done that a few times."
Mari tried to calm everyones nerves.
"So much for looking for a formula though, she's the only one who would be able to pinpoint the right books, we'd be wasting our time trying to find them ourselves."
Kanan concluded, searching the shelves briefly.
"That's fine, we have something more important right now, Hanamarus health comes first."

---

"Okay, everyone's got their weapons?"
Erena surveyed the small expedition group.
A chorus of affirmatives followed.
"Great! Now as always, stick together and stay quiet."
Nico smiled as she made sure her handgun was safe in it's holster.
Yukiho, Alisa, Erena, Anju and herself had formed a small group, she had left a written notice on the empty school bulletin board for all to see.
If all went well, they'd be back in three or four days, depending how far out they had to roam.
Opening the school doors, the small group stepped out into the open.
Time for some scavenging.
woweee I haven't posted in a month on this chapter, my bad. I was working on the Halloween special and also had some serious emotional baggage just now (I broke up with my girlfriend of 2 years, she had been getting pretty abusive and shit so yeah) so sorry for the long wait. But this'll get updated soon again as it used to be!

Also I did speak with multiple trans people and gave the best reaction I could based on what they told me, but if I've discussed it badly in this fic, please tell me so I can rectify it, I don't want to do this halfassed and I really care about accurate representation (yes even if its just a fanfiction, there aren't enough trans representing fanfictions or as a matter of fact just fictions out there)
"Dude, that's like, an ungodly amount of biology books..."
Mari awed at the whole bookshelf that stretched before them.
Hanamaru had, thankfully, woken up pretty quickly and after a few minutes of orientation and then
a whole hour of relaxing, shown them to the biology section.
And it was like, super big.
"Maybe we only have to check the Biochemistry books?"
Kanan offered helpfully, but threw the idea away quickly.
They might accidentally miss what they were looking for.
"Well, guess we should get on it then. Let's get reading."
Dia grabbed the first book, determination but also dread filling her voice.
She did not want to read all of this.
But here goes nothing.

---

"Heeeeeyyy Riko!"
Riko felt herself tackled from behind, as strong arms wrapped themselves around her.
This wouldn't be a problem in itself, she had gotten pretty used to Chikas rough hug-tackles, the
issue was that, well, she had lost her balance.
Meaning the two of them were falling down at an alarmingly fast pace.
Just a few inches before her face would have collided with the floor however, she felt yet another,
much stronger pair of arms catch her.
And she recognized the persons scent immediately.
Not that she stank, well not more than anyone else, she just had her own, individual scent just like
Chika, and Riko could recognize it anywhere.
"Thanks a lot You."
She smiled up at the ash haired girl, as she helped the two up.
"Chika, you have to be more careful!"
Riko scolded the orange haired girl, who simply laughed sheepishly in response.
"I'm sorry, I just get so excited when I see you."
Out of the corner of her eyes, Riko could have sworn she had seen Yous smile disappear for a
second, but brushed it off quickly.
"Now that we narrowly avoided Rikos beautiful face getting splatted"
You spoke up, her choice of words totally in no way causing Rikos head to heat up.
"Have you finished the song? Can I start with costumes for all the singers?"
You had an eagerness to her vouce, as if her fingers itched to do something.
"I mean yeah, we've finished a few songs, but no need for costumes yet."
Chika responded, humming the tune of one of the songs.
"Hey Riko, I'll need some help with fitting in some lyrics. Cmon!"
Chika grabbed Rikos hand and under her protests dragged her away in a flurry, leaving You
behind, a dark raincloud of bad thoughts forming in her head.

---

"Okay, I officially give up."
Mari threw her fourth book against the wall, much to Hanamarus great displeasure.
"We won't find it here, we've been reading for..
She checked her watch and wanted to slam her head on the table.
"I have never read longer than three hours, and now I did 15."
And thanks food and water shortage, she hadn't had to pee either.
"Oh this is normal, zura."
Hanamaru beamed at her from behind her own biochemistry book.
"No, you're just weird."
"Yeah, this is ridiculous, I have to sleep."
Dia added, as she set down her own book and used a bookmark to be able to tell later, where she
had been.
"How bout you, Kanan?"
Silence.
"Kanan?"
Dia slowly lifted the book off of Kanans and found her dead asleep.
"She's crashed out."
Mari got up and quickly nestled herself carefully next to her friend.
"What a big mood."
"What?"
"I'm gonna sleep too."
Hanamaru sighed.
"You can sleep too Dia. I'm just going to finish this book and I'll join you."
She would've loved to say after the chapter, but that never actually worked.
She was way too hooked on books, even school books.
And to be honest?
It felt nice reading again.
She wasn't going to stop so soon.

---

A loud crash sounded through the empty apartment, fallowed by a slew of curse words.
"God fucking-stupid goddamn door can't even fucking-!"
Nozomi groaned as she held her head, waiting for the headache to abate.
Honestly, doing all this while on pain meds, it was hard.
Taking a quick look through the small apartment, she quickly found what she was looking for.
"Dog, Panda and Kangaroo."
She muttered, picking up the desired items and stuffing them into her backpack. She had to hurry
now.
Every second that she stayed away, was more time for her parents to notice she was missing.
And she didn't wanna have to explain why, this excursion wasn't exactly linked to killing her
schoolmates.
That would come later.

---

"Hey, Riko?"
You finally found Riko alone and they desperately had to talk.
"Hm?"
The pianist looked up from her instrument as You closed the music club doors behind her.
"Do you have a sec?"
"Sure."
Riko quickly made some space on the small bench, patting the space next to her.
The ash haired girl gratefully accepted the seat and after a minute of uncomfortable silence, finally
spoke up.
"Why...Riko, why does Chika prefer you?"
"Huh?"
Riko looked up in surprise, an unreadable mixture of emotion on her face.
"Prefer me? What do you mean?"
Her bright, beautiful eyes stared up at You bewildered, causing her to have second thoughts about this.
"I-I mean...she spends more time with you."
Yous heart ached as she saw Riko look downcast at that.
"You noticed huh?"
"Of course I did!"
The sailor burst out, stepping up from the bench and slamming her hand on the window.
"She was my best friend!"
"Y-You!"
Riko sprung up, grabbing Yous arm.
"She is your best friend! Trust me!"
You wrenched her arm free, eyes glistening with tears.
"You please-"
"I should have never said anything."
She muttered, shaking her head as she turned away.
"Forget it."
She stumbled out of the door, almost running over Chika who stood bewildered in the empty doorway.
"What happened?"
Riko pulled her friend in and locked the door behind them.
"Chika, we have to talk."
"Eh?"
Chika hated people saying that. It always made it sound so serious.
"Why?"
"Chika, why have you been ignoring You?"
Wait what?
She hadn't been ignoring her.
"I haven't-"
"You haven't noticed?"
Riko asked incredulously.
"You brush her off all the time."
Chika tried to think back on the last few days.
Sure, she had cut You off a few times, dragged Riko away from her and stuff but, surely that wasn't ignoring her.
Right?
"Talking to someone genuinely clueless is useless."
Riko sighed, unlocking the doors and stepping out.
"I know you love You just as much as I do, so make sure to show her that."
She shut the door, leaving a puzzled Chika behind.

---

"Okay so, this is what? Day three?"
Yukiho groaned as she sat down on an abandoned tire by the side of the road.
The group had been driving a stolen car, with Nico on the wheel as she sorta knew how to drive (she aced mario kart soooo) for the last few stretches, but it had run out of gas.
So basically they were stuck, hours away from Otonokizaka, actually, she was pretty sure they
weren't even near Tokyo!
And on top of that they had found absolutely nothing to scavenge. The region had been picked clean.
"Yeah I think so."
Nico replied, settling herself on top of a roadside stone.
"This is a disaster."
"Absolutely."
Alisa agreed, taking a swig from her water bottle.
Thankfully they had run into a running water fountain, so water was no longer an issue.
For them, it wouldn't make sense to bring back, they'd drink it all first.
"But we can't return without any loot."
Anju had climbed onto a tree to get a better view of their surroundings.
They were currently in the middle of a forest, so basically in the middle of nowhere.
"Yknow, I can see what I think is the ocean in that direction."
She pointed off into the distance, pretty uselessly though, as the rest just saw trees.
"Maybe there's some non affected towns, or at the very least, un looted towns."
She continued, clambering off the tree pretty ungracefully.
"I guess that's as good a shot as any right?"
Erena saddled her backpack and helped Alisa up.
"C'mon, we don't exactly have all day."
"Actually, we have exactly all day, and no more."
Anju piped up with a cheeky grin.
"I swear, keep bringing those and you won't be able to walk tomorrow."
Erena replied, half annoyed and absolutely serious.
"Eh? What does that mean?"
The young blonde asked curiously, before bursting out in laughter at the older ones mortified faces.
"I'm kidding, have fun, we'll get a bedroom ready as soon as we found a house."
She winked in the couples direction, which both flushed full red.

---

"Zuramaru?"
Yoshiko poked her head into the library, spotting not only her, but also the three third years fast asleep.
Picking up Dias book, she read the beginning of the chapter, confused at what they had been looking at.
"The hell is this supposed to be?"
She muttered, flipping the pages a bit, until she hit a section that sounded more than just sleep inducingly boring.
"Mechanics of the so called "Zombie Fungus". Huh, that could actually be interesting."
She wanted to keep reading, but it was Dias book and if Dia found out, she would be pretty furious.
So she made a little dent into the top of the page and set the book back.
She would check up on Zuramaru later.
Walking down the main hallway, her eyes caught something, no, someone at the entrance hall.
Actually scratch that, it was four people.
She reached for her knife as she realized who the woman was, that was talking to the three youngest Yazawa siblings.
And with all the courage that she could muster, with all the power she could put into her voice she spat out:
"What the fuck do you think you're doing?!"
"Hey big sis? What does that say?"
Cotaro pointed at a small notice that was hanging on the cork board wall. His older sister had to jump up, skillfully grabbing it and leaving only a slight rip on the top. When your mom wasn't around and you want some cake, you learn these types of skills after all. "Anju, Erena, Yukiho, Alisa and I, Nico, have gone out for what will probably be a week. We're looking for food and other supplies, so we can't set a definite deadline. Stay safe everyone."
Cocoa groaned as she pinned it back up, lower than it had been hanging before. "So that's where those guys are. Nobody ever tells us anything....also that was a stupidly rash decision."
Cocoro sighed, facepalming at how dumb their beloved big sister could be sometimes. "They better come home safe." "They will."
Cotaro promised them, even if he had no power over this. "Unless Nozomi tries anything, they will."
The eldest added on, turning around to return to their room, only to run into someone head first. Looking up, the three were absolutely horrified by who had cornered them in the deserted entry hall. "Oh, I'm not planning anything, don't worry about that."
"Wh-What is she..!"
Cocoro stammered out, placing herself between the traitor and her siblings. "G-Go away!"
Cocoro protruded a really small pocket knife, causing a pleasant giggle to escape the newcomers lips. "No need for hostility here kids."
She knelt down in order to be on eye level, green eyes soft and vulnerable. "I'm honestly not here to hurt you."
Cotaro scoffed at that, but was too scared to actually say anything. He was young, not an idiot.
It seemed though, that Cocoro was both. "Yeah right! You tried killing our big sis!"
A sad smile replaced the cheerful one as Nozomis composure slipped for a fraction of a second. "My parents want me to kill everyone I was close to but...well you three aren't a threat. I'm here to save you from all of this."
Her tone was genuine, her entire demeanor as non threatening as one could imagine it. "All of..this?"
Cocoa asked cautiously. "Yes, there's a helicopter on the edges of Tokyo that would take you away from Japan, off to live with a good friend of mine."
"That does sound nice.."
Cocoro muttered, before shaking her head. "But we have to stay with our sister! And we can't trust you."
A sad sigh escaped Nozomis lips as she took out a gun, much to the children's utter horror. "I'm sorry, but you really have to come with me. This world is no place for kids your age."
Cocoro found herself staring right into the barrel of the gun and one could very clearly see the three kids composure slipping. "Just...I-I don't know, put your hands up."
Why was she being so gentle with them?
The three raised their hands, but as Nozomi motioned for them to move forward, a sharp cry echoed through the building. "What the fuck do you think you're doing?"
Turning around, Nozomi muttered a small "Damnit."
Under her breath as she found herself staring at Yoshiko, who was fumbling with her knife. "Yoshiko, look, I know this looks bad, but I'm taking them to safety."
"Bullshit!"
The fallen angel spat, but she didn't dare inch closer as Nozomi's gun was still pointed straight at the three kids.
All she could hope for, was to get people's attention with the commotion.
"Jesus, I don't have time for this."
Nozomi let out exasperated as she scooped up the youngest Yazawa, pressing the handgun to his temple.
"Yoshiko, shut up or he's dead."
Quickly inching towards the front door, the older woman motioned the other two, very terrified girls to follow her.
That's when Cotaro let out one, very loud wail.
"Fuck."
Putting the gun into her holster, she scooped up another one of the siblings and grabbed the others hand as she sped out of the front gates.
She could hear the guards shooting near her, but as she was holding two of their own, she was pretty sure that she wouldn't be shot.
Not that that gave her much time.
She could her footsteps behind her, and she couldn't speed up too much or she'd hurt the kids.
What a fucking situation.
Exiting the school grounds, a car came to a screeching halt in front of her, a young girl opening the back door, her auburn twin braids flying in the momentum of her stop.
"Get them in, and for the love of god don't forget the seat belts, they're kids!"
Kidnap, or as Nozomi preferred to think of it, saving, successful.

