The Phantomhive Chronicles

by DCUnitedFanfics

Summary

A retelling of Black Butler. What happens when one of the Phantomhive servants discovers Ciel and Sebastian's secret? And what will happen to said person afterwards? Will she tell or will she keep the young lord's secret? The better question is, will she live through the whole ordeal? Well, let's just say, it will be one hell of a chaos. Rated M for violence and sexual content.
A retelling of Black Butler in our maid's perspective and that of other characters.
"Mother! Father!" Ciel cries out as he runs throughout the mansion looking for his parents and his brother. But they are nowhere to be found. Someone has broken into their home and is killing all of the servants. He even found their dog Sebastian dead. "Mother! Father!"

He enters the study where they would usually be. The moment he opens the door, his eyes widen upon seeing a man aiming a gun at his father's face. He can't see his father because of the shadows obscuring his face. The only thing he can see are the brown leather gloves he's wearing. But he can see the fear in his father's eyes clear as day. Vincent is standing in front of Rachel, shielding her from the intruder. Ciel tempts into entering the study to put a stop to it but his mother quickly sees him and shakes her head. Tears fill his eyes. He watches his father trying to talk reason with the intruder, telling him to put the gun down so they can talk more civilized.

Ciel gasps when the intruder pulls the trigger. Blood and brain matter burst from Vincent's head, splattering on Rachel's face and dress. Rachel lets out a blood-curling scream at the sight of her husband's body dropping dead to the floor. Ciel tries to call out for his mother but she gets shot in the head as well and she drops dead besides Vincent. Ciel stares in complete shock. Both of his parents are dead. Once he is finally able to process to what just happened, he shrieks in terror and sorrow.

The intruder immediately spots Ciel and aimed the gun at him. That's when Ciel bolts out of there as the intruder pulls the trigger and the bullet strikes the door, sending splintering wood flying.

Ciel runs down the corridors in search for his brother and Tanaka. The murderers could still be inside the house and they need to get out as soon as possible.

"Tanaka!" Ciel yells as he runs desperately through the hallways. His nostrils quickly catch the smell of smoke and the hallways are beginning to fill with hot black fog which causes Ciel to cough profusely and his eyes to water and blur.

He stops when he turns a corner and finds the rest of the hallway engulfed in raging flames, covering the walls, eating away the drapes and reaching the ceiling above him.

He finds Tanaka on the floor near the fire, lying face down like his parents and with a bloody stab wound on his back. Ciel almost went into complete his hysteria when he sees Tanaka coughing. He's still alive. Ciel calls out for his brother but it looks like he is nowhere to be found. Did the intruders get him? Is he dead like Mother and Father?

Ciel runs to Tanaka's side and shakes. "Wake up! Tanaka, wake up!"

Ciel looks up as he hears roaring and creaking. The flames are above them, threatening to bring the second floor down to the ground.

Knowing that there's no time to waste and can't leave Tanaka here to be eaten by the fire while he looks aimlessly for his brother. With very little strength he has, he grabs Tanaka under the arms and starts dragging away from the fire, dragging the unconscious body through the carpeted floor. For
an old man, Tanaka is heavier than he thought.

Ciel stumbles back and falls back with Tanaka heavy body on top of him.

He calls his brother again. To his relief, he reappears through the smoke, coughing and looking just as horrified as he is.

"We have to leave! Or the fire will kill us all!" he shouts.

"Tanaka is still alive, we can't just leave him!" Ciel shouts back.

His brother pushes Tanaka's upper half up to allow Ciel to get up from the floor. He has always been stronger than him. "I have his arms! You grabs his legs!"

Ciel does as his brother says and takes Tanaka by the legs while his brother grabs him under the arms just as he did before. Together, they lift Tanaka and carry him away from the fire and out of the mansion. Ciel feels sick and selfish for leaving their parents' bodies to be devoured by the fire that is now destroying their beloved home and everyone in it. But he and his brother don't have a choice. It's live or die.

Once outside, the two brothers watch their home become completely engulfed in flames that are now bursting through the windows.

"We need to take Tanaka to a hospital," Ciel says while holding the old man's hand in his own while checking his heart beat with the other hand.

"Where are Mother and Father!" his brother says while looking around.

Tears stream down Ciel's cheeks and his voice cracked. "They're dead."

His brother stares at him in complete shock and disbelief. His face turns ghost-white and tears fill his eyes. "We need to go and report to Scotland Yard."

"But Tanaka is hurt. He's going to die -.

His brother quickly becomes snatched before Ciel can even finish. He screams as he watches his brother get dragged away by one of the men. "No! No, let him go!"

Ciel then gets snatched by another man, one wearing brown gloves. Ciel kicks and screams as the two are being taken away from their burning home and leaving Tanaka there to bleed out. "Tanaka!" The two boys continued screaming for help as they are taken away, taken to a fate worse than death, a fate that led Ciel to make the worse decision of his life.

He tolerated many months of torture and abuse. All of their disgusting hands and bodies touching him. But seeing his brother being stabbed to death at the altar was the final straw. He just wants them all dead. He wants them all to suffer a painful death. And he finally gets his wish in the form of a demon emerging from his brother spilled blood. The demon's shape takes many forms (a wolf, a large snake, a goat and finally a creature with sharp teeth and curved horns), all of them covered in his brother's read blood. Ciel starts at it in terror and disbelief. That thing is real. And he looks pissed. It turns into a large red snake and kills a few of the bastards nearby.