---

The half hour drive afterwards had been tense. The three kids were too terrified to make a sound and Emma...well this was a really tricky situation.
"I'll make this clear again."
The young Swiss finally spoke up.
"I'm only doing this for the kids. And because I'm hoping to slap some sense into you."
Nozomi nodded, heart wrenching at the tone her friend was using.
Not that it was undeserved.
"I'm doing this behind my parents back, doesn't that show sense?"
"Maybe."
Another five minutes of silence followed, only interrupted by Cotaro's silent weeping.
Emma turned around, letting Nozomi take the wheel on the straight road as she reached back, patting his head in assurance.
"It's okay little guy, I promise I'll take care of you."
He looked up, the immense fear in his eyes abating, if only slightly.
"I have a little brother, just your age, you'll have fun with him. I actually have eight siblings, you'll love it in the alps."
Turning back to the road, to take on the wheel herself, she kept talking in a soothing voice.
"I promise, you'll see your big sis again someday. Maybe we can even arrange phone calls."
Nozomi laughed lightly as she kicked her feet up onto the dashboard.
"I...I really appreciate the help Emma, I really do."
"Spare it."
Her voice turned cold as she addressed Nozomi.
"As you are now, we aren't friends, I can't be sure you're not lying."
A groan escaped Nozomi as she nestled herself in comfortably-and dangerously-into the seat.
"Emma, I'm high on painkillers right now, pretty sure I can't lie."
The auburn haired girl sighed and shook her head, preferring to stay focused on the road.
"I haven't changed yknow."
Nozomi spoke up again, attempting to rekindle the conversation.
"The hell you haven't."
"I'm looking out for them. All of them."
Emma shook her head in disbelief.
"You want to kill them."
"My parents want that."
Nozomi countered.
"Then what do you want, Nozomi?"
A small smile adorned Nozomis lips.
"Death."
"Now don't even start with that again or I will personally keep you tied up for your own safety."
The purple haired woman laughed.
"I never said my own death Emma."
Haha.
Ominous.
Emma rather not unpack that statement.
Luckily she didn't have to, as they had arrived at their destination, namely a sleek black helicopter.
"Okay."
Emma got out and opened the back door, unbuckling the now a bit more relaxed kids.
"I'm going to assume you've never been in a helicopter?"
The three shook their heads.
"You'll need noise canceling headgear then."
She took her backpack and pulled out three kid sized headsets, handing them to the kids.
"Make sure they fit snuggly, then just keep them but don't wear them yet. Or you won't hear me."
She smiled warmly, helping them out of the car one by one and sat them in the back of the helicopter.
"This thing is awesome."
Cocoro awed as she looked around.
"You can fly it?"
"Yep!"
Emma smiled brightly as she fastened the three to their seats.
"Yknow."
Cocoa looked at Emma, a smile forming on her lips.
"I think I trust you. Please bring us to safety..and if you can, don't have big sis worry about us too much."
"I will, I promise you."
Emma ruffled the kids hair lovingly as she got into the cockpit.
"Ready to go?"
The three kids took out the headset and chorused a "Yes!"
Before they put them on however, Nozomi spoke up, her attention directed at Nicos siblings.
"Wait, one more thing.."
She retrieved a backpack from the car, rummaging in it for a bit before pulling out three stuffed animals.
"Nicochi told me you all had a favorite stuffed animal at home, but never got to retrieve them..I stopped by there yesterday and got them."
She handed Cocoro the panda, Cocoa the Kangaroo and Cotaro the dog.
"How did you know which one is whom's?"
Cocoro asked curiously as she quickly accepted the toy, burying her face in it's fluff.
"Nicochi told me a while ago, all before this started."
Cocoa looked up at Nozomi, one last request on her mind.
"Please don't hurt our sister."
A regretful look crossed the older woman's face.
"I'll do my best."
"Okay, time to go, I don't want to fly in the dark!"
The three kids nodded and put on the headgear, making sure it fit snugly.
Emma started to close the cockpit door after having remotely done so for the back part but stopped halfway.
"I see you haven't been completely reprogrammed."
"It kicks in when I see them, they're the trigger, pawlow dog style. Here I can fight it."
A large smile plastered on Emmas face at that.
"I'm happy to see you back then, I wish you best of luck. What has been trained, can be untrained and after all, you've done this before."
"I'll need to be faster this time though, the final plan is going to be set in motion in just a week or so."
The Swiss girl cocked her head curiously.
"Sorry, can't tell you about that. Just let's say, if it works, only two people will die that day."
Nozomi slammed the door shut and stood to the side, as the chopper took off.
Now the real battle began.
---

"What the fuck..." Muttered Eli as she put back her gun, having vaguely shot at the running figures, not wanting to actually hurt any of them.
"Was that?"
It seemed like...Yoshiko? Yeah it had been Yoshiko that had been pursuing the small group, before they jumped into a car and drove off.
Jumping from the watchtower, maybe not the wisest move, she landed on the rooftop and sprinted downstairs, almost tripping over her feet a multitude of times on her way down.
Skidding into the entrance hall, she found an out of breath, very outraged Yoshiko.
"She fucking took them!"
"Huh?"
"Nozomi."
Yoshiko breathed through gritted teeth.
"She took Nicos siblings. All of them."
Oh dear lord.
"Did anyone else notice?"
Yoshiko shook her head, leaning against the wall for support.
"I tried to stop her."
She muttered, pain seeping into her voice.
"I really did!"
The blonde quickly rushed up to the younger girl and, with just a moments hesitation, embraced her tightly.
"You did your best, I'm sure Nico will understand."
That's what she hoped anyway.
As much as it hurt to see Yoshiko like this—meaning absolutely devastated—Eli couldn't shake off the anger at Nozomi.
How could she do something so terrible?
It took all of her willpower not to run out and pursue her herself.
At the moment that was.
They would get the three back.
No matter the cost.

---

"My feet hurt!"
Alisa burst out, sitting down onto the road.
"We've been walking for hours!"
Erena groaned, tired of having to scold the younger girl.
"Well, if you want to sleep here and get bit, go right ahead, but I want to survive."
Yukiho lifted the young Ayase up with a reassuring smile.
"We're almost at that train station we saw earlier from the tree. Just about thirty minutes left."
Anju pulled out half of a candy bar and put on a teasing smile.
"If you make it, I'll give you this."
That seemed to be all the motivation that Alisa needed as she bounded ahead of the group.
"Let's go then!"
Yukiho sprinted after her with Nico following as not to lose sight of them.
"You'd make a great mom."
Erena chuckled as she planted a soft kiss onto her girlfriend's cheek.
"I think I am a good mom."
She pointed towards the two younger kids who seemed to be playing tag at this point.
"See? I have kids already. Which makes you the dad."
Erena let out an annoyed groan.
"I'm not ready for that responsibility."
Her girlfriend laughed, knowing fully well that if Erena ever actually was a father, well technically
mother, it would be a disaster.
"Responsibility aint your thing, you almost blew us all up."
"Don't remind me..."
Erena muttered, still regretting that decision.
"I was hungry, thirsty, sleep deprived and all in all deluded, give me a pass."
"I will, but I feel like some of the others still haven't completely forgiven you."
She heavily implied Nico it seemed, as she was fixated on the smaller girl.
"I'll find a way, don't worry. They can't hold a grudge forever. Not in this world."

---

Eli trudged into her room, intending to just crash.
She had spent the whole afternoon comforting Yoshiko, who blamed herself for the entire incident,
completely falsely of course.
And that, combined with just general exhaustion, had really drained her.
Plopping herself onto her bed, she was about to lay down and fall asleep, when she felt something
under her.
Sitting up, she discovered a small folded paper and after unfurling it, a very scrawled handwriting.
Whoever had written this, had either been in a hurry or a preschooler.
Eli's guess was the first.
"Please don't worry about the kids, I'm bringing them to safety. -Nozomi"
She read allowed, the last words getting stuck in her throat.
When had Nozomi been in her room?
When had she written this?
Why had she left this?
Eli head hurt with the many questions.
She wouldn't be able to be productive like this.
Reluctantly, she placed the paper on her night-desk, intending to show it to Yoshiko later, before
she fell asleep almost instantly.
You woke up with a start, as she heard something knocking on her window. She squinted outside, but couldn't make out anything, it was still dark out. Meaning that it was like, five am. As her mind cleared of sleepiness, a sudden, terrifying thought struck her. She was on the second floor. How could anyone knock? Terrified, she snatched her small kitchen knife from her closet and slowly inched herself in the windows direction. After another knock, she swung it open, raising the knife. "Hold up hold up!" Okay what the fuck. "No-Nozomi?" She could make out a figure on the ledge, but that was about it. "Yep."
"How did you even?"
"I climbed up."
Nozomi replied, her voice cheerful. That actually made kinda sense. Nozomi was trained for these types of things after all. "What are you doing here?"
You gripped the older womans arm and wrenched her inside, shutting the window. The later didn't actually seem to care about the rough handling, simply getting up and brushing herself off. "Just wanted to check up on the situation."
You felt a sharp jab in her heart as she was reminded of Nozomis offer. "I'm sticking with my friends."
A scoff fallowed that. "Some friends. Why are you sleeping alone? These rooms have plenty of space for three." That was...actually true?
You had never thought of it until now, but yeah, why was she sleeping alone?
"I talked with Riko about the issue and she-"
"She doesn't care. Did anything change after that?"
"Well no but-"
"So what is the point then?"
Nozomis sharp voice cut through Yous protests. "I'll be back in a few days, maybe your answer will have changed by then."
Nozomi laughed cruelly, before opening the window again and swinging herself off. A few seconds later a thud was to be heard and then the scuffling of someone sprinting off. "I swear it won't"
You muttered, unsure of her own words.

---

A high pitched scream rang through the woods, startling the group awake. "What was that..?"
Yukiho muttered sleepily, as she sat up, making sure to strap her weapons on. "I-I don't know."
Erena spit out through clenched teeth, grabbing her gun. "Guys? Where's Alisa?"
Nico wondered as she peeked outside of the abandoned kiosk, that they had been sleeping in.
"Please don't tell me that was her."
Yukiho prayed as she was about to step into the open, in order to search for her friend.
No way was she letting her die.
A rustling in the distance brought her attention to the brush, only for it to become a crashing.
With trembling fingers, Erena fixated on the location with her gun.
"Wait, don't shoot."
The young Kousaka muttered under her breath as she waited for what was bounding towards them.
In a flash, a young girl crashed out of the wood brush, landing face first at their feet.
"Alisa!"
Yukiho dropped down, inspecting her friend for bites.
"What happened? Are you bit?"
The young blonde shook her head.
"I-I went to the bathroom and-"
She gasped, out of breath, before managing to continue.
"There's a herd! It's fallowing me-we have to go!"
Yukiho's eyes flew open in panic as she quickly hoisted Alisa up.
Now that Alisa mentioned it, she could hear the woods creak and the dead moans draw closer.
"Shit."
Erena muttered, ushering them all inside and trying to lock the door.
"There's no inside lock, goddamn stupid building!"
She reached for the keys that had been laying on the counter, only to be stopped by Anju, a furious look on her face.
"If you think we're just going to let you sacrifice yourself like that-you're dead wrong!"
Erena didn't respond, snatching the keys to herself.
"I have to, or else we'll all die!"
Nico began rolling down the protective cage of the store's open part, not wanting to get involved.
"I won't let you-!"
From the corner of her eyes, Nico caught the distinct figure of a zombie, slowly hobbling towards the kiosk.
"Guys!"
She interrupted, pointing at the trees, where more and more dead were emerging.
"Fuck!"
The two former idols muttered at once, desperately trying to find a solution to this.
"Erena, I'll come with you. We can fend this off."
Nico grabbed the taller girl as they strode out, weapons in hand.
"Erena-"
"Anju, keep the other two safe."
The pain in in her partner's voice ripped her heart apart but it had to be done.
"I will."
"I'll see you soon then."
A fleeting kiss was shared before she closed the door and it was securely locked from the outside.
"Do you think it'll hold?"
"It will have to."
The two stood side by side, as the horde closed in.
Nico could feel the sweat of anticipation roll down her back as she finally surged forward, bringing her axe down onto the first head, smashing it in half.
The first of many.
One by one, she mowed them down, narrowly avoiding a bite way too many times for her liking.
"They just keep coming!"
She panted out, days of malnourishment and sleep deprivation catching up to her.
"Nico, you have to get out!"
The black haired girl looked at Erena utterly baffled.
"How in hell-"
"I'll give you a boost, you can jump onto the top of the kiosk, then run for it."
Nico stared aghast as she kept evading the deads biting, hungry mouths.
"You can't be serious."
"The group has to know what happened. Anju and the rest-they'll make it, but I can't put more than
necessary in danger."
That's when Nicos eyes caught something that let her stomach plummet.
A large, gaping bite was to be seen blood red on Erenas upper arm.
"No..
"Don't dwell on it! Get away while you can!"
"But."
"Do it!"
Erena barked, as Nico let herself get hoisted onto the roof.
"But what about you?"
She could hear her voice crack as she watched Erenas eyes glaze over in unspilled tears.
"Nico, I'm dead meat."
She kept swinging at the dead, but they didn't seem to be as fixated on her as they had been on
Nico.
"But you know what? I may as well fight until death."
She paused, looking up at Nico with determination.
"Nico, I was prepared to die to destroy you before. Now I'm prepared to die to save you."

Chapter End Notes

And here's another long one in just a week! I'm a productive shit aint I. Hope you enjoy it, I put a lot of thought into this whole thing
As the sun shone in through the curtains of the library, it's four inhabitants slowly woke up. The word was slowly.
"Mari."
Kanan grunted, trying to pry the half asleep blond off her.
"Get off."
"Dunwannagimmemoretime"
Was the garbled answer, as some drool dripped from Maris mouth.
"Mari!"
Kanan kept struggling with her friend, who absolutely refused to get off.
"Kanan, your boobs are so soft."
Oh jesus christ.
"I'll sue you."
She muttered, finally managing to push Mari off of her.
"Good luck finding a court."
Dia cut in, grabbing for her book that lay on the nightstand.
"We should keep reading."
"But I'm hungry."
Mari protested, a large growl echoing her plea.
"We don't exactly have enough food for breakfast, sorry."
Dia gave Mari a sympathetic pat on the head.
"Cmon, back to reading."
She opened her book but noticed something was a bit off.
A page, just a few chapters ahead, was marked via indented page.
And that had not been her.
Dia never treated a book in such a terrible way.
But Yoshiko did.
What had she been doing with her book?
She reached for the marked page, her breath hitching as she caught the title.
"What the."
Flipping through the chapter, she found what she was looking for.
"Oh my god."
She slammed her hand onto the table, to get the other threes attention.
"Guys!"
Hanamaru squeaked in surprise, dropping her own book in shock.
"Wh-What?"
"Look at this!"
The other three gathered around the table, and after just a minute of reading, Mari grabbed the book.
"We have to go find Maki. Now!"

---

Okay, she had slept.
Kinda.
Fine, she had sort of dozed for six hours.
But that would have to do, she had stuff to do.
Eli swung herself off the bed, grappling for the note that Nozomi had left her. She had to go find Yoshiko and show her this. Quickly stuffing it into her pocket, she tied the belt tighter yet again, grimacing at how skinny she was. Sure, she had been before but that had been a healthy, muscular skinny. This was pretty bad. She had to eat soon, her stomach was starting to hurt. Maybe she would have to stop by and try to get some food before seeing Yoshiko.

---

"Hey Maru."
Ruby ran up to the four as they were in the process of finding Maki. "What is it zura?"
Ruby tugged on the taller girls sleeves, looking very panicked. "You grew up with no electricity right?"
A small nod indicated that yes, basically she had. "Great! Because we seriously need help cooking here."
Hanamaru looked back at the third years, her eyes asking for permission. "You go on and help her, we'll talk to Maki and keep you updated."
Dia smiled encouragingly. "Yknow, you're gonna become pretty important now that this is all shut off."
Mari grinned as the three walked off, leaving Hanamru a smidge unhinged from the offhanded comment that Mari had waved in her direction. It sounded too similar to what Nozomi had told her. She was ripped out of her thoughts by another tug on the sleeve. "Cmon, we are seriously screwed, Eli and Yoshiko don't know anything about cooking."
Hanamaru laughed, thinking back at multiple futile attempts that Ruby had made at cooking. "Neither do you, zura."