Ciel curls up in the corner of the cage when it slithers over to him and hisses, bearing its fangs at him.

"You," it hisses in a whispers, "Your anger and hatred is...delicious. I heard you...calling to me. And
"I came. Tell me, what is it that you want?"

"...I...I don't know what I want..."

"I see. You are still young. You do not understand." It takes the form of the creature with horns and sharp teeth. "But you will soon. I am here because you called to me and I am here to fulfill your wish. Say it and I will grant you any wish you like. All desires come with a price though. I can never change. And no sacrifice shall ever be regained." The creature reaches out its sharp bloodied hand towards Ciel. The boy simply stares at the hand with wide eyes, frozen in fear. "So choose wisely."

Ciel looks at his dead brother on the altar and then at the rest of the murderers surrounding them. His fear is soon replaced with boiling rage and he grits his teeth before firmly grabbing the demon's hand.

"Kill them!"

3 years later...

Ciel is sleeping in his chamber curled up in a fetal position and wrapped in heavy blankets. The eye patch he wears today is lying on the nightstand next to his bed. He was exhausted from all the work he had today and needed rest for tomorrow. They have a guest in the afternoon.

"...Wake up," a familiar voice whispers his name. It also sounds foreign to his ears, like a whispering echo. Ciel moans lowly but ignores the voice calling, trying to get some sleep. Why must Sebastian wake me at such early hours?

Ciel's eyes open, the pentagram marking his right eye glowing a dull purple, and they widen when he sees his brother standing next to his bed with blood staining his nightshirt and trickling down his mouth and his eyes glassy and lifeless. He tries to sit up but his body remains frozen in the bed. Trapped. He can't move. His breathing shifts heavily as he panics as he continues to struggling to move, his chest heaving and letting out muffled screams between his lips, his fingers twitching slightly. He wants to call out for Sebastian or anyone in the house that can hear him but all he can do is lie there frozen and panicking at the sight of his bloody brother.

His brother leans over him until his face is close to his and smiles a bloody grin at Ciel. "Its time for you to wake up."

He curls his toes. That seems to work because Ciel finally regains his movement and sits up from his bed gasping. The moment he does this, it seems that his brother has disappeared from sight. Ciel pants heavily and looks around, his own nightshirt drenched in perspiration. But that doesn't stop him from letting out a raspy scream.

He continues to scream until the door bursts open and Sebastian quickly enters the bedroom. "Master!" He quickly grabs hold of Ciel's wrist to keep him hurting himself and starts shaking. "Master, snap out of it. It was just a dream."

Ciel stops screaming and struggling, simply sits there shaking in shock and terror. "...It wasn't a dream...It was a nightmare...He was here."

"Master, there is nothing here."

Ciel looks around, still shaking. He realizes that Sebastian is right. There is no one here. And probably never was.
"Did you have another episode, my lord?" the butler asks, "Moments like that tend to make you hallucinate, remember?"

Ciel nods his head. Yes, it must be that. Nothing more. He takes deep breaths and manages to calm his heart and breathing. It was just my imagination.

"Do you wish for me to call your aunt and tell her to come and see you?" Sebastian asks.

Ciel immediately shakes his head. "No, I rather not. Besides, we all have a busy schedule tomorrow. I prefer not to disturb her with my problems."

"Very well, sir. Would you like for me to make warm milk and honey, to help you go back to sleep?" he asks.

Ciel is tempted to say yes as milk and honey always made him feel better but Tanaka always said that too much sweets are bad for your teeth.

"No, not tonight."

Sebastian gives him a strange look as this is the first time he has rejected sweets. "Are you sure you're all right, young master?"

Ciel doesn't answer his question. Instead, he instructs him to make sure tomorrow's evening dinner is done well. No screw ups.

"I'm going back to sleep," he says as he turns his back to the butler and wraps his body and head with the duvet. He doesn't close his eyes yet though.

"Very well, my young lord," Sebastian says.

Ciel doesn't come out from the duvet until he hears the door shut and the footsteps die out.

He sits up from the bed again and looks around his chamber once more, making sure no one is watching him, before reaching for the nightstand next to his bed and opening the drawer. He takes out a photograph in a square golden frame that has burnt areas. A picture of him, his father Vincent, his mother Rachel, his brother and their dog Sebastian.

Tears filling his eyes, he holds the picture frame in a tight embrace.

It's nine o' clock in the morning. Breakfast time. The daily routine has begun. Mey-Rin Fan only has one job in the morning. Enter the master's chamber, put the tray of breakfast on his nightstand but don't fill his teacup. That's Sebastian's job. Open the window curtains but don't wake the master in the process. It's Sebastian's job to wake Master Phantomhive, not hers. Do this and walk quietly out of the bedroom and continue her daily routine of cleaning the house and help Klaus cook lunch. She would do this without complain or questioning.

She dresses up in her daily black pinafore, ties her dark red hair back in a bun and puts on the white bonnet before slipping on her round-framed glasses, the glasses Master Phantomhive had made for her. She never takes it off, not even when they crack. The young lord's cousin Elizabeth had tried to force the glasses out of her. Luckily the young lord stopped her.

Sebastian already has Ciel Phantomhive's breakfast made. The only thing she needs to do is take the tray upstairs, without tripping on her own two feet, and set it on the nightstand.
Mey-Rin takes note of the contents on the silver tray. A cheesecake with strawberries on top, a bowl of apples and grapes, and cambric tea. Cheesecake in the morning. Not very good for a boy his age to be eating sweets this early in the morning. However, this is the young lord's house so it's his rules.