---

"Youuuuu."
Chika drawled out, knocking on her friends door. It was way too late to still be asleep, namely noon. Had You not slept well?
Opening the door a crack, she found You sitting up on her bed, her eyes puffy. What had happened?
"You?"
She asked more softly, letting herself in. "Everything okay?"
You only now seemed to notice her as she reacted in a shock when Chika put her hand on her shoulder. "Ch-Chika!"
She screeched, quickly covering her mouth before continuing in a more inside appropriate voice. "What are you doing here?"
"It's noon, I was wondering where you were at."
The orange haired girl turned her friends face towards her. "Have you been crying?"
You quickly shook her head, trying to rub the redness away. "Just the stress of the situation."
That definitely wasn't all, but Chika really didn't want to pry. Okay maybe a bit.
"Really?"
"Don't bother with it."
Okay that confirmed it.
Something was wrong.
"Why aren't you with Riko?"
Okay time to be tactful.
"She told me to spend time with you."
She could hear Yous exasperated sigh.
"Don't spend time with me because you're told to."
Maybe that hadn't been as tactful as hoped.
She really had to fix this, she honestly did care a lot about her friend, even if she neglected to show
it sometimes.
"No that's not what I-"
"You know Chika?"
You stood up, her voice trembling with both sadness yet anger.
"Y-yes?"
She asked, scooting closer to close the distance between the two.
"You can spare your pity for me. I'm done with this."
You stormed out of her room, tears streaming down her face.
"Wh-What does that mean?"
Chika wondered, trying to comprehend how she had fucked up this terribly.
"I just saw You running out of here looking absolutely terrible! Chika what in the world did you
say to her?!"
Riko burst into the room not even seconds later looking pretty infuriated.
"I-I said you told me to-"
Riko wanted to hit her head against the wall.
What a goddamn idiot.
She loved Chika dearly but sometimes just..!
She could rip her head off!
"Chika, she doesn't want you to care because you have to!"
"Eh? But I do care, that's why I-"
"Then why did you say that?"
"You told me to check on her didn't you?"
Chika asked in utter innocence.
She could seriously be a terribly dense orange sometimes.
"Chika."
Rikos voice was calm but sounded deadly.
"You are going to search for her now. And talk this shit out!"
Riko watched Chika quickly rush out, hoping this could all be mended.
She wished she could do more but...this seemed to be an issue between the two.
As much as she loved them both, she would not stand in their way.
A cough from the window ripped her out of her thoughts as she opened it and looked out, finding a
very odd sight.
"Uh..Hi!"
What the fuck.
Nozomi was cautiously perched on the narrow ledge, but quickly clambered into the room as the
window got opened.
"Geez it's cold outside."
She shivered, dusting herself off as if it wasn't weird at all to randomly sit on small window ledges.
"What the fuck are you doing here?"
Riko asked suspiciously, reaching for her gun in her holster, thankful that she never took it off.
"No need to reach for your gun."
Nozumi smiled gently, but her voice had a very menacing undertone. "As I've told everyone that I've visited, I'm not here to hurt you. Yet."

Hold on.

Everyone that she's visited?
"Your face betrays that burning question. Truly, who else have I visited?"
A mischievous grin was plastered on her face as she said the next line in almost a sing song voice. "Or better yet, who have I already convinced to betray the group?"
Nozumi prowled around Riko, who was frozen in place by rage and confusion.
"Yes, who could it be? Kanan? Dia?"
She gripped Riko's shoulder softly from behind, whispering tauntingly into her ear. "Or perhaps...your beloved You?"
In retrospect, Nozumi dearly regretted underestimating Riko's pure muscle power.
She expected a punch but he honestly did not expect to be thrown against the wall, Riko's hand wrapped around her neck.
"Don't."
She snarled through grit teeth as Nozumi began gasping for air. "Don't even suggest that!"
The purple haired woman felt Riko's knee collide with her stomach as the wind got knocked out completely.
Riko threw her adversary to the floor, unnerved at her lack of fighting back.
Something was wrong.
As much as she wanted to hurt the woman in front of her, she had to calm down.
"What are you up to."
She growled lowly as she managed to pin Nozumi under her, the statement much more a demand than a question.
Despite her situation, and much to Riko's anger, Nozumi laughed. "You'll see, just be patient."
Riko sent a wild punch into her direction, only for it to land in Nozumi's palm.
"But seriously, maybe check up on your dearest You, or you may regret it."
Riko was getting very scared as to what the hell Nozumi had been doing in the last few days.
Come to think of it, You had started to become more bitter.
"It's your fault."
She gapped, her one hands fingernails digging into Nozumi's arm, causing the later to wince slightly.
"You're the reason she's been acting so glum!"
A wide, malicious smile spread across Nozumi's face. "I didn't do anything, I merely pointed out how she's wasting away her talent with people who treat her like shit."
The redhead freed her hand from Nozumi's fist, lunging it straight at her face, only to be, but only barely, blocked again.
"All I had to tell her was that you didn't care about her and bam! She's in my grasp."
Another punch, another block.
"Of course,"
Nozumi's eyes flitted to the doorway smiling as she caught sight of two newcomers who stood frozen in it.
"That's not true right?"
She barely whispered the last part but it was enough for Riko to pick her up and pin her out of the window, her upper body bending very unsafely over the ledge.
"You have no idea how much I love her. How much Chika loves her. If you only so much as touch the two of them,"
She hoisted Nozumi out of the window completely with muscle mass Nozumi had honestly not reckoned with.
"I'll kill you."
Riko's eyes narrowed in malice and let go, watched as Nozomi fell down, her hand catching another windowsill with ease before she lightly jumped to the ground and ran off.
"R-Riko.."
Someone whispered behind her.
Oh fuck.
She knew exactly who that someone was.
Spinning around, her mind frantically raced for excuses on how this had happened, why she had dropped someone from the window and threatened to kill them.
"I-I-
She never got to finish the sentence as You rushed at her, with Chika following suit, embracing her tightly.
Overwhelmed—that would be an understatement.
She had just dropped someone out of a window and was being hugged—no, thanked for it!
"Y-You? Chika?"
She wondered aloud, staring at the two, tear smeared girls.
"R-Riko.."
You managed to press out in between hiccups.
"Did you mean that?"
"Huh?"
"The thing about how much you love You...a-and me."
Chika tacked onto the back of her statement almost shyly.
Oh, they weren't even focused on attempted murder.
Riko's worries melted away as she nodded vigorously.
"Of course I did. I love the both of you!"
A moment of silence hung between the three as Riko remembered why they had been gone in the first place.
"You-Did Chika talk things out with you?"
Yous face flushed suddenly as she nodded curtly.
"We uh, we were about to come talk to you about that."
Chika kept going in an uncommonly shy tone.
"We talked it out and all a-and uh..."
She trailed off, looking at You for help.
"Riko uh...do you uh, mean love us in like.. a romantic way?"
Now it was Rikos turn to flush red.
How had she gone from almost killing someone to this in all of five minutes again?
She contemplated lying but decided against it.
What did she have to lose right?
"Wh-What if I did?"
Good going Riko. Stutter more will you?
The twos faces lit up immediately, confirming honesty as the correct answer.
"Well then."
Chika smiled as she took one of the redheads hand, the other somehow found itself clasped in Yous.
The other two nodded at each other before chorusing together.
"Will you go out with us?"

---

Nozomi smiled as she listened to the conversation.
She had looped around as soon as she was sure Riko was no longer looking and thankfully, caught the entire conversation.
Things were going just as planned.

---

"Maki?"
Kanan knocked once on Makis door before stepping in.
The redhead looked up from a sheet of music as the three walked in.
"Hm? What's brought all three of you here?"
She looked at them quizzically, her gaze drifting towards the book that the three were holding.
"We found something and...look this may seem like a long shot, but we have to try everything."
The redhead set the sheet paper aside, focusing all her attention at the three girls.
"Maki, would fungus that works on ants, work on humans?"
Kanan asked, her voice betraying that this was in no way a random question.
"Like, work how?"
"Zombiefie. There's a fungus that-"
"Oh yeah I know that one-wait holly fuck you guys aren't implying that it's the same fungus?"
Maki almost stumbled over her words as she sprung from the chair, startling the third years.
"W-We found it's base structure and my dad had this hanging in his office so...it's a hunch."
Maki snatched the book out of their hands, placing it onto her desk.
"I need you to get me a fresh corpse, one that was bit recently. I don't care how long it takes, but get it done."
The three nodded dumbly, setting out to do just that.
Was this really the solution?

---

"So they're safe?"
"Have to be. No reason to leave behind this note otherwise."
"She may be tricking us."
"Trust me Yoshiko, she's not."
"I guess it's better than the alternate-Hi Zuramaru."
Yoshiko turned away from the heated debate that she had been having with Eli as the latter stuffed a piece of paper into her pocket.
"Are we interrupting something?"
Ruby inquired, feeling a bit relieved as the two shook their heads.
"We were just clearing something up, no worries."
Yoshiko reassured her.
"So what's the issue zura?"
Eli groaned.
"Where do I start."

---

Run.
That's all Nico allowed herself to think.
Run.
Run.
Run.
Whatever she did, she could not think.
She could not think about their deaths.
How they were being chewed up at this very moment.
She had to run.
She had to get back to the group.
Anything but thinking.
Anything but reality.

Chapter End Notes

Bit shorter than the last two, but I'm hoping to keep a 3000 word average on these. Sorry this took a bit longer, I'm actually working on a book so yeah, that's happening! I mean I'll be done in like a year or two but I actually do wanna release it
"And there. You've got yourself a working stew without the need for a real big fire."
Hnamaru stepped away from her work, grinning at her friends proudly.
"I would have never thought of that.."
Eli muttered in awe.
"Thanks a lot Hanama-huh?"
A quick wrapping knock on the door cut her off.
"Yo Hanamaru, you-"
"Yes I did."
Maru cut her off, pretty sure she knew the question.
"What's your problem?"
You grinned sheepishly as she didn't seem to want to say.
"C-Can you just come?"
"Sure, you guys will be okay right?"
Maru turned to the two cooks who gave her the thumbs up before meeting up with You.
"So what's the issue?"
"Ah....Well so uh...how do I go poop with no plumbing?"
Maru stared at her friend in surprise.
"You, I didn't grow up without plumbing! But nevermind, I've read enough books for this. Come on, we can actually use this to our advantage."
"What."
Hanamaru left Yous question hanging, bring up her own.
"So You, what's that spot on your neck?"
She asked innocently.
Of course she knew what it was.
She was 15, you hear (and read) stuff.
But watching her friend attempt to explain it was really fun.
You had grown red, only managing to stammer out bits of words.
"I-that's-i mean!"
"Is it a bite?"
Hanamaru grinned at her friend, her cheeky smile finally letting You know that she was playing with her.
"Hamanru, you are such an ass."
"Hey Hey, watch your language, zura."

---

"A corpse huh?"
Kanan mused, getting out of the stolen police van.
Well stolen.
The police was mostly dead so, it was practically legal.
That's totally how the law worked.
If it existed in this world.
"We should probably check apartments. Where people lock themselves in and die of starvation."
Dia spoke up, kicking in the door of an apartment building.
"Woha."
"Whole building is falling apart, nothing special."
Dia shrugged it off, keeping her arm out for protection. A low moaning was to be heard from an apartment on the ground floor, which door was leaning open. Motioning for her friends to wait, she slowly walked in, her whole body tense. She could hear the squeaking of the floorboards getting closer, the ragged moans of the dead becoming louder. As the rotting face of...what was probably? a woman? shot forward, she only barely managed to bite her lip in time not to scream. Raising her blade, she was ready lob the creatures head right off. Except...something was wrong. It was ignoring her completely. No-worse. It had totally seen her. But that was it. It had made no attempt at an attack. "What the hell?" She muttered, stepping closer. This was incredibly dangerous, she was aware. But her intrigue was peaked. Slowly shuffling closer, and definitely having grabbed it's attention, she kept closing in. But it just stared at her blankly. As if she was one of them...! That's when it hit her. Oh my god. This was so repulsing but...honestly also pretty useful. "Dia? You oka-Dia what the hell are you doing?!" She felt herself ripped back as the door to the kitchen was slammed closed, locking the dead inside. And now she was faced with two very worried friends. "Are you out of your mind?" "You could have died!" "Weren't you supposed to be the smart one?" They kept bombarding her for probably another five minutes before giving Dia time to respond. "I-Guys listen!" She burst out. "It's not harming me! It-It completely ignored me!" Silence.

"What."

---

"Maki? You haven't moved from your room all day are you-" Eli cut off as she was faced with a sleep deprived, frenzied looking Maki. Papers were strewn over the floor, books lay everywhere. What was she doing? She knew school was over right? "Eli!" Maki almost screamed in desperation. "How much does an ant weigh?" Had she heard correctly? "A-An ant?"
"You heard me! How much does an ant weigh?"
Eli had no clue.
1 gram?
0.5?
She had no idea.
"L-like uh.... 5 milligrams?"
That sounded about small enough.
Maki bashed her head against the table.
"Let me try the math with that."
She muttered, picking up a pen from the ground.
Closing the door, Eli wondered what the hell that had been.
What was Maki even doing?

---

"I'm done."
Hanamru groaned as she sank into Rubys bed.
"What happened?"
The redhead inquired, nestling herself next to her friend.
"I keep having to help this helpless bunch, zura. It's fun, and I'm glad I'm needed but it's tiring."
Ruby laughed, stroking through Hanamarus hair.
"Well take some time to relax here then."
She swung herself off the bed and rummaged in her backpack.
"I actually found a fully wrapped tea bag the other day, so sit tight and I'll make one."
Hanamru thought back to Ruby burning herself, the last time she had tried.
"Just be careful."
As the door clicked closed, Maru stretched herself out on the bed.
She was happy.
People needed her, she was important.
But something still bugged her.
She did owe this to Nozomi.
All her importance, her new found confidence and her new leader role.
And Nozomi knew that all too well
And she was sure to use that against her.

---

She was almost there.
Nicos legs ached, her lungs were on fire and she hadn't eaten or slept in two days.
And she was finally back.
Just the steps.
Just the gates left.
Standing by the front doors, she banged on them as loudly as she could manage, her voice was barely nonexistent.
She needed water.
Why wasn't anyone answering goddamnit!
She kept pounding on the door, finally pulling out her gun.
One bullet left.
Whatever, she needed to get in.
Stepping away, she aimed the gun at a random tree in the distance and shot.
Surely the loud bang must have alerted at least someone.
"Nico? Is that you?"
Finally.
She didn't know who was calling, but she managed to croak out a "yes" loud enough to be heard. The door opened minutes later as she practically fell into the entrance hall.

"Nico- what-where is my sister?"
Honoka, yes it was Honoka for sure, asked aghast.
Nico didn't have the energy to respond.
She didn't want to face it.
She wanted to cry but at this point, she didn't even have the fluids to do that in her body.
So resigned to shaking her head meekly.
"No..."
She heard Honoka mutter.
But before she could ask anymore questions, a whole group of people arrived.
Probably.
At this point, Nico could barely keep her eyes open.
"Nico!"
"Oh my god!"
"Honoka, get her some water and food!"
The voices began mixing together, forming a jumble of words.
Her head pounded.
Her eyes wouldn't open.
Her mind went blank.

---

"Nico...cmon wake up.."
Nicos eyes shot open as she felt something prod her cheek.
"Wh-Wha-!"
She garbled out, the last few days having sent her defenses on edge.
Finally adjusting to the dim light, it must be evening then, she saw Honoka, Eli and Umi in the room.
Where was Maki?
This was her room too.
Her thoughts were interrupted by a water bottle that was shoved in her direction.
"Here, you look like you need it."
Umi smiled kindly as she handed her half an apple as well.
"Sadly that's all we can spare."
Not bothering with a thanks, she was way to starved for that, the gifts were quickly down the hatch.
That felt a lot better.
"H-Hey Nico."
Honoka asked softly.
"Where's Yukiho?"
Oh fuck.
Nico wanted to answer honestly.
She really did.
But the last time Honoka had learned of a loved ones disappearance, she had butchered a bar.
God that seemed like forever ago.
"U-Uh..."
She gulped.
How was she supposed to say this?
"I...I don't know. I'm sorry."
A sharp look entered Honokas eyes, a look Niko really didn't want fixated on her.
"What does that mean?"
"We got ambushed—Erena got bit, I...I had to run! I-I don't know whether they survived, Erena certainly not but she might have fought off the horde. Anju, Yukiho and Alisa...they never got out to my knowledge though. I'm really sorry! I wanted to go back but—There was a herd! I'm so sorry Eli, Honoka!"

So much for not saying it outright.
The moment she had opened her mouth, words and tears spilled over.
She barely had enough time to look up at them as she felt a strong hand take hold of her throat.
"Honoka!"
She heard a distressed Eli behind her attacker.
She could defend herself sure.
But what was the point?
They were all near death.
So she died a bit earlier.
Who cared?
At some point, everyone dies in this world.
They die young.
"I'm sorry Honoka."
She managed to croak out, her lungs burning, aching for air.
But she didn't struggle.
This was good right?
It relieved her from the stress of survival.
Her vision was blurring, her senses began to dull.
Why was this okay with her?
She tried to focus again, her hands slowly scratching away at Honoka's arm.
No!
She wouldn't go down without a fight!
Erena had the fuck not died for this to be the outcome!
The grip loosened, and her lungs got a breath of fresh air.
She must look pretty pathetic, gasping for air like a fish out of water.
"Nico..."
Her eyes met light blue ones, glazed with tears.
"Eli I'm really-"
"Nico I'm so sorry you had to go through that."
Huh?
Eli was hugging her?
And where was Honoka—oh dear.
"What—What happened to her? Why is she passed out in Umis arms?"
Eli groaned at the question.
"Umii cut her air off. Bring her to her room and lock the door."
The archer nodded, sending a "sorry" in their direction before walking off.
"I'm going to go lay down too."
Eli muttered defeated.
Nico nodded, knowing she would have to be left alone for now.
It had been devastating on all of them.
Laying down, one last thought came to mind.
Why hadn't her siblings come to visit her?

---

"Oh my god."
Maki muttered, going over her math.
This was it.
This was the dosage!
Oh my god she had figured it out!
All she had to do now was analyze the corpse the third years would soon bring in, get the decay
time and bam!
She could totally predict this!
Definitely!
She stood up, stumbling backwards and hitting the wall.
Maybe she should have slept.
Maybe she should sleep.
Trudging out of the former broomcloset that she had been using as office, she made her way to her
room.
But the hallway was moving funny.
Wait no—that shouldn't be possible.
A second after that thought, she hit the ground with a thud.
---

Eli entered her room, throwing herself onto the bed.
She wanted to cry.
But she couldn't.
Physically couldn't.
Her body wouldn't let her.
She had to sleep then, maybe that would help.
Rolling over, her hand fell onto a paper.
"What the..."
Holding it up into the moonlight, she could make out two words in hasty writing.
"Trust me? What does that even-"
She was cut off, by the sound of a high pitched scream.
---

"Let me go!"
Ruby struggled with her restraints, finally spitting out the words she had wanted to say from the
moment a sock had been stuffed in her mouth.
Which had been hours ago, when she had been intending on making Hanamaru a tee.
"In a few minutes, I only need you for a bit."
Her captor grinned, fastening the last light onto the courtyard.
"Don't go screaming now that the gag is gone though, I'll shoot you right through if you do."
Ruby glared at the woman, hoping someone would walk in on this.
She really needed some help.
"Okay there!"
Nozomi picked up a megaphone and Ruby herself, pressing the gun against her forehead.
"Let's get this going!"
The lights flashed on, illuminating the courtyard in a bright sea of light.
"Hey guys!"
Nozomis voice boomed through the megaphone.
"Why don't you all come into the courtyard? We've got something to talk about."
Ruby winced as the gun pressed into her forehead, drawing blood.
"Oh and I'd hurry."
Ruby was suddenly faced with the speaker of the Megaphone.
"Right Ruby?"
A sharp howl of pain, amplified through the device, rattled all of Otonoki a second later.
Chapter End Notes

not as long as the others, but the next will be a lot longer so forgive me. Also we are seriously close to the end of this, just a few more chapters left. Of this arc that is
That had been Ruby!
Hanamaru shot up from her bed, her hand wrapped around the pistol that had been laying next to her.
Which was...actually kinda weird?
She didn’t own a fire arm.
But at this moment, it really didn’t matter.
sprinting through the hallways she caught up to Eli and Umi, both whom looked out of breath.
“H-Hey.”
She greeted them, getting but a nod of acknowledgment in return (how rude).
After narrowly avoiding multiple walls and nearly tripping down the stairwell, the three of them came to a skidding stop in front of the courtyard where it seemed that all of Otonokizaka had assembled.
Wait actually no.
Maki, Nico, Kanan, Dia and Mari were missing oddly enough.
Pushing herself past her friends, she found herself face to face with Rubys bleeding face as she was shoved in her direction.
“Oh, thanks for catching her Maru.”
A cruel voice mocked her from a few feet away.
Looking up, she found Nozomis gaze fixated on her.
But it was different than last time.
A far cry from the bloodlust she had experienced then.
This was far, far worse.
“Seems a few of you are missing..”
Nozomi discarded of the megaphone, her voice even at normal pitch reaching everyone in the silent audience.
“What lucky girls.”
She continued, strolling up a bit closer to the group.
“Ah Kotori, nice to see you survived.”
She grinned at the ash haired, who, had she had a gun, might have just shot her on the spot.
“Thanks to your intervention.”
Okay maybe not.
Kotoris voice was actually...really happy?
Honestly, Hanamaru had just about reached her threshold of what she could process.
“A miss calculated call on my part, something I aim to correct tonight.”
The purple haired woman smiled devilishly at Rubys shocked expression.
“Yes, today will be everyone’s demise..but I’m not unfair, I’ll give you a fighting chance.”
“And what is that?”
Umi finally mustered the courage to speak up, earning a laugh for it.
At this point, it seemed that Nozomi had completely lost it.
“I have to kill the person I was closest to, personally.”
Eli shrank back as the murderous gaze landed on her.
“Elichi.”
Eli shuddered at the use of the nickname.
“Come fight me. One on one.”
Nozomi reached forward and grabbed her opponents hand, wrenching her into the middle of the
spotlight.
“Nozomi..”
She pleaded.
She didn’t want to fight!
How could she fight her-no kill her friend?
She watched as Nozomi unholstered her gun and two knives and threw them into a bush.
“Hand to hand combat. If I win, I get to kill you and everyone else. If you win..”
Eli could have sworn she saw a look of hesitation or even hope cross her adversaries face but it vanished quickly.
“You have to kill me.”
“I wouldn’t ever-!”
The blonde cut herself off, her mind looking back onto the messages Nozomi-the real Nozomi- had left her.
She had to do this.
This wasn’t a choice.
“Fine.”
“Eli wait!”
Umis voice broke through the tension.
“You can’t actually-“
“Umi.”
The blonde looked back at her friend, her eyes barely able to hold back her tears.
“Trust me on this.”
“But-“
“I have to...she wants it that way.”
Umi didn’t bother to ask who “she” was.
Or why Eli seemed so determined to do this.
But she understood the guilt that laced Elis voice that was starting to seep into relief.
Eli had been feeling guilty of never having to kill anyone close to her.
She never said it but, whenever she was around Umi it was a noticeable back tone.
And now she could make up for it.
Umi shook her head, stepping back.
This logic-it didn’t make sense outside of their reality.
But in a world where you killed loved ones, well you had to deal with much more than survivors guilt.
“I understand...good luck Eli.”
The blonde smiled thankfully as she too threw her weapons away, if not into a bush and more into Kotoris hands who almost miss caught due to her eye coordination not completely working out yet.
“Let’s do this Nozomi.”
She grit her teeth, grinding her feet into the ground.
“Look who’s eager.”
Nozomi grinned, her leg flying forward in a kick, that sent Eli crashing to the ground.
“But you’ve got a lot to learn.”
Her shoe collided with Elis stomach, the blondes body convulsing painfully.
“Doubt you’d have a lot of time though...but I’ll give you another chance. Get up. Attack first.”
She taunted, stepping back a few feet as Eli managed to prop herself up.
God did she not want to fight.
But she had to.
She repeated that to herself over and over again while searching for weak points in Nozomis defense.
Not that she found any.
Any attack she made, any thrust or punch, she’d just land herself in the dirt.
Maybe...maybe she could talk Nozomi out of this.
Yeah, that had to be possible.
“Nozomi, why do you want our death so badly?”
She mustered up all her courage, preparing for the inevitable punch that her question would earn her.
Except...it didn’t come?
“Because my parents told me to. Simple.”
She had got an answer?
She could totally keep this going!
“But why do you follow them?”
Nozomi’s face shifted from cocky to unsure.
“I-I...they told me to...”
She didn’t know what she was doing, but something was working.
“But why do you follow them?”
She pressed on, emboldened by her adversaries stuttering.
“Th-They-I-Eli stop it!”
Nozomi barked harshly, sending an unhinged fling in the blondes direction which she, much to her own surprise, actually managed to dodge.
“You aren’t enslaved to them! Do what you want to do!”
Her last sentence earned her a punch to the gut, causing her to keel over and the onlookers to almost instantly surround her in a protective circle.
“Get the fuck out of the way.”
Whatever spell had been on Nozomi just seconds prior had definitely been broken.
“This is our fight!”
Eli pushed herself to the front, wiping blood away from her lips.
“Is it really? Or is it your parents fight?”
She barged at her friend, her swing missing by miles.
But not her tackle.
The two flew through the air before skidding to a stop in the dirt, Eli pinning Nozomi to the ground.
“I knew it. You only respond to programming. Only to programmed fight moves, only to programed words.”
She could feel Nozomi’s nails (only 9 actually) dig into her skin, but she didn’t care.
This was the only chance that she would get at this.
“You’re spouting shit.”
Nozomi grunted as she switched their positions, her fist landing a milimeter away from Eli’s face.
The two wrangled with power, switching top and bottom (sexual innuendo intended) in seconds.
Eli could feel her mouth bleeding after one fling hit it’s mark, sending her head crashing against the ground.
Nozomi’s hand had made itself up to hers, and she could feel something in it.
Before she could even comprehend what Nozomi was doing, she was...on top again?
Hold up when had she-
“Get off of me!”
Nozomi flailed, attempting, astoundingly weakly, to free herself.
Eli felt herself be pulled down and in the split second that she was down, Nozomi asked a question.
“Trust me?”
She breathed out lowly, receiving a very, very hesitant nod in return.
Nozomi’s attention shifted at that, past the blonde and onto-
“Hanamaru.”
The young girl looked up from tending Rubys wounds in shock.
“You owe me.”
Nozomi spat, wringing with Eli’s grip on her.
Eli didn’t know what was happening behind her.
But what she did know was that something landed next to her—no something was in Nozomi’s hand—fuck.
“Looks like I won.”
She cackled, as she pulled Eli up and rammed the muzzle of the gun into her stomach.
“Goodbye.”
A dull shot rang through the courtyard, muffled by Eli’s body as she stumbled away, clutching her stomach as blood began flowing out.
“Eli!”
Umi rushed to her friend’s side, hate boiling up inside her.
But before she could reach the blonde who lay gasping for air in the dirt, she was flung back against the group.
“No helping, she lost.”
Umi’s rage turned on Hanamaru, who slowly moved backwards.
“Why!”
She snarled.
“Why did you give her that?!”
Had Kotori not tackled her to the ground, she probably would have killed Maru right where she stood.
The archer found herself face to face with Nozomi as the latter had crouched down.
“She owed me a debt, surely you of all people understand how important that is to repay.”
Umi didn’t respond, she refused to give in to the taunting.
Getting up, Nozomi surveyed the rest of the crowd.
“Now then, where were we—”
She cut off with a grunt as three people tackled her to the ground, her gun being thrown across the yard.
“Left yourself open.”
You growled while bearing down onto her adversary.
Nozomi couldn’t see with her face pressed to the ground, but she was pretty sure she could guess who was on top of her.
“Get off me you three!”
She roared, shaking them off with a quick leap up and sending all three of them flying.
“Pathetic. The whole lot of yo—“
A needle stuck out of her neck as she spoke, it’s content infused in her before she could completely grasp what was happening.
As Nozomi sunk to the ground, her eyes lidded and breathing irregular, two newcomers joined the game.
Two very unwelcome newcomers.
“This is taking ridiculously long.”
Nozomi’s mother sighed, kicking her daughter’s unconscious body away into the brush behind her.
“Seems like we still haven’t erased her affection for this bunch of disposables.”
Her husband agreed, his voice calm and collected, but the smile betrayed his bloodlust.
“Yknow...”
Her mother pondered, aiming her gun at her daughter.
“Maybe it was a mistake to try to reclaim her.”
Before she could pull the trigger, she was hit by something—how does one even explain the texture?
By something slimy and wet and rubbery but also not and
“What the fuck?”
Her attention shifted momentarily to what lay at her feet.
“Is that—Oh my god.”
Her gaze swept over the crowd finally landing on Kotori, who was wearing a ridiculously smug look.
“Thought I might want to keep an eye on you....besides, if Hanamaru is paying her debt, I might as
well too.”
She laughed, seemingly unfazed by anything that was going on.
Seemingly.
Umi could confirm that by the strength that she was still being held down, her friend was just about as close as you could get to breaking again.
Which in this situation...actually wouldn’t be bad?
Nozomi’s mother groaned as she picked up the eye.
“I’m surprised you survived...How did you remove the eye?”
“I didn’t, our resident doctor did...though she’s not currently here for some reason.”
Kotori realized after quickly checking the group.
“Probably the redhead, she looks a lot like the Nishikino pair.”
Nozomi’s father said.
“I feel like she may survive the murder then.”
Cutting off the duo’s monologue, Umi looked up at Kotori in determination.
“Kotori, it’s perfectly fine to kill now.”
A look of uncertainty overcame her friend.
“I-I don’t really..”
“You don’t have to feel sorry for these two.”
The archer shook Kotori off and helped her up, pressing a blade into her hand.
“Nobody will fault you. These people are monsters.”
She smiled, before leaning in and capturing her friends—well not anymore probably—as of now girlfriends lips, leaving the latter a flabbergasted mess.
“Unlike you.”
Kotori nodded, stepping up in front of the two, who yawned.
“Very lovey dovey. You really want to fight us?”
The mother laughed, holstering her firearm.
“Unlike our daughter, we don’t have a programming.”
A small grin overcame the ash haired girl.
“True. But...well, Honoka?”
Kotori turned to the ginger, who looked like she was still fuming in rage from a few hours ago.
“They’re the ones who kidnapped Tsubasa back then. How bout giving them the same treatment as you gave the people in the bar?”
Honoka looked confused, seemingly still not having remembered her murderous spree.
“Just fuck em up.”
Kotori sighed before lunging at Nozomi’s mother.
Sure, she could dodge everything she threw at her. Sure, her husband was just as bad and sure, Honoka could not fight.
But she would be damned if she did not go down without a fucking fight!
Besides, they still had a small trick up their sleeve, she thought, watching Umi disappear into the building.
They just had to stall for time.
Her knife barely sliced her adversaries arm as she spun out of the way of a stab.
She caught sight of Umi on the roof and grinned.
Maybe they’d all die.
But their killers sure as hell will never forget them.
“Honoka! Give me your hand.”
Kotori reached out, grabbing onto Honokas hand and swung her around, directly at the pair, managing to knock the wind out of them.
Before either of them could recover, an arrow was sticking from both their shoulders, causing the two to convulse in pain.
“You little-“
Kotori and Honoka high fived, the fact that they were ignoring him seemed to infuriate him even more.
“That’s it!”
He roared, pulling out his gun.
“No more games!”
He continued, before he pointed his firearm at the students.
“At this rate we will take as long as our useless daughter.”
“Honestly, we really overestimated her.”
His wife agreed, pulling her own weapon on the group, only to find that they had all taken cover during the skirmish.
With nobody left, Honoka and Kotori now stared down the barrels of their guns.
A strained cough from behind them brought their attention back to their-not unconscious daughter?
“I’d say you underestimated me.”
A searing pain filled their hands as a shot bore through their firearms and their hands, causing them to let out groans of pain.
The two of them could barely make out red twin tails before their attention was caught by the unlocking of a safety.
“Riko, why was the safety on?”
Nozomi asked the trio that stood in the corner of the courtyard.
As their eyes fell on the redheads empty holster, it all clicked into place for her parents.
“She owed you too, didn’t she?”
Nozomi laughed.
“Of course. You taught me how to have people owe you favors, don’t be surprised.”
Her gun was raised now, pointing straight at her fathers head.
“You know, you put too much faith in your brainwashing methods. After all, I only react to triggers.”
One could visibly see the strain in her parents faces.
And in Nozomi.
“And look around, their all hiding.”
She laughed, walking a bit closer for the drama of it all.
“Maybe you could continue to perfect it, maybe you could learn to instill loyalty, not fear in your ranks. Maybe you could realize that tranquilizer doesn’t work on an infected body.”
Her finger had reached the triggers pressure point.
“A pity you won’t have time to learn.”
Her finger squeezed the trigger twice and with barely any adjustments in aim, her parents sunk to the ground, blood pouring out of their skull.