She's about to enter the master's chambers when the door opens and she nearly crashes into Sebastian. The tray almost slips from her hands but the butler catches it in time.

"Oh, um, forgive me, Sebastian," she apologizes awkwardly while fixing her glasses, "I didn't see you. I really need to have these glasses fixed."

"Are you sure you don't want a new pair-?"

"Oh no, it's quite all right. I can fix them."

Sebastian sighs and gives her back the tray. "Very well then. Listen, Mey-Rin, I'll be heading out for the day to purchase the ingredients for dinner and I'm afraid I cannot attend my master today. Would you be so kind to look after him while I'm gone?"

Mey-Rin's eyes widen in surprise. What? "Wait, you're leaving me with him? I - I thought taking care of him was your job."

"I won't be long. Besides, he must learn on his own that I can't be around him all the time. I'm sure you can handle it while I'm gone."

A lot of things can happen if Mey-Rin is left alone with the master. As many have noticed, Ciel Phantomhive is unpredictable. He even threw a dart at Finnian. There's no telling what could happen if she's left alone with him.

Mey-Rin sighs in defeat and bows her head. "Very well, Sebastian."

He gives her his usual charming smile. "I shall return before lunch."

Sebastian leaves. That means she truly is left alone to attend the young lord herself. Perfect.

Mey-Rin enters the bedroom. The master is still sleeping. If he wakes up and sees her instead of Sebastian, what will happen? He will probably start ranting. She quietly sets the tray down on the nightstand and serves his tea, not wanting to disturb his slumber. At least when he wakes and sees everything prepared for him, he won't be entirely irritated.

The young lord starts to turn in his bed, moaning lowly. He must be dreaming, Mey-Rin assumes. However, his dreams are never good ones. They're bad dreams. Ever since his parents died in the fire, he has been heard screaming in the middle of the night. Sebastian told Mey-Rin and the others not to worry. It will pass, he said. But Mey-Rin is not entirely convinced.

When she sees the young lord thrashing and crying out, she takes action and tries to wake the young lord by shaking him.

"It's just a nightmare, young lord."

Ciel sits up from his bed, opening his one blue eye. When he sees Mey-Rin standing next to his bed, he quickly pushes her away harshly, clearly startled by her unexpected presence. Mey-Rin stumbles and falls to the ground.

She immediately stands up and bows her head in shame. "Forgive me, my lord."
"What are you doing in here?" he snaps at her sternly.

"I, um, you were screaming in your sleep," she says meekly.

"Where's Sebastian?"

"He said something about heading to town and purchase the last ingredients for tonight's dinner with Lord Damiano," she tells him. She may not be the smartest person in the house but know the names of the people that come here and what they work for. Lord Damiano, for one, is the head of the Poseidon Company and is investing in the Funtom Corporation. The Funtom Corporation is the toy manufactory company Lord Phantomhive owns. Despite not being near the company for a while, he's still in charge. Lord Damiano is coming to Phantomhive Manor to discuss about the company every month. Angelina Dalles, also known as Madam Red, works at the Royal London Hospital. Lau is the president of the British Branch of a Chinese trading company known as Kong-Rong. That said, Mey-Rin basically knows everyone who enters the manor. "Sebastian left me in charge of you while he's gone."

"He left me with you?"

Mey-Rin nods. That's the same question she's been asking herself since this morning. "I already have your breakfast ready. Today we have cambric tea, a raspberry cheesecake Baldroy made for you and a bowl of sliced apples."

The young lord lets out a deep sigh. Mey-Rin can't tell if it's a sigh of annoyance or disappointment. He removes the covers from his body and swings his thing legs over the edge of the large bed, big enough to fit four people. His other eye is still closed. Apparently Ciel lost his right eye the day his parents died which explains why he's always wearing an eyepatch. It's still lying there on the nightstand waiting to be picked up.

Ciel takes the delft cup in his hands and takes a whiff of it. Mey-Rin remains watching silently as the young lord drinks his tea.

"Do you wish for me to help you into your clothing?" she asks once he finishes his tea. Ciel nods in confirmation and she walks over to his wardrobe.

"After this, I want you and the others to be ready for when Lord Damiano arrives," he says, "Has Finnian planted the roses his morning?"

"Not quite," she says, "He's still trying to kill the weed-grass with herbicide but I'm afraid he might end up killing the flowers instead."

"Tell Finnian to stop worrying about the grass and focus on finishing planting the white roses before this afternoon. Has Baldroy prepared the meals?"

"Sebastian took care of that earlier and Baldroy is helping Finnian in the garden."

"And Tanaka?"

"Same as always." Tanaka, the man who witnessed the murders of Rachel and Vincent Phantomhive, and the kidnapping of Ciel Phantomhive but was stabbed in the back before he could do anything and hasn't been the same since. He's in his wheelchair now. Mey-Rin has taken care of that. She gave him his medication this morning as well as a bath. Baldroy brought his breakfast early in the morning.

Ciel doesn't ask anything else and starts eating his cheesecake. Mey-Rin searches for clothing for the
young lord to wear. Most of his clothing are in black or dark grey. She finds a few frocks that are green and blue but she's unsure if he's willing to wear them this afternoon.

"For our guest's visit, which colour do you prefer? Green? Or blue?"

"Neither," he answers with his mouth full, "I'm not in a festive mood so black would be a suitable for today's evening. However, I should impress our guest by pretending to be festive. The dark green one will have to do."

With all honesty, the young lord never cared for his guests, let alone being presentable for them, even if it is Lord Damiano. What made him change his mind?

Once he finishes breakfast, he allows Mey-Rin to dress him. She feels uncomfortable having to do so. Since the young lord doesn't know how to dress on his own, he needs help, but Mey-Rin is uncomfortable because she's seeing his penis while helping him put on his trousers. Why did Sebastian make me do this? Her face nearly turns red in embarrassment. Once putting on his trousers, she proceeds helping him put on the rest of his clothing. A white button-down shirt with a cravat neckband and ruffles at the sleeve cuffs. She then helps him slip on the dark green frock and buttons it up for him. Lastly, she puts the shoes on his feet. He doesn't know how to put on shoes either. Can't he do anything on his own?

"Can you pass me the eyepatch?" he asks.

The patch that conceals the missing eye. She takes it in her hands and gives it to him. His fingers brush against hers as he takes the eyepatch. His fingers are nearly ice. He puts on his eyepatch and closes his one good eye.

"That will be all, Mey-Rin," he says, "Get back to your duties."

She nods and swiftly leaves the bedroom, feeling lucky that the young lord didn't decide to throw a dart at her on the way out.

"So, Sebastian left you in charge of the young lord while he's gone," Baldroy laughs while washing the dishes. Mey-Rin is mopping the floor, making sure that everything is clean and spotless. "That must have been a nightmare."

Mey-Rin nods. However, she wasn't the one having a nightmare this morning. "It was actually quite intimidating."

"At least he didn't throw a dart at you like he did to Finny."

Poor Finnian.

"He wasn't really happy about Sebastian being absent," Mey-Rin tells him.

Ciel Phantomhive seems very dependent on Sebastian Michaelis. It's understandable. He was the one who brought Ciel home after the death of Rachel and Vincent Phantomhive. But it's something else. Something more.

"He's always unhappy," Baldroy says.

"Now, we both know that's not true. The young master does smile everyone once in awhile."

"Yeah, when he's making other people miserable."
She snaps at him. "Baldroy! Watch your mouth."

"What? It's true. And Sebastian seems to enjoy it as well. Also, don't you think it's odd how
Sebastian simply appears after the deaths of Lord and Lady Phantomhive's death?" Baldroy asks.

"We were all hired after the Phantomhive parents' death and we didn't seem to question each other," she says.

"But we've been getting to know each other for a long time. We know Finny and we know Tanaka.
We know where we come from. What about Sebastian? What do we know about him?"

Mey-Rin frowns before walking over to Baldroy and punches him in the shoulders sharply. Baldroy cries out in pain and rubs his aching shoulder. For a girl he height, Mey-Rin sure knows how to deliver a punch.

"If the master hears you talking like that, you'll get us both in trouble," she says harshly.

Baldroy sighs. "I'm just saying. Sebastian Michaelis and Ciel Phantomhive know everything about
us but we don't know anything about them. Don't you think that's a bit unfair?"

As a matter of fact, it is unfair. Baldroy is right. Sebastian and the young lord know everything about
her, Baldroy and Finnian but they don't know the people that picked them out from the streets.
Baldroy came from America after escaping a terrible war that nearly killed him, Finnian was brought
from Germany after being experimented on by some mad scientists and Mey-Rin...Well, Mey-Rin
has a unique history of her own where she was an assassin and shot people for a living before being
found Sebastian. She came to London with the next mission to shoot her next assigned target when
Sebastian Michaelis stopped her and offered her a better job that didn't involve killing innocent
people. Now she's a maid and does not regret it. She's happier as a maid. Yet still, Baldroy is right.
She doesn't know Sebastian or the young master. Who are they exactly?

"Oh Mey-Rin," Finnian comes into the kitchen, looking a little dirty from all the gardening. Did he
dig a hole to the other side of the world or something? "The delivery boy left a package at our
doorstep. It's for the young master from the Royal Hospital."

Mey-Rin nods and takes the package outside to open it, just in case it's an explosive to kill the young
master. However, when she opens the box, there's simply small bottles of blood-coloured liquid.
What on earth is this? There were at least twelve of these bottles. And there is a note attached to the
box's lid. Remember to take them every week, Lord Phantomhive.

She reenters the kitchen and shows them the packet. "It's just some bottles. I think the master is
supposed to take these."

A bell rings in the kitchen, a sign that Ciel Phantomhive is calling. They have a few bells installed,
hanging from the ceiling with labels on it. The bell labelled STUDY is ringing. Ciel Phantomhive is
calling from his study. So much to do for this evening and he's calling now?

Baldroy sighs in annoyance. "Sebastian left you in charge of him. He's your problem now."

Mey-Rin sighs as well. This is going to be a long day. It will all be over once Sebastian returns from
town.

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Mey-Rin enters the study with the package in her hands and shuts the door behind her. Ciel is sitting
behind his desk, looking through a few documents. "This package is for you, my lord. They're a
bunch of bottles delivered from the Royal Hospital."
Ciel looks up for a moment to look at the package in her hands. "They're my monthly medicine. Put them on the desk. And be careful you don't break them. Is that understood?"

She nods and carefully walks over to the desk, putting the package down on the wooden surface.