Chapter End Notes

Well, I’ll leave you with a shot Eli, dead parents and a Nozomi who is completely off her hinges....maybe
It was over.
Umi threw her bow aside and ran down the stares, managing to acquire what will probably be
multiple bruises in the process.
But what did she care?
It was over!
Tripping through the last few steps, she was caught by a brightly smiling Kotori.
„Umi! That was fantastic!“
She screeched, her happiness barely contained.
„You shot them right-and Honoka smashed-And I got to throw my eye!“
She bubbled on, reminding the archer of Honoka actually.
Looking into the courtyard, she found the rest of the group was very weary to approach Nozomi,
who-who had her eyes closed? and was inspecting someone.
That’s when something smashed her good mood.
„Eli..“
She muttered, pushing past her friends, intending to get to the dead woman.
But her attention was caught by something else.
Looking closer, she found Nozomi was actually crouched over Elis body.
„The fuck are you doing?“
She could feel rage bubbling up in her again at the sight.
„Ah, that’s Umis voice correct?“
Nozomi turned to her-still with her eyes closed.
What the hell.
„What are you doing?“
She asked again.
„I know this looks really weird, but I gotta check something first...“
Nozomi continued to rip off part of her leggings and placed it over Elis face.
„Is her face fully covered?“
She asked sweetly, any sign of the bloodthirsty monster was eliminated.
So she was playing games again.
„Does that matter!?“
She screamed at Nozomi, who shrunk back a bit at the harsh tone.
„You killed her!“
Umi lunged at Nozomi, her momentum, causing them both to roll several feet.
„I-I-Umi listen-“
She was interrupted by her own jaw as it was crashed upwards from what must have been an ill
placed punch.
„Open your eyes."
Umi growled, growing sick of how Nozomi was acting.
„No! Umi I’m sorry but I can’t do that!“
Her adversary almost screamed in...terror?
„Why? Can’t look us in the eye?“
Nozomi shook her head desperately.
„No, no just..Umi tie me down first."
What?
„B-But let me check on Elich-..“
„On your victim."
„No Umi please."
She pleaded, before throwing the archer off and getting up.
„Can someone please show me to her body?“
She asked almost exasperated.
It took almost a solid minute, in which Umi had to be restrained yet again by her two childhood friends, until Hanamaru finally walked up to her and took her hand.
„H-Here I’ll guide you..“
As they walked slowly, Hanamaru looked up to ask something that had been really bugging her.
„Did you lay that gun on my bed?“
Judging by the smile that played on Nozomis lips, Maru didn’t even need to hear her „Yes.“
As they reached the body, Nozomi crouched down again.
„Hanamaru, I’m sure you’ve figured it out if you asked that question. Can you make sure nobody comes into my field of vision?“
„Of course."
She nodded, although of course Nozomi couldn’t see that, before stepping out in front of her.
„Everyone, get right in front of me.“
She commanded proudly, the last few days really having pepped her up.
Most of Otonoki fallowed the command.
Most.
But with a fuming Umi under them, it was pretty hard for either Honoka or Kotori to move.
„Umi please calm down."
Hanamaru heard the two trying to bring her down.
Unsuccessfully.
Walking up to her, she knew that apart from Nozomi, she was probably the last person that Umi wanted to see.
But no can do.
„Umi, please get out of her vision."
„Traitor!“
Umi snapped, acting incredibly uncharacteristic.
„Why did you give her that gun?!“
Hanamaru sighed, with the calm now finally being able to explain to the archer what had happened.
„Umi."
She tried again, her solemn tone granting her a bit of time to talk.
„She gave me that gun before all of it started."
„So fucking what?!“
God was she happy that Kotori and Honoka were here.
Umi looked like she would rip her head off if she would get her hands on her.
Grasping the fact that Umi wouldn’t let the young girl speak, Kotori quickly covered her girlfriends mouth with her hand, knowing that even in this state, Umi would never resort to biting her.
Hanamaru smiled thankfully before continuing.
„Umi, the gun was empty."
——
Nozomi heard a loud gasp from across the courtyard and then a scuttling until it was behind her.
Seemed like Hanamaru had calmed Umi down.
Opening her eyes, she smiled as she saw the slow and steady rise and fall of Elis chest.
She must have fallen unconscious from the shock.
Thankfully, after cracking the blood capsule open, which a quick check in Elis hand confirmed.
What a clever girl she was.
Having made certain that Eli was indeed unharmed, she closed her eyes again and turned to the group.
„I’m going to assume Umi and Hanamaru told you that she’s alive. Just unconscious it seems, so maybe get her to a bed. Now.“
She held out her hands with a pair of handcuffs and a key.
„Before I open my eyes, anyone mind chaining me to a chair, inside if possible?“
A muttering overtook the group as they all seemed pretty reluctant.
„My arms are getting tired, can anyone lead me to a room and chain me up?“
Finally, a hand grabbed her arm and started walking.
„Hanamaru trusts you so... I guess I will too.“
Oh dear it was Ruby.
She really was owed an apology.
„H-Hey Ruby, is your face alright? I’m really sorry for hurting you.“
She asked tentatively.
„Bleeding has stopped and it’s nothing serious. Now worries.“
Ruby could tell by the uneasy look on Nozomis face that there very much so still were worries.
„If it was necessary to do, it was worth it.“
Nozomi nodded slowly.
„I promise I’ll explain it all soon.“
She stumbled backwards onto a chair, not exactly used to being blind.
„Make sure to have me attached to the chair... and maybe have the chair attached to the floor.“
She could hear Ruby groan.
„You don’t happen to have a second pair of handcuffs?“
„In my room, under the bed.“
She could hear someone shuffle out of the room, which she assumed must be Ruby.
But judging by the multiple inhales and exhales, she was far from alone.
„How many are just watching me right now? Three?“
The breathing quickened slightly, indicating shock.
„Y-Yes.“
Ah, so You was here.
„It’s just You, Hanamaru and Umi.“
Oh dear, she was gonna get ripped to shreds.
„What room am I in?“
She inquired curiously.
„Judging by my shallow echo, it’s pretty small... there’s a musty smell... we didn’t go up a flight of stairs... hold up, is this the janitors office?“
That was definitely right, if she was any good at judging the wows and ahs from the small group.
Their little, mostly one sided, conversation was interrupted by Ruby, who arrived panting.
„Found em. And the keys.“
Nozomi felt her arms being guided behind her back then locked together, while the chair was locked on to... probably the heating?
It was the only locked down bars that she could remember.
„Fastened tight?“
„Yeah.“
Ruby sounded nervous.
Hell, Nozomi sounded nervous.
Mostly, because she was about to lose control of her mind the moment she opened her eyes.
„One more thing... I’m not in full control when a trigger gets put off... please forgive me.“
Well, now she was even more nervous.
And scared.
But what can you do?
She had to fight this.
She couldn’t let it win!
So she opened her eyes.

—

„I can’t believe she managed to crack a blood capsule before fainting. “
Kotori wondered as she was cleaning Elis shirt, leaving her in her incredibly overused bra.
To be fair, cleaning was a bit of an exaggeration.
She was simply scrubbing the fake blood off, because it looked pretty terrifying.
Maybe You and her should make new clothes for everyone.
Now that was an idea.
A soft groan woke her from her little daydream.
Any normal person would be able to see Eli sitting up, but with a missing eye, well, Kotori was a little startled.
„E-Eli!“
She squeaked as she turned around.
„What...is it over?“
Eli muttered slowly, gradually grabbing her bearings.
„Yep. Nozomis parents are dead and-.“
„Oh my god she shot me!“
The blonde panicked, before noticing that she was in fact, intact.
„Silly, it wasn’t loaded. You even cracked the capsule.“
Eli grinned sheepishly.
„Not on purpose. I was so surprised that my hands just clamped up, which cracked it. “
„Hey, it did the trick. “
Kotori handed Eli her mildly clean and still damp shirt, which she donned nonetheless.
„I should probably catch you up on what happened after you fainted huh?“
„Might be a good idea. “

—

„Wow this looks grotesque...“
Riko muttered, having stayed behind to investigate the corpses.
In this world, any information was valuable.
„Truly. “
Yoshiko agreed, still busy wiping brain matter off of her as she had been splattered by the shot.
„Pretty sure a few months ago I’d be running crazy cuz of this..“
She flung the last piece off of her, joining Riko on the ground.
„I really feel desensitized at this point. “
Riko nodded, her finger inside the bullet hole of the fathers corpse.
„I know what you mean. I would have been sent screaming by this before..“
A silence settled upon them as they kept making mental notes of the state of the corpses, before
Yoshiko spoke up again.
„I’m terrified of it if I’ll be honest...we shouldn’t be this calm around a corpse. “
„True..“
Again silence.
„You know...“
Riko started up, wiping her eyes from tears.
No wasting water.
„Hm?“
„How many of us do you think will survive?“
Yoshiko smiled sadly as she wiped her fingers on her skirt.
“I’ll be honest with you.”
She sighed, her voice solemn.
“I don’t think any of us will.”