"Is there a reason why you called me, master?"

"I need the board game from the top shelf of the bookcase," he says without looking up from his work. "I decided that if Lord Damiano is going to stay with us this evening, I should at least entertain him with a little game."

Mey-Rin nods and climbs up the ladder to the bookcase's top shelf where a flat rectangular box lays covered in a light sheen of dust. It's a very gruesome and malevolent board game the young lord likes to play with the guests, sometimes to scare them. It's the master's twisted way of having fun. She takes the board game in her hands and carefully climbs down the ladder since her small clumsy feet can throw her off balance. Her feet and short sight make her clumsy. Her feet...In China, it has been a tradition for girl's feet to be bound and folded to keep them from growing any bigger, apparently small feet makes the girl more attractive in China. Mey-Rin doesn't blame her mother for binding her feet. She blames the naivety of those who didn't understand that binding a person's foot can cause more harm than good. May-Rin stopped having her feet bound when she came to England, but her feet are now crooked and somewhat deformed because of binding. They hurt a lot and she must take her shoes off every now and then to massage them and allow her big toe to crack. She once tried to separate the rest of her toes from the soles of her feet, but they're left in a permanent bend. No one has seen her walking barefoot and prefers to keep it that way. It's shameful to her.

She gives Ciel Phantomhive the board game without question. As usual, no thank you.

"That will be all, Mey-Rin," he says.

She then remembers the conversation she and Baldroy were having in the kitchen earlier. "Do you have a favourite colour, my lord?"

Ciel looks up from his work and frowns at her. "Pardon me?"

"A colour. Do you have a favourite?" she asks.

"Why are you asking such tedious question?"

"Well, since you know everything about us, I'd thought it would be fair if we got to know you," she says awkwardly.

"...Has Baldroy been talking again?"

Mey-Rin's face falls when the young lord said this...How did he know? "Yes, my lord," she sighs in defeat.

Ciel taps the side of his chin while staring at her blankly with his icy blue eye. "Tell Baldroy that he's fired. Tell him to pack up his things and get out."

"What? No! Please, Lord Ciel, don't fire Baldroy," she pleads, "You know he doesn't mean the things he says."

Ciel simply laughs at her panicked state. "I know. It was merely a joke, not a very good one, I believe."
"Oh." She now feels very stupid for taking everything so seriously.

"With all seriousness, Mey-Rin, make sure Baldroy minds his tongue if he wishes to maintain his job."

"Yes, sir."

"As for your question, would you like to guess what my favourite colour is?"

"Blue?" she guesses though she's not really sure since he's always wearing black.

The young lord chuckles in amusement. "It is. What's yours?"

"Master, you clearly know what my favourite colour is. Sebastian probably told you."

"I want to hear it from you, not Sebastian."

"...It's pink." A lot of girls like pink. Apparently pink is more feminine but that's not the reason why she likes pink. It's warmer and livelier.

"I would have guessed red, the traditional colours of China," he smirks.

"But your aunt likes red."

"True," he says and he continues his work, "I need everything to be perfect this evening. That means no messing up, am I clear?"

"Yes, young lord."

"And wear something presentable. That goes for Baldroy and Finnian as well," he orders, "I hate the sight of you three in the presence of our guests covered in dust, grass and kitchen grease. Last time Lau told me he could smell it from the recreational room."

Mey-Rin nods in agreement. "My apologies. I'll notify the others and we'll be ready for tonight."

"Good. You may proceed with your duties as usual."

"Yes, Lord Phantomhive," she says before turning to leave, only to squeal with a startle at the sudden sight of Sebastian Michaelis standing in front of her. When did he return? She didn't even hear the library door open. She didn't even hear him enter. "Pardon me, Sebastian."

Sebastian steps aside. "Watch your step, Mey-Rin."

She nods once more before finally leaving the study.

Arranging for dinner for Lord Damiano was a disaster, however. As predicted, Finnian killed the flowers along with the grass with herbicide, Baldroy tried to cook the food with a flamethrower and accidentally burned everything that would be served for dinner and Mey-Rin tried to reach for the new tea seat on top of the cabinet but her feet made her fall off balance and caused the cabinet to crash along with the tea set. As usual, Sebastian has everything fixed before the evening by rearranging the yard into a Japanese rock garden and having Baldroy make beef donburi.

Mey-Rin takes a cold bath since she doesn't have enough time to heat up the water for a hot bath. They only have an hour left before Lord Damiano arrives. Afterwards, she dresses up in a plain white ruqun with those dreadful lotus shoes she hates so much. She loves lotus flower but despises
lotus shoes. She remembers having to wear those infernal torture devices (that resembled a lotus bud) to her once bound feet. They still fit. However, they're tight since she stopped binding them and allowed them to grow so they'll probably start hurting later on. She wiggles her stiff toes.

This is going to be a tiring evening indeed.

The moment Lord Damiano entered Phantomhive Manor, he is completely awestruck by the Japanese rock garden set in the yard. Sebastian indeed did a wonderful job with the yard. Ciel Phantomhive and Lord Damiano greet each other with a handshake and introduces the house staff.

"Good evening, Lord Damiano," he says, "I welcome you to our Phantomhive household. This is the rest of my staff. Sebastian Michaelis, my butler. Baldroy, the cook. Finnian, our gardener. And finally, my maid, Mey-Rin."

The moment Lord Damiano sees her, Mey-Rin immediately became uneasy. She's had a few gents stare at her but never that way. She's not even wearing anything provocative, just the plain ruqun dress that covers most of her, minus her hands and face. There should be no reason for the lord to stare at her the way he sees an appetizing meal. He's the owner of the Poseidon Company's Indian Factory and Lord Phantomhive's guest so she can't complain.

During dinner, Ciel and his guest eat the beef donburi. Mey-Rin tries to serve the wine but with Sebastian and Lord Damiano watching her every move, she gets nervous and accidentally spills the wine on the white tablecloth. Luckily, Sebastian is able to remove the cloth in a swift move before Lord Damiano could notice. Such a clever butler, he is.

After dinner, Sebastian rewards the staff with a lemon meringue pie. Mey-Rin, however, is not hungry. Her stomach is still on knots, embarrassed for spilling the wine and unease by Lord Damiano's staring.

Ciel Phantomhive and Lord Damiano talk in the library while playing the grim board game he asked Mey-Rin to bring. Ciel moves his gargoyle piece twice.

"The progress we've been making with the East India Factory is quite astonishing," Lord Damiano says. "We already have the makings of a top-notch staff —."

"Bewitched by the eyes of the dead," Ciel interrupts Lord Damiano, clearly more interested in the game more than the man's words, "What terrible luck! It appears I lose a turn."

Lord Damiano chuckles in amusement. However, he still wants to talk about the company, "Right now it's the perfect time. We should begin expanding the company and building a strong labor force —."

"Go on, it's your turn," Ciel interrupts him once more, his tone full of boredom.

Mey-Rin doesn't understand. Lord Damiano is simply talking important business involving Ciel's company. Why is the young lord interrupting him so much? Why he is not interested in hearing him out?

Lord Damiano lets out a sigh. "Oh yes...I just spin this then?" He spins the blue top with numbers on it. It stops to a 5. He needs to move five spaces. Mey-Rin knows this as she has watched the young lord play this game with his aunt. She may not be intelligent, but she is observant. "I move five paces then. Now what I wanted to ask you, perhaps you can contribute another 12,000 pounds to support our expansion." Ciel remains staring at him sternly. "I believe it will be quite a profitable venture for you, my lord, to help expand the Funtom Company —."
"You lose a leg in the enchanted forest," Ciel says.

"Huh?"

"And it's your turn again. I lost a turn, remember?"

"Oh, I see," Lord Damiano says, feeling uncomfortable right now. He moves the blue top again. It stops spinning. "Right, I move 6 spaces."

"You don't," Ciel says, "That's three."

"What?" he asks in confusion.

"You lost a leg, if I recall. Now you only move half the number of spaces." Lord Damiano stares at Ciel in shock as he says this.

"Oh my," he chuckles but it's an uncomfortable laugh. "This is a gruesome board game, isn't it? Is there no way to restore my leg then?"

"I'm afraid once something is truly lost, sir, one can never get it back," Ciel says, his tone turning cold. And Mey-Rin hates to admit but it's quite scary. Ciel leans forward and snatches Lord Damiano's gargoyle piece away, much to the man's bewilderment. "Your body is burned by raging flames."

One of the images in the board game shows a man being burned alive at the stake while surrounded by crosses. Mey-Rin can actually hear that poor man screaming in her head, as if the man burning at the stake is real.

"Are you sure we should be talking business in the presence of the servants?" Lord Damiano asks.

"Sebastian and Mey-Rin are one of my most loyal servants. Nothing that we say in this room comes out of their mouths," Ciel says sternly.

Lord Damiano continues watching Mey-Rin, his eyes following her moves as she cleans up the bookcases with the feather duster. Ciel notices this and glares at him. However, Lord Damiano doesn't seem to notice, too distracted by the pretty maiden in glasses.

"Where did you find that girl?" he asks with a sort of glee in his eyes.

"Sebastian found her for me," Ciel says, "When my parents died, most of the servants perished in the fire. The surviving staff left. Tanaka was the only ones who remained by my side. However, it still wasn't enough. I was still short on staff. So, I had Sebastian hire Mey-Rin, Baldroy and Finnian. Finnian is from Germany. Baldroy is from America. And Mey-Rin is from China."

"China, you say? How lovely!" he says, "Does she understand English?"

"She understands and speaks English quite well," Ciel says, "She knew English even before Sebastian found her. She is quite fluent at it, actually. So, I would proceed with caution when talking about her."

"Did she have a tutor? Did a family member teach her, perhaps?"

Ciel looks over at Mey-Rin. She doesn't make eye contact with him. She simply sighs and continues dusting the cases.

"Mey-Rin doesn't like talking about it. And even if I'm allowed to tell, it would be disrespectful, so I
wouldn't dare pry, Lord Damiano." At least he's sparing her from telling her story. "She may be the maid of the house but even maids prefer to keep their lives private.

"Yes, of course." Lord Damiano is about to stand up from his chair. "Now about the contract -.

"Before we discuss that, we must finish the game," Ciel says, just as cold as ever.

"Yes, of course," Lord Damiano sits down on his seat again, "I do have a pressing appointment. Perhaps another time -.

"Children can be very demanding with their games. Surely you don't want me to get upset," Ciel smiles this time. The first time Mey-Rin has ever seen him smile. It's not a real smile though. It's more like a smirk.

"No. No, of course not," Lord Damiano says, "Perhaps you will permit me to use your telephone."