——

“Nozomi?”
Hanamaru asked cautiously, as the purple haired opened her eyes.
She seemed calm—for a second that was.
The moment that she fully saw them, took their faces in, something changed.
Her body was convulsing, her face fighting with itself.
It was bizarre—no grotesque.
“You know, I don’t think we’ll get much out of her like this..”
You spoke up, earning a harsh bark of laughter from their “captive”.
“Of course not! You-“
Another convulsion.
“Get someone-“
Nozomi strained out, before quickly closing her eyes.
“O-One minute..”
She muttered, before continuing after what was a very tense minute or so.
“Get Tsubasa. I was never programmed to trigger to her...my parents didn’t know she was here.”
“Of course.”
Yous voice was to be heard, followed by heavier footsteps than before.
“And to you three still here, maybe listen through the door? I can’t see your face, it’s still too
strong of a trigger.”
Nozomis voice grew almost bitter at that, but her face betrayed nothing.
“S-Sure.”
Hanamaru stammered out.
“Why can’t you just talk with us with your eyes closed?”
Nozomi stayed silent for a while.
“Nozomi?”
Umi inquired again, noticing a small tear leak from her eye.
“Please Umi.”
The older woman managed to say, her voice barely audible.
“I can’t keep seeing their death.”
Umi should say something at that.
She had killed her parents too, this shouldn’t be hard but...
Well what do you say here?
Her parents more than deserved it.
They were cruel, terrible people.
“You did the right thing.”
She murmured, laying a supportive hand on her shoulder.
“You know it’s crazy.”
Nozomi spoke up.
“They tortured me, branded me, killed thousands of people...”
A small hiccup interrupted her as the tears kept flowing.
“But I...I still loved them.”
Umi wished she could say she understood.
But she didn’t.
She couldn’t see how anyone could love them.
Thank god for Hanamaru and Ruby, who rushed to the crying woman’s side, enveloping her in a
tight hug.
“Love is a complicated thing.”
Ruby comforted, or attempted to.
“They were never terrible to me as a child, I looked up to them yknow? Smart, strong, calculating—I admired everything about them.”
“Of course, that’s natural.”
Hanamaru used the hem of her shirts sleeve to wipe away some of the tears.
“When I ran away...it was the first time I saw them for what they really were...but I was only 14 yknow? I spent most of my life loving them! Those foul people!”
Nozomi screamed into Rubys shoulder.
“I spent almost all my life with them but-I shouldn’t love them! They’re murderers!”
Hanamaru stepped away slightly, consistently wiping her friends face clean.
“We understand...just rest easy with the fact, you did the right thing.”
Nozomi nodded slowly, her sniffles starting to subside.
“As much as it hurt, she could not waste energy like this.
“For once...I never got to apologize to you Hanamaru...for putting you in such a situation.”
The young girl shook her head.
“I understand your intentions now, no harm done. I’ll have to apologize for punching you too.”
“You did what?!”
Ruby asked shocked.
“Yeah, she sent me flying across the library, didn’t know she was that strong...though I think Riko tops you, she threw me out of the first floor window.”
She could hear someones palm it their face in frustration.
“We seriously have a lot to talk about.”
Umi concluded, just in time too, as Tsubasa poked her head in, followed by You.
“ Took a while to find her and Honoka, sorry bout that.”
“No problem, zura.”
Hanamaru smiled easily.
“We’ll be outside then okay?”
Ruby asked Nozomi, freeing herself from the hug.
“Of course.”
Tsubasa waited patiently as they all filed out and until the door closed.
“You can open your eyes now.”
Nozomi seemed hesitant, but after a few seconds her eyes opened.
“I-I don’t feel anything.”
She awed, a large smile spreading across her face.
“Thank god.”
She laughed giddily.
“So...you wanted to see me because I’m not a trigger right?”
Nozomi nodded in affirmation.
“If I may ask...how was this programmed into you?”
“They..”
Nozomi started, trying to recollect her thoughts after that breakdown.
“They linked my brain to their faces and beatings. I’d be shown for instance Umis face and get shocked or beaten while having to look at that for hours on end. Elis was the worst...the-what was their name again...ah! The Aqours girls were less prominent however, but it’s still hard to fight. Thankfully, they didn’t use voices or I wouldn’t even be able to communicate with them.”
Tsubasa nodded, taking a chair opposite of her.
“Kind of ironic yknow...”
She let out a light laugh.
“Just a bit ago and our situation was reversed.”
Nozomi joined the giggled as she thought back.
That had only been a few months ago.
“Can’t believe it was just last season ago.”
“Stuff changed quickly in this world.”
“Mhm...I should probably explain, especially for the people listening right now.”
She heard a terrified squeak, that had to have been Ruby.
“I told you to eavesdrop, you aren’t doing anything wrong.”
She yelled a bit louder, smiling at the soothing shh that Hanamaru gave her friend.
“Anyway, continue, I’m pretty interested too if I’ll be honest.”
Nozomi made herself as comfortable as possible first, as her ass had started to hurt.
“Well...I guess I’ll begin with Hanamaru. I turned off both water and electricity, although to be fair I heard my parents discussing to do it that very day, so I may as well do it myself. Y’know, so that they don’t suspect. Anyway, that gave Hanamaru a bit of confidence, which she owed me...I did get quite the bruise from that encounter though.”
Nozomi grinned sheepishly.
“She even was able to read that I wouldn’t hurt her, even in the triggered state.”
“Smart girl.”
“Probably blushing right now.”
The two of them burst into laughter as a muffled “I’m not!” was heard.
“Then with You, I had seen how the three interacted like, they clearly liked eachother. So I told her that they didn’t want her, that she should betray you and stuff, again, I’m really sorry about that You, it broke my heart to see you like that. Anyway, that caused her emotions to build up, guaranteeing an explosion in the end in which they talk their feelings out.”
Nozomi shrugged, clanking with the handcuffs a bit.
“Hanamaru owed me her confidence, You her relationship. And Kotori her life, that was unplanned. But when I saw her in such danger, I acted on pure instinct even while triggered. That move earned me a lot of hurt, trust me.”
The purple haired girl finished her short resume of the story with that, prompting Tsubasa to ask one thing that was seriously bugging her.
“So what happened with your finger?”
“Ah! I forgot about that!”
The former idol groaned.
“How do you even...”
“I let it get bit, then cut it off. They don’t attack pollinated people. I’m immune, much like Dia is.”
Tsubasa stared at her quietly, before everyone, including the people behind the door let out a simultaneous “What!”
“Yeah, but I don’t recommend it, it hurts like hell. Even when sown up correctly like by me.”
Tsubasa shook her head at how easy the idea really was.
But wait.
Pollinated?
“Is this a plant? You said it pollinates.”
“Oh yeah, a mutation from a fungus found in the Amazon. There’s no known cure.”
Well fuck.
“It takes over the brain and makes the mind it’s slave in the right dosage...but it dies within a year.”
Wait that was great news!
“So we just have to wait it out!”
Nozomi nodded, smiling happily.
“Yep! Just gotta wait it out.”

“Ugh...”
Nico opened her eyes slowly, blinking at the brightness.
Hadn’t it just been night?
“Good morning.”
Huh?
Turning her head, she found a very exhausted looking Maki, laying in her own bed, a bandage wrapped around her head.
“What happened to you?”
“I fell from exhaustion.”
Maki sighed.
“And I had just figured it out...not that it matters now though, now that we have Nozomi.”
Wait what.
“Oh right, you don’t know. Truth be told, I slept through the whole thing too, I only just woke up after Hanayo and Rin had put me to bed here after stumbling on me laying in the hallway. They explained everything to me.”
Nicos silence was quickly interpreted.
“Long story short, Nozomi killed her parents and...turned herself in I guess? I don’t know the details, but apparently she’s in the downstairs janitors closet right now.”
Nico swung herself out of bed at that.
“Then I have a question to ask her.”
She stormed outside, crashing into someone walking the hallways.
“Ouch! Can you fucking watch ou-Eli is that blood?”
Nico quickly grappled herself up and helped the blonde as well.
“Fake blood. Where are you heading so quickly?”
“Gotta find Nozomi. I haven’t seen my siblings since I got back and I have a bad feeling.”
Silence.
Eli suddenly had a very guilty look on her face.
“Eli, do you perhaps know something?”
The blonde groaned.
“She uh...she took them.”
“-”
“-”
“What?!”
Nico could jump at Elis throat right now.
“The hell do you mean she took them!”
She demanded, resisting the ever growing urge.
“Wh-While you were gone...she came and kidnapped them-“
“That’s it. Where’s her room, we have to talk!”
She grabbed the blondes hand, storming off to the downstairs floor.
Janitors office or something it was right?
Probably, seeing as there was a group of three people in front of the door.
“Coming through!”
“No wait Nico you can’t-“
Nico didn’t bother to listen to the rest of the sentence as she barged in, startled to find that Nozomi was chained up.
And that Tsubasa was covering her eyes.
What the fuck.
“N-Nico! Please knock-She almost saw you-god be careful.”
Tsubasa sputtered out, only taking her hands away once she was sure that Nozomis eyes were closed.
“The fuck...”
Nico growled at Nozomi, causing the later to shrink back a bit.
“The fuck does this mean, you took my siblings?!”
“O-Oh yeah-I-I was gonna tell you—"  
Nico could fucking kill everyone here.  
“Where are they!”
She demanded, grabbing Nozomi by the collar.  
“Look at me!”  
“Nico stop!”
She felt herself pried away by a furious looking Tsubasa.  
“Let her speak.”
Begrudgingly, the raven haired girl waited for Nozomi to catch her breath.  
And open her eyes.  
The latter, did not happen.  
“They’re in Europe-the Swiss alps. I was able to get them to safety Nicochi, they didn’t belong here.”
Europe?  
How did she even-!
“I have a friend who flew them out. I know it’s hard to be apart but they’re safe now. Trust me.”
The nerve of this woman.  
“Trust you? You tried to kill me last time we met!”
Why was-Holly fuck Nozomi was crying.  
Fuck Nico, could be a bit more tactful.  
“Nicochi please get the situation explained by Tsubasa. Outside?”
Nico nodded dumbly, confusion overtaking her anger.  
As they went outside, Eli slipped past them, having been in a discussion with You and Hanamaru.  
She waited patiently until the door clicked closed, hoping Nozomi wouldn’t open her eyes immediately.  
“Someone’s still here, am I right?”
Nozomi asked, kicking her foot in Elis direction.  
“A-Ah!”
She hadn’t expected to be noticed that fast.  
“Y-Yes I’m here.”
A shocked expression overtook the older woman, as she tried to compose herself.  
“E-Elichi..”
Eli pulled up a chair, ripping a part of an old hanker chief off of the janitors old one.  
“Nozomi, I know you don’t want to look at the dark…but you can’t look at me either so..”
She reached forward, tying the light yellow and surprisingly clean fabric around Nozomis head snuggly, making sure she couldn’t see out.  
“Here. You’ll see yellow.”
She could see Nozomis eyes flutter open by the movement of the cloth and was relieved that no such reaction as Hanamaru had described it from before had occurred.  
“Thanks a bunch.”
Nozomi smiled thankfully, before they sat in a tense moment of silence.  
“S-So listen Elichi-“  
“Don’t you dare apologize.”
“Hah?”
Nozomi asked surprised, confirming that she totally had wanted to apologize.  
“I know you did what you had to… and yknow, I found your phone… and unlocked it.”
“O-Oh.”
Was all Nozomi could squeak out.  
“So I saw the messages…it gave me hope that I’d meet you again… you know, like you are now.”
A relieved smile spread across Nozomis face as she let out a long held in breath.  
“And yknow Nozomi..”
Eli got up, settling herself on Nozomis lap.
Sure, she had attempted to kill her before.
But this wasn’t the same person, this was the teasing, joking, loving Nozomi right now.
And if they had any chance of returning to normality, she had to start now right?
“E-Elichi?”
A large blush was creeping up on Nozomi’s cheeks.
“I’m really flattered that I was the one closest to you.”
Nozomi looked away, a heavy feeling setting in.
“It also means I have the worst trigger to you.”
“True. But it’s untrainable, you and I both know that...and the best way is to link me-and of course everyone else-to pleasant things right?”
Nozomi nodded, her face only reddening as Elici’s arms slung around her neck, pulling her closer.
“And I figured that, well, since I’ve already been caught up and all, we might wanna start with that already?”
She grinned as she could discern a small nod from the uncomfortable-but-not-wanting-it-to-stop girl under her.
And it was pretty much all the confirmation that she needed.
Maybe it was rushing things.
Maybe it was a stupid response to the entire thing.
But in a world where you may not live to see another day, well, you don’t exactly have all the time in the world.
Placing her finger under Nozomi’s chin to prop it up, she couldn’t help but grin at the embarrassed look on her friend’s face.
This was the real her.
And she’d do anything to get her back permanently.
“Wh-When would you wanna start?”
Came a stuttered question, causing a mischievous smirk to form on Elici’s face, a look that was usually reserved for the woman she was sitting on.
“I’d say right about now.”
She whispered softly, before locking their lips together.

Chapter End Notes

Man 2 days wait and already a new chapter, i am on fire! (procrastinating my studys to write this, I am not actually very productive)
But isn’t it nice to end a chapter on a happy note for once?


We have to leave

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

„Why did it go silent?“
Hanamaru asked curiously.
They had fallowed the conversation between the two third years closely, but now it was just...kinda quiet.
„I don’t know if we wanna know.“
You groaned, picking herself up from the ground.
„Why?“
Ruby questioned, innocence radiating from her.
The young innocence of someone who has killed two people.
Such marvelous innocence.
A small grin was plastered on Hanamaru as she peaked through the keyhole.
„I wouldn’t have put Eli as a top.“
You looked at her incredulously.
What in the world did Hanamaru read?
„A top...?“
The redhead asked curiously.
Hanamaru looked like she was about to tell, at least that’s what that shit eating grin was betraying.
Meaning You had to really quickly intervene, covering up Hanamarus mouth with lightning speed.
„Do not!“
She hissed, Ruby looking even more confused at that.
Hanamaru nodded, her grin very much so persisting.
„What made you think I would?“
„That stupid grin of yours.“
Ruby at that point, had peeked through the hole as well.
„Ooooohh you mean sitting on top!“

—-

„You know it’s great that Nozomi is back..“
Hanayo sighed as she picked up a notebook.
„But we still kinda have a food and water issue.“
Maki nodded, helping stacking the little supplies that they had.
„Yeah. Besides, I don’t exactly think that we’re safe here. I mean cmon, no such organization will just take the murder of their leaders without revenge.“
Rin groaned.
„We’re all gonna die, aren’t we?“
The redhead sat down the last of the still edible food and turned to Rin.
„Not if we get out. It’s been a good run but...well we aren’t safe here.“
Hanayo nodded, settling herself next to her friends.
„How do we convince everyone to get up and move though?“
“Pretty sure they’ve been thinking too...also the sooner we go, the better. Not only will we have a start on their goons...the dead are going to speed up now.”
This earned the redhead some very confused looks.
“I mean I can’t say for certain without a body, but I’m pretty sure they’ll act like plants.”
“Huh.”
Hanayo and Rin honestly didn’t know what to say to that.
“I thought plants fight against zombies?”
A shrill voice cut in.
Hold up.
“Mari?”
The redhead sprung up and sprinted to the doorway, to find all three of the trio that she had sent out.
That and-and multiple bodies?
Holly fuck they had taken this seriously.
“We’re back!”
The blonde grinned, dropping the body she was holding at Makis feet.
“Did you know that infected don’t attack people who got bit and cut off? Dia just walked in, killed and walked out!”
Oh.
That totally explained Nozomis hand then.
She gripped the hem of one corpse and made her way to the kitchen table, retrieving a cleaver.
“That’s just confirming my suspicions then.”
She swung it down, severing the hand and arm from the corpse cleanly.
“Bring the others here too, I just need part.”
Dia groaned, dropping the remaining two at Makis feet.
“Could’ve told us that..”
“Didn’t make a big difference.”
Kanan grinned.
“Not for miss muscle, I’m sure.”
Rin laughed, helping Hanayo stand up.
“Hey let’s leave Maki to it nya. We gotta fill you in on what happened while you guys were gone.”
Mari was looking out of the window that faced the courtyard.
“It can’t possibly have to do with those two corpses can it?”
“Dead on. It’s quite a story.”