"Of course."

Lord Damiano gets up from his seat and leaves the library.

That was strange, Mey-Rin thinks as she pours the young lord a fresh cup of tea. Ciel takes the cup to his lips but does not drink it. He sniffs it and makes a disgusted face.

"What is this?" he asks. "It smells terribly weak."

Mey-Rin looks at Sebastian, hoping she answers the young lord's question for her. She doesn't know what tea she's serving him. She's just following orders in pouring the tea, nothing more.

"Out of consideration for our guest, I brought some Italian tea," Sebastian answers.

"Italian?"

"Italians drink more coffee than tea, sir. So, finding high-quality Italian tea can be difficult. This particular selection is not to your liking, master?"

Ciel glares at the tea coldly. "No. It is not. I don't like it at all."

"I'll see to the dessert preparation," Sebastian bows his head. Ciel nods in return.

"Good. We must show Lord Damiano every available hospitality," he smirks once more. "The Phantomhive family is known for its courtesy."

"Yes, my young lord."

Ciel then turns his attention to Mey-Rin. "Bring me some Earl grey tea. I want to wash this bad taste from my mouth."

"Yes, master," Mey-Rin bows her head before leaving the library herself.

That was the most uncomfortable situation she had ever witnessed in her entire life though it wasn't the first time she was in a situation she did not like being in. Thankfully, Sebastian and Ciel got her out of that.

Mey-Rin decides to head to bed for tonight after cleaning up the dining table and bringing the Earl Grey tea he requested. Baldroy wanted to do the dishes but he's already exhausted. So Mey-Rin
volunteered on doing the dishes tomorrow. But wants to sleep first. Tonight's dinner was good even though embarrassing. At least Lord Damiano is pleased. And Ciel and Sebastian are glad of that.

As she walks down the corridor, she suddenly starts to hear talking in one of the rooms nearby. The telephone room.

Mey-Rin doesn't have intention to eavesdrop but just by the accent, she can tell that it's Lord Damiano talking on the phone.

"I am tired of babysitting this child earl...Yes, I've already sold off the factory...Now all is left is to pocket the extra cash and try to squeeze more out of the brat right now...The employees? Who cares about them?"

Mey-Rin puts a hand over her mouth to hold back a gasp. Lord Damiano sold Ciel's factory in India. He was lying. And now plans to steal money from him. She needs to tell Ciel immediately before he gets deceived by this con artist.

She quietly walks past the telephone room. She doesn't want to be heard by Lord Damiano. However, one of her feet throws her off balance again and she nearly falls to the side if she hadn't held on to one of the tables that decorate the side of the corridor. This cause a vase to fall. Mey-Rin tries to quickly catch it but it falls to the floor and shatters with a loud crash.

Oh my God, no.

She immediately turns around to see Lord Damiano come out of the telephone room. They both stare at each other for moment, Mey-Rin's eyes wide in fear and Lord Damiano's in shock.

She turns and makes a run for it. Lord Damiano runs after her. Unfortunately. Mey-Rin isn't fast enough. Lord Damiano grabs her by the upper arm, stopping her from running any further. He slams her against the wall and grabs her by the throat in a tight squeeze.

"How much did you hear!?” he snaps at her.

Mey-Rin shakes her head in panic. "I didn't hear anything, honest."

"Liar!” He slams her against the wall once more. "I'm going to make sure you stay quiet, girl!”

Lin Yun screams as she tries to fight Lord Damiano off. Lord Damiano puts a hand over her mouth and squeezes her throat tighter, choking her.

In order to free herself, she kicks Lord Damiano in the crotch.

Lord Damiano cries out and lets go of her.

Mey-Rin runs again.

She then bumps into Sebastian who is now staring down at her in surprise. Mey-Rin responds by putting her arms around his waist in a tight embrace and sobs against his chest.

"Mey-Rin, what happened?"

"What is going on here?" Ciel shouts as he appears in the hallway quite displeased from the commotion. He is surprised to see Mey-Rin hugging Sebastian and sobbing, and Lord Damiano getting up from the floor, holding himself in pain.

"Don't believe anything that wretched girl says!” Lord Damiano snaps angrily, "She attacked me!”
"I'm sorry, young lord!" Mey-Rin cries. "He sold your company and wants to rob you by asking for more money!"

"She's lying!"

"That's enough!" Ciel yells angrily before turning to Sebastian, "Get her out of here. Now!"

Sebastian bows his head. "Yes, my lord. Come along, dear." He guides a crying Mey-Rin away from the corridors, leaving Ciel alone with the bastard Lord Damiano.

"This is my house, Lord Damiano," Ciel says firmly, "I will not allow you to threaten my staff. I'd tell you to leave but it's the middle of the night and as a Phantomhive, I'm giving you the opportunity to stay for the night. But you will get out of my home once dawn breaks and you don't come back. Are we clear?"

Lord Damiano glares at Ciel but sighs and bows his head. "Yes."

Sebastian presses a damp cloth to Mey-Rin's already bruised neck, purple blotches decorating her pale neck. She may have been emotionally weak, but she was at least physically strong enough to incapacitate Lord Damiano by kicking him in the crotch, and that impresses Sebastian a lot.

"You should be more careful, Mey," he says, "If he ever comes near you again, call me."

"Forgive me, Sebastian," she says and hisses as the cloth touches her neck again.

"What else did you hear from Lord Damiano?" he asks.