—-
“Okay, snogging is over.”
Nico finally decided to step in, having been updated on everything.
The couple quickly scrambled apart-meaning Eli jumped off, leaving a drooling and blushing—not to mention blindfolded-Nozomi behind.
“This...do you guys know how much this looks like bdsm?”
Nico groaned, closing the door behind her.
“I swear it’s not-“
“Chill, I’m kidding.”
The raven haired sat down next to Eli as a long silence fallowed.
“I’m sorry for flipping out before.”
Nico finally broke the ice.
“No, it’s a natural reaction-I did kidnap your siblings.”
“Probably for the best if that means they’re safe.”
“I promise you, they are. Unless a cow eats them.”
Nozomi laughed, a grin spreading across her face.
“So...”
Eli spoke up sheepishly, still embarrassed at being walked in on.
“I’m gonna assume we can’t stay here?”
Nozomi shook her head.
“Not if you don’t wanna die. My parents deputy is sure as hell gonna hunt us down...they were pretty good friends.”
Nico groaned.
Like they needed more problems.
“We should probably pack our things then.”
Nico laughed harshly, thinking back to the three or so belongings that she had.
“I’ll see you in five minutes then.”
“Way to be pessimistic.”
Nico scoffed as she got up.
“I’m being realistic.”
She left, leaving Eli to smile sadly.
“Well if we’re gonna be realistic…”
She started, but couldn’t finish her thought.
“We’re all gonna die aren’t we.”
At least Nozomi could say it for her.
“Yeah.”

—-

“Hanamaru? You’re packing too?”
Ruby peeked into her friends room, finding it even emptier than usual.
“You’ve heard people talking. We have to go.”
A sad look overcame the small redhead.
“I know… I’ve packed everything too but… I don’t think I want to truly realize it.”
Hanamaru closed her backpack and sat down on the bed.
“Come here.”
She pat the bed next to her, prompting Ruby to sit down and swiftly place her head on Hanamarus lap.
“Hanamaru… if we go out, we’re going to die.”
Maru shook her head, but her solemn demeanor betrayed her true feelings on this.
“We’ll need bug spray.”
She avoided to answer.
“Huh?”
“If it’s passed by blood… well, mosquitoes and ticks could become deadly.”
Ruby groaned.
“God we are so fucked.”
Hanamaru laughed dryly.
“Don’t be so pessimistic. The rest of the world is fine, I’m sure they’re trying to save us.”
“You’re sure?”
The redhead looked up at Hanamaru disbelievingly.
“They better be… or they’ll deal with my wrath zura.”
Ruby let out a genuine giggle at the dramatics that her friend put into that.
“Don’t take this personally, but I feel like I’m being threatened by a cupcake.”
“Hey!”

—-

Riko stood up as she slung her backpack over her shoulder.
She’d heard Hanamaru and Ruby talking in the next room and decided it best to pack for both herself and Chika. You already had her own stuff neatly sorted and tucked away for travel.
In all probability, almost everyone will have heard about impeding departure.
It made a lot of sense after all, even if they were probably doomed out there.
Bit they were doomed in here too.
So what was the real difference?
“Hey, what’s with the two backpacks?”
Riko was ripped out of her thoughts by a very beloved voice.

“Ah, Chika. I decided to pack for you.”
The orange haired girl smiled in gratitude.

“Woha thanks! I was about to do that.”
Riko shook her head in amusement.

“Don’t know if I want to trust you with that.”
She handed her girlfriend her luggage and accompanied it with a peck on the cheek.

“Let’s go meet up with the rest. I’m pretty sure people are starting to be done around now.”
The blushing mikan grinned as she jogged behind Riko, giddy despite the situation.

It was really weird how months of terrible things dulls tragedies.

“Ah, you guys had the same idea huh.”

“Nothing zura.”
Came a much too sing song esque response, which merely left the raven haired girl to question if she was being teased or, alternatively, they had actually done something that they wanted to hide.

“Woha, whole crowd here.”
You exclaimed as she almost smashed the door of her room in Rubys face.

“And we have a pathetic amount of package.”

“Hey, at least we have our lives. Be grateful.”
You laughed at Hanamarus wise tone.

“Of course, sorry mam.”
The group reached the entry hall, startled to find everyone else already assembled there.

Actually no.
Everyone but Nozomi and Eli.
A fact Rin was quick to point out.

“Where are Nozomi and Eli nya?”
Maki shrugged, sending a questioning look in Nicos direction.

“You were with them last right? You don’t think they’re still kissing do you?”
She had been informed of the action by an incredibly flustered Umi, who had witnessed it as she passed the door.

It seemed that she had completely forgotten that she had engaged in the exact same thing with Kotori.

“No! You will not fucking-that is incredibly stupid-I will NOT do that!”
Elis voice screamed through the schoolhouse.

“What the fuck?”
Nico wondered, handing Maki her backpack.

“I’ll go check it out. You guys organize yourselves in the meantime.”

She sped off, confident that the voices had originated, for some reason, in the chemistry room.

Skidding to a stop in front of it, she was met with an incredibly bizarre sight.

Eli was restraining Nozomi on the floor—an act that yet again somehow looked stupidly sexual—while the later struggled with a small chemical bottle.

“Let me go!”
Nozomi urged, her grip not letting loose as Eli attempted to pry her...girlfriends? fingers off the bottle.

“We can solve this another way Nozomi.”

She grunted, as the two wrestled with each other, completely ignoring Nico.

“But it’s a good idea!”

“It’s fucking insane!”
Nico stood in the entryway, looking completely lost at this point.
“Uh..guys?”
Ignored again.
“Guys?”
Completely ignored.
The two seemed way too focused on their little skirmish.
“Elichi let go! I’ll do it myself!”
Nozomi pleaded.
“No!”
Eli finally managed to wrench the bottle away.
“I am not letting you pour HCl onto your eyes!”
Wait hold up.
What the fuck was going on?

—

“Sir, satellite footage show the Toujous dead.”
A man spoke up from one of the monitors, almost immediately regretting it as he was thrown against the wall by the second in command, a tall, blonde man.
“What?!”
The man shouted, his bright eyes focused on the monitor.
“Nozomi.”
He spat out, anger filling every fiber in his being as he watched the footage of the last few hours.
“Send people to that fucking school. Kill everyone inside.”
His eyes flit over the monitor for another second.
“Everyone, except the traitor...and the girl with the loop in her hair.”
He stormed off with that, having to have a serious talk with their partners.

Chapter End Notes

Mari Christmas!
So here's the thing, I've got like a million more ideas for the story buuuuut it's gotten really long and therefore kinda messy to navigate. So should I stop this one soon on an incredibly depressing note and start a new story (probs called road to hope/salvation) or just keep this one going?
“You know, one thing bugs me.”
Dia spoke up after a long silence that followed Nicos departure.
Well not really silence. Just not a group discussion.
Many small ones were held on the side, the reason of which she was now asking their “chief”
medical expert.
“Thanks to Nozomi we now know, that infected fully die, as in the body, a year after pollination.”
Maki nodded, having an inkling where this was going.
“Well...what about non infected but pollinated humans?”
Dia finished her question by gesturing to her stump.
“I can only guess.”
The redhead began slowly.
“Shoot your best shot then.”
“Well, I’m assuming by the structure of the chemical, that it’s simply a mutation of the so called
“Zombie fungus”. Meaning I’m deriving my conclusion from ants.”
Yoshiko scoffed at that.
“Pretty sure ants and humans have a different biology going on.”
Maki nodded, refusing to get annoyed over this.
“True. But it’s the best assumption I can go on and the brief analysis I could run on the corpses
confirms it.”
Dia sighed in aggravation.
“Can you please get to the point? I do kinda wanna know if I’m gonna die or not.”
“Sorry. Well, assuming it functions similarly, then you should be fine. The fungus attacks the
brain, and while you may have had some...bloodcurdling dreams, you clearly don’t have sprouts on
your head. Meaning you should be fine.”
The bite victim sighed in relief.
“Doesn’t mean however, that it’s not a possibility of course. It’s a blood born virus-at least the
mutation- and as such could spread through the blood. But after giving you a dialysis, you yourself
should be alright.”
And Nozomi as well, she concluded, as the quarantine most definitely owned dialysis machines.
Hopefully.
Her attention shifted to the rest.
“Beware of ticks and mosquitoes. I can’t clean your blood when on the run. Our first stop will be to
get bug spray.”
The group nodded, looking uneasy.
“We should probably map out a route.”
Kanan concluded, protruding a map and red marker.
“We can cross out areas of large woodland and warmer climate regions.”
Hanamaru began, uncapping the pen and drawing large Xs on the map.
“And higher climates where we would never find food.”
Yoshiko added on, using the marker as well.
“So that’s like...half of Japan.”
Ruby concluded grimly before seemingly being hit by an epiphany.
“Hold up!”
“Huh?”
She grabbed the marker and began scribbling it onto the map, by the loo of it, primarily roads.
“Wait a second...”
You muttered in awe.
“You aren’t suggesting-“
Ruby took a step back, revealing what seemed to be a clear path to-
“Numazu?!”

Okay what the fuck is going on?”
Nico finally got the squabbling pairs attention.
“This absolute lune-“
Eli grunted as she flung the vial in Nicos direction who, thankfully, caught it.
“Wants to blind herself to avoid triggers.”
Nico sighed, quickly pocketing the vial.
“Moron.”
Nozomi protested profusely, but having her eyes closed really seemed to diminish it.
The raven haired shook her head, kneeling down in front of Nozomi.
“Nozomi.”
She began, grabbing the older girls chin.
“Open your eyes.”
A look of shock spread through both Elis and Nozomis face at that.
“But-“
“We do not have time to bicker over this. You will have to keep your eyes open on the run and you
will have to deal with it.”
Her tone softened in the end.
“I know it’s hard. But you know the organization better than any one of us. You really think we
have the time for this?”
Nozomi bit her lip, looking incredibly uncomfortable.
But maybe that was because Eli was currently sitting on top of her.
“No we don’t...I’m sorry, this is selfish of me.”
“None of that. I’d probably wanna blind myself too if I had your predicament.”
She sighed, letting go of her friend and got up.
“You guys are both insane.”
A new voice broke into the mix.
“Take it from someone who’s lost an eye. It hurts like hell and you really want it back.”
Kotori walked inside, her demeanor the most somber Eli had ever witnessed it.
Honestly, she really reminded her of the old principal.
Eli at this point had let go of her girlfriend, who was now sitting there, a blank expression on her
face.
“Nozomi, I know triggers are hard to overcome. I really do.”
“Where would you know that from?”
The ash haired took a moment to respond at first.
“Triggers aren’t always created intentionally..usually aren’t in fact. They result in trauma.”
Eli was shocked to see a tear roll down Kotoris face at that, as her voice started to choke up, failing
to keep her composure.
“And trust me, I know a lot about trauma...I don’t exactly deal with it well.”
She hesitated again to wipe her eye free of tears, a sad expression overtaking her.
“Nozomi, do you have any idea how many times I’ve looked in the mirror and seen my mother?
How many times that I wept alone because of it? Relived the moment I saw the bloodied room?”
Despite her best efforts to keep it together, the last words came out bitter, almost as a scream.
“I know triggers and trauma are hard, sometimes impossible to overcome. But you know what
helped me?”
She smiled sadly, before taking off her eye patch, revealing a not yet healed wound that was still a harsh red. Nozomi of course couldn’t see it, but she understood once the patch was pressed into her hand.

„Ironically, losing my eye. A large change helped me distinguish between myself and my mom... and maybe leaving this environment will be your change."

She refastened the eye patch, tugging on her hair to get out from underneath it, before reaching out and helping Nozomi up, as Eli tied the blindfold back on.

„So I don’t want to hear you giving up on this fight. Not when there’s still a chance to win."

—-

„Yeah!”

Ruby grinned proudly.

„Think about it. There’s fish, so we can eat and if we’re clever about it we can use fire to get water... even if it takes a while.”

She got up and pinned the map to the corkeboard.

„Besides, no ticks on beaches and no mosquitoes in windy areas with no standing fresh water.“

Mari stared at her aghast.

„Ruby that’s... actually really smart.“

The redhead smiled triumphantly.

„It’s a long walk from here but... well if we stick to paved roads we won’t have to deal with any ticks and mosquitoes haven’t hatched yet.”

She made sure that everyone had seen the map, before rolling it up and handing to back to Kanan.

„Only concern is... who will we find alive?“

Chika sighed in concern.

„No use dwelling on it. There’s only one way to find out anyway.“

You smiled optimistically as she shouldered her backpack.

„Hey Maki?“

Umi approached her friend as everyone began to scramble for their things again.

„Hm?“

„How is Eli holding up? Has she talked to you at all about Alisa?“

Maki shook her head, the same issue having been plaguing her since Nico had returned.

„She hasn’t even cried. I don’t think she’s acknowledged it yet.”

The archer sighed, a gloomy look overtaking her.

„Better keep an eye on her then... I don’t want her breaking down all of a sudden.”

Maki nodded in agreement, sweeping a look over the crowd.

„Where are they anyway? Wasn’t Nico gonna bring them back?”

She jumped as a hand tapped her on the shoulder from behind.

„We’re here, sorry it took so long.”

Kotori smiled, letting go of Nozomi hand at this point.

„We had to take a relaxing walk first. Nozomi finally broke down.”

„I’m sorry.”

„Don’t. You’ve gone through more than any of us combined, I wouldn’t expect you to hold up.”

The ash hair was about to continue talking when something was caught in her vision.

„Oh fuck!”

„Huh?”

At this point, Eli had noticed as well as she grabbed her girlfriend’s hand tightly.

„Everyone!”

She screamed, already starting into a sprint.

„Duck and run out the back! Meet at the sa-“

She barely got to finish her sentence as a shower of bullets rang over their heads.

In a second, panic filled the room as the girls started running into different directions, stumbling
over each other in the process. Eli gripped Nozomi's hand tightly as they wound through the corridors, adrenaline washing through her. She could feel her blood pounding in her ears as she sped up, her mind solely focused on getting out. Reaching the other side of the schoolhouse, she barreled through the window, barely noticing a spike of wood ebbing, thankfully shallowly, itself in her shoulder. At that moment, she felt herself being pulled, as she looked up, her eyes met with those of glistening green ones.

“Nozomi! Close-“
“No time! I can fight it with distractions, we have to get out!”
She kept pulling Eli along, as they joined up with Nico, Maki, Umi and Kotori.
“Where’s the rest?!”
Nozomi screamed over the sound of relentless gun fire.
“Behind us! Just run!”
Kotori managed to wheeze back as they stumbled through the brush and finally got confronted by the school walls.
Nozomi didn’t hesitate, flinging herself onto the wall and reaching down to help the others up, one by one.
“You go on! I’ll help everyone else!”
“But-“
Eli began to protest, but was cut off by Nozomi.
“They’ll be trapped without help! You really think one handed Dia can make it up?!”
The blonde nodded, muttering a quick “stay safe” before sprinting off to a designated meet up area, which they had drilled into everyone months ago.
Watching them leave, Nozomi sighed in relief, knowing that at least they were safe. She could still feel the will to kill them, but at the moment, it seemed as though the adrenaline was stopping it.
Looking back, she found another group of three running towards her, consisting of the first years in Aqours.
On another patch of the wall, she could make out Rin, who was helping Hanayo cross.
“Hold on!”
She shouted down, grabbing Ruby's hand and hoisting her across.
After similarly helping both the other two and Mari, Kanan and Dia, she made a mental checklist of who still had to pass.
As Honoka and Tsubasa hopped over the wall themselves a few feet away, only three people seemed to be missing.
“Where’s the poly trio?”
Considering the circumstances, she didn’t know if she wanted to find out.
“Fuck it.”
Jumping off the wall, she sprinted back to where gun shots still rang through the area. This place would soon be swamped by dead. Not that she had a problem with it of course. Keeping up a brisk pace, a shattering realization began to dawn on her. The three hadn’t made it out. Nobody was on the grounds anywhere. She could feel her blood boil up in anger as she raced towards the building, jumping through the broken window with ease. Slowly making her way through the school, Nozomi stopped dead in her tracks at the sight of blood. The dread was slowly evolving into fear.
“Please no..”
She muttered, ducking under to avoid bullets as she followed the blood slowly. (Homage to Outlast?)

But she didn’t get very far.

It seemed, some of her parents goons had discovered the blood too.

“Think we killed one?”

She could hear the gruff voice of...damnit she couldn’t fight people she had grown up loving!

She was certain, had she had to kill her parents hand to hand, she could not have done so.

And currently, she was armed with exactly one knife.

A kitchen knife.

“Not enough blood. How did the brats even evacuate so quickly?”

“My niece must have warned them we’d be coming.”

“Shut up, you’re blood related?”

God, why couldn’t she have one sane family member.

No use hiding anymore though, she decided. If the three were alive, she’d have to barrow time for them.

“Thankfully, we aren’t.”

She spoke up, mustering her most murderous look yet.

If ever there was a time to kill, it was now.

Her body count was nearly 200 anyway, what did a few more or less make right?

She was such a terrible person.

“Ah? Now who do we have here?”

It was three against one. Three with guns against one with knife.

She was going to die.

“Hi Uncle George.”

She greeted a tall man with reddish hair and a beard.

They weren’t technically blood related, he had been adopted. Thankfully.

“Nozomi. Care to explain why you killed my dear sister?”

If there was ever a time for acting, it was now.

“They wanted to kill my friends. I couldn’t allow that.”

George rubbed his chin, seemingly more amused than anything, knowing she was more than overpowered.

“I guess the programming didn’t work as well as we had hoped.”

He sighed, taking his gun and let her stare straight down the barrel.

“If I hadn’t got orders to keep you alive, I’d shoot you on the spot.”

Huh.

A small grin started to grow on Nozomis face.

“Keep me alive? So you can’t shoot, for fear of killing me right?”

The cockiness seemed to disappear out of her uncles face for a fleeting second.

“It also means, you can’t let me die, correct?”

Now it was completely gone, replaced by shock as Nozomi took out her weapon and placed it in front of her own heart.

“I know the punishment for failure is terrible isn’t it Uncle George?”

“N-Now calm down-we can talk this out.”

The trio had become white as sheet paper at this point, as they all knew that the the most merciful punishment for failure was death.

“You wouldn’t-“

“Uncle George.”

Nozomi began, her serious tone catching him off guard.

“Look me in the eye and try to say I wouldn’t kill myself right here and now if it meant getting revenge on you.”

A strained smile rose on her lips as she watched the three mens brains working overtime.
“Now I’d recommend you drop your guns.”
She continued, knowing she had gotten her point across.
After a nod from their leader, they dropped their weapons, before taking a step back.
God Nozomi sure hoped that the trio was out at this point, she couldn’t hold up this act for much longer.
A tense silence filled the room and she could feel her hands slowly begin to cramp up.
This silence was cut short however, much like one of the men’s necks as he was kicked to the ground, a pool of blood forming at his feet, thanks to a very, very pissed looking-
“Riko?”
Nozomi scrambled to the guns, managing to kick them across the hallway, just in time before her Uncle could grasp them.
“You fuckers!”
Riko began, in a terrifying tone of voice.
“Shot You!”
She plunged her knife into the second man’s eye socket, ramming her knee against his face for good measure.
Nozomi wondered at that point how close she had come to that fate when she had aggravated Riko herself.
Grappling herself up, Nozomi spotted a terrified looking Chika, who was desperately attempting to shield You from the bloods platter.
“Riko wait!”
The older girl intervened before the redhead could focus her rage on George.
“Let him be. The fact that he failed...he’s gonna be in for a world of hurt.”
At this point, it seemed that he had been stunned silent.
“What a scaredy-cat.”
Nozomi scoffed, retrieving the three guns.
“Good luck.”
She rammed the back of the gun against his head, sending him unconscious.
“Now.”
She began, heaving from all the exercises at this point.
“What was that about You getting shot?”
“I’m fine...”
A grunt came from You’s very much alive body as she struggled, and failed, to get up.
“They cornered us and-You she punched-She saved us-but then he shot and-!”
Chika seemed to be in too much of a frenzy to string together coherent sentences, but she got the point across.
“Shit.”
Nozomi knelt down, picking her friend up with ease as she examined the wound.
It was oozing blood and she could see the bullet, meaning this would be a messy job. She was pretty sure You would lose her leg.
Which could cause infection and then-no. She couldn’t think like that.
“I can’t tell how bad it is here. Let’s get to safety first.”
She tried to reassure them.
The other two nodded, as the four made their way back, somehow avoiding detection.
It seemed that the organization had pulled out, even though they could hear distant gun fire.
Not that it mattered.
Everyone was safe now.
Probably.
Nozomi did wonder how safe they were with a murderer like her in their midst.
“Oh my god You!”
Kanan gasped as Nozomi placed the sailor down onto a tire. They were currently in a junk yard, a safe space they had discussed beforehand.
Nozomi was relieved to see everyone assembled.
Nobody had died.
Yet.
“I’m fine-Just a scratch.”
You wheezed out between grit teeth.
“You moron! I can see the bullet!”
Mari groaned as she slowly peeled Your blood splattered jeans up, revealing the true extent of the wound.
“Shit...”
“That’s two shots..”
You smiled painfully as Maki began prodding at it tentatively.
“I-I don’t know if I can do anything-I barely have medical supplies.”
You shook her head, rolling down her pants again.
“It’s fine, I know I’m not save able. The wound will infect, cause blood poisoning and then I’ll die.”
She laughed dryly at that.
“I only wish I could have seen the ocean on last time first.”
“The hell are you talking?!”
Riko screamed, desperation practically cracking her voice.
“You won’t die! If Dia can lose a hand, you can survive a bullet!”
Chika joined in, grabbing Your hand.
“I appreciate your optimism but...blood poisoning is hard to stop in this situation.”
The air was thick with the looming threat.
Nobody knew what to do, what to say.
What do you say when a friend is going to die?
How do you even handle it?
“I...I might have an idea.”
Nozomi spoke up, having finished tying her blindfold again.
“But you’ll lose your leg.”
Again silence.
-
-
-
“Fuck it.”
You sighed.
“I’ll take it.”
Nozomi hesitated for a moment before continuing with her idea.
“Honoka, do you still have the axe?”
“Yeah, why?”
The older girl ignored the question, deep in thought at this point.
“We can’t do dialysis...so we have 7 seconds with a full turned..”
You seemed to start to understand.
“So if an infected but not turned person does it, I’ll have more time?”
Nozomi nodded, happy that You realized her idea.
“There’s a threshold of pollination that a person can take in blood. A bite by infected will cause to death in a year, even if chopped off, if no dialysis is given at any point in that year. But you have a 7 second gap in which it can be cut off, causing pollination without death....that does not count for mosquitoes though, as they inject directly into a bloodstream. Then you will need a blood cleanse.”
Maki nodded, having written every word of that down.
“But why would a bite save You?”
Ruby inquired curiously.
“The pollination speeds up healing processes and prevents infections. It’s a nifty side affect that occurred during the mutation.”
Nozomi responded, adjusting her blindfold for the millionth time.
“So I assume I should bite You?”
Dia sighed, taking her blade off.
“It gives us a larger time frame as the dosage is smaller...but all of this we can only do with Yous consent.”
The sailor scoffed at that.
“The other choice is dying isn’t it? I’m gonna go with leg loss first.”
Riko quickly found a small rubber tube, probably former on a bike, and gave it to her girlfriend.
“Here. To bite on.”
You smiled gratefully and quickly stole a kiss from her, causing Chika to huff in indignation.
“And me?”
You laughed through the pain, pulling Chika in to a tight hug.
“How’s that?”
The mikan smiled, despite the situation.
“You’re brave for doing this.”
She reassured the tailor and got up, linking hands with Riko for support.
“Don’t have much of a choice now do I?”
She focused herself on Dia.
“Bite as hard as you want, but don’t eat my leg.”
Dia shook her head in amusement.
“I promise I won’t eat you.”
“Neat!”
Honoka placed Yous leg on another level area, getting her axe ready, while Maki was ripping up a spare shirt to create bandages.
“This going to hurt like hell.”
You was struck with an idea at that.
“Can someone like...strike me unconscious or something?”
She looked into the round, finding a lot of unwilling faces.
“I’ll do it.”
Nozomi finally spoke up, getting behind You and placing her finger behind her neck.
“Pressure point. You’ll be out like a light. Want to take one last look at your leg?”
You smiled sadly as she moved her foot around a bit before settling it back on a level ground.
“I’m gonna bleed out if we continue so slowly. Let’s get this done.”
Even with the blindfold, Nozomi seemed to know exactly what she was doing, as You fell unconscious as if at the press of a button after saying that.
“Dia, please have a bite. Keep it under the knee.”
The third year nodded, kneeling down next to Yous right leg as Honoka made herself ready behind her.
“I’ll need to get a clean cut right? So a lot of power?”
Nozomi nodded, getting herself at a distance.
“Maki? Ready with bandages?”
She asked, sitting down on a pile of junk.
“Y-Yeah.”
Looking around, Dia found Chika and Riko looking incredibly anguished as they clung onto each other.
And the rest wasn’t exactly more relaxed either.
Taking a deep breath, she focused herself on Yous leg.
As much as she hated it, as much as she despised the idea...she really, really wanted to take a bite.
It was so bloody and fleshy and—It looked delicious!
God this was terrifying.
Closing her eyes, she plunged her teeth into her friend’s leg, her mouth filling with the sweet taste of flesh.
She wanted more! She kept biting, relishing the blood, the bone!
That was until two strong hands pulled her back.
“Dia!”
Kananeous voice broke through her fever as Mari slapped her straight in the face.
“Snap out of it!”
The blonde screamed, slamming her friend to the ground as she kept trying to grapple her off.
Thank god she had detached her blade.
As the three wrangled with the zombie mode Dia, Honoka held up her axe, trembling slightly.
“Three, two...one!”
She screamed, slamming the blade down onto You’s leg, severing it cleanly beneath the knee and sending her shin flying.
“Now!”
Kotori and Maki dashed forward as Kotori held up the leg to hinder bleeding, while Maki bound it in bandages quickly.
Within the five minutes, it was done.
Dia had calmed down and was crying in a corner. Honoka was being comforted by Umi. Kotori and Maki were still tying to stop the bleeding, tears threatening to spill over. Chika and Riko were weeping into each other’s shoulders.
It was a big mess.
But it was worth it.
“We did it...”
Maki finally huffed out, scrambling to her feet and helping Kotori up.
“Shes going to live.”
She smiled in Riko and Chikas direction as Kana heaved up You’s unconscious body.
“We should start moving.”
She said as she also shouldered her backpack.
“We aren’t safe in Tokyo. We just stop by a mega store first, get bug spray and maybe a improvised prosthetic for You here and then we get out.”
Ruby took out the Map from Kanas backpack and rolled it out.
“Itll take a while. But we’ll get to Numazu. Alive.”
She grinned at the group.
“Alright everyone!”
Umi spoke up, tacking a leader position.
“Formation is as follows. Melee in front, Guns in the back and sides! Injured or carrying injured, into the middle. We want no loss of life!”
Nozomi smiled as she got up, being led by Eli.
“Shes grown up quite a lot.”
“Tough times toughen the mind. Shes a born leader.”
Nico sighed as she heard that.
“True. I think shes going to be leader for now.”
Umi smiled shyly.
“Ill guide us on the journey. Please entrust in me.”
She bowed to the group, as Eli grinned happily.
“We’ll be in your care.”
Umi formed the tip of the group, as they all began walking.
Nobody knew if they would make it.
Most likely, theyd die on the way.
But Umi would be damned if she didn’t go down without a fight. None of them, would go down without a fight. So they will keep up this battle. To the very bloody end.

—

“So this is what caused all that noise a few days ago.”
“Not a surprise. The old building was barely kept in shape before all this happened. I’ll assume the noise brought all the zombies in that we’ve been facing too.”
The dulled voices wafted through the tons of rubble, rousing the people inside, who were just about as close to death that one could be. Gripping the stump of their shoulder, one of then got up, trying for the up tenth time to remove the debris from on top of them.
“Something’s moving there.”
The second voice broke through, which was interrupted by a loud bark.
“Humans! Come on, help me move!”
The group could hear the bricks being moved away from on top of them and for the first time in days, did light shine into their would be grave.
“Oh my god..”
The first voice whispered out hoarsely as a dogs nose pushed through the last bits of rock that was in the way.
“Back girl!”
Someone called out as the nose disappeared, revealing a young woman with red eyes and dark hair, which was bound up into a ponytail.
Moving another large chunk of bricks, the opening was finally large enough for humans to crawl through.
Stretching her hand out, the savior grasped the remaining arm that the only fully conscious person possessed and started pulling her out.
“Looks like we came just in time didn’t we?”

Chapter End Notes

This has been one hell of a ride hasn’t it?
As it stands we have Dia with no hand, Kotori with no eye, Nozomi practically blind, Eli with a spike in her shoulder, You with no leg and everyone has serious trauma!
If any questions about the story arise, I’ll be happy to answer them of course.
The new story, Road to salvation, will launch as soon as I’ve reworked the first few chapters, which i suggest you check out as well when it’s done!
Happy delayed new year everyone and happy birthday Dia.
Thanks for everyone who decided to pop in and read this story, I hope to be continuing a sequel soon! (It’s not all in one to keep in structured)
And I’ll be honest here, after over a years work on this first part, It’s weird to start it anew. But we’ll get this shit finished, just you watch!
Its slightly rushed but don't worry, backstories and everything will come, just more as flashbacks. The rush is so that I can give you an idea of what this will entail.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!