"Nothing else much. He simply said he sold Lord Ciel's company and planned to steal from him by asking for more money," she says, "I was going to tell the young lord when Lord Damiano caught me and attacked me."

"Well, you don't have to worry. Young master will have a strict talk with Lord Damiano and you won't have to see him ever again."

"I worry for the young lord, Sebastian."

"I'm sure the young lord can take care of himself," he assures her.

Mey-Rin smiles. "I'm sure he can. But that's not what I mean. When you took me in, I promised to protect the Phantomhive Manor."

"You've done a good job so far," he compliments

"...Thank you, Sebastian," she says with a smile, taking his hand in hers. Sebastian frowns at this sudden gesture of gratitude. He's not very used to kind gestures, so he retracts his hand and bows his head before leaving her bedroom.

Mey-Rin's smile slowly leaves her face. She takes off her glasses, her pupils growing bigger, and puts them on the nightstand before curling up in her bed in fetal position. She knows that Sebastian will never respond to her form of gratitude and neither will Ciel. Never a thank you, please or you're welcome. That's much she knows about them.

She wakes up the next morning, dresses up in her uniform and immediately gets to work. Ciel Phantomhive gave her instant orders to tidy up Lord Damiano's bedroom. After what happened last
night, she hesitates at first, but she obeys her young lord's orders. It's his manor.

Luckily for her, Lord Damiano is nowhere to be seen once she enters the bedroom. She lets out a sigh of relief before getting to work. She makes the bed though there isn't much to make. It doesn't look like he slept on the bed last night at all. That's odd. If he left Phantomhive Manor, then good riddance. She prefers to never see that man again for as long as she lives. She wipes off the dust from the dresser with a damp cloth and sweeps the floor with a broomstick.

After cleaning the guest bedroom, she heads downstairs and goes to the kitchen to help Baldroy clean the dishes. He's already occupied cooking breakfast and lunch for the young lord, might as well do him a small favour.

He's making scrambled eggs and his apron are covered in grease stains. He greets her with a smile upon seeing her walk into the kitchen.

"Morning."

"Morning, Baldroy," she smiles back as she heads over to the sink to wash the dishes, only to find the sink empty and the dishes set on the drying rack already clean from any food spots. She looks at Baldroy with a surprised expression. "Did you do the dishes this morning?"

"Yes?"

"Baldroy, I said I was going to do it this morning," she protests.

"Well, after what happened last night with Lord Damiano, I thought it be best not to overwork yourself," Baldroy says, "I swear, if I see that bastard go anywhere near you again, I'll grab this butcher knife and chop his wanker off."

Mey-Rin smiles softly. She knows that Baldroy has always looked after her. He acts like an older brother towards her. He's always trying to make sure nothing bad happens to her or Finnian. But sometimes he can get a little overprotective. Chopping off Lord Damiano's cock seems like a suitable punishment but it would be too much, and the young lord would never allow such thing.

"After what happened last night, I needed a distraction and you ruined it," she smiles, "Now I have to find something else to distract me."

Finnian enters the kitchen wearing strong canvas gloves and a straw hat on his head. "Hey, guys, I need to trim the hedges and I can't seem to find my shears."

"Didn't you leave that thing in the tool-shed yesterday?" Baldroy asks.

"I did, but now it's gone," Finnian winces, "Master will be so disappointed if I don't get those hedges done by this afternoon."

There's a distraction for her. "I'll look in the garden and see if you left it somewhere in a tree or something."

"Are you sure about that, Mey?" Baldroy asks, his face expressing concern.

Mey-Rin nods though she can't say she's sure herself. The guest room for Lord Damiano looked empty but that doesn't guarantee that he's no longer in Phantomhive Manor. She hopes not. She's praying hard not to encounter the man while looking for Finnian's shears.

"Yes, I'm sure. Don't worry about it," she tells him. If anything happens, she'll follow Baldroy's
advice and chop his cock off. She'll probably use Finnian's shears, if she manages to find them, that is.

Mey-Rin leaves the kitchen through the backdoor than leads to the open garden the young lord has. The grass green and trimmed down to perfection with pretty red poppies blooming. Tall trees perfectly aligned, even heightened and surrounding the garden in a neat square shape. There's also a beautiful cherry blossom tree growing, its delicate pink petals falling from the branches one by one like snow. Mey-Rin has always liked cherry blossoms but her favourite will always be the lotus flower. The garden has a pond that has white water lilies that resemble the lotus flower but not quite. Tables are set around the pond just case someone would like a cup of tea in the garden and what better way to enjoy it than sitting near a pond with beautiful water lilies, at least that's how Mey-Rin thinks. There are stone paths that lead to certain area of Phantomhive Manor, including a path Sebastian forbids them to go. A path that leads out of the garden and into the forest.

Apparently, that is where the original Phantomhive Manor used to be...Mey-Rin can't tell which it was though. But one thing is for sure, Ciel is the only person who goes there (accompanied by his butler, of course), and no one else is allowed to go down there. Many stop to look at the forbidden path but never dare to walk into the forest, for the fear of angering Ciel or the fear of encountering something they're not supposed to see. No one, not even Finnian, has dared to enter the forest through the forbidden path.

Mey-Rin walks past it without a second glance. She prefers to look for Finnian's shield than letting curiosity kill her. She searches through the toolshed where Finnian said he left it yesterday. She finds a lot of things there. A rake. A few old cracked flower pots. Herbicide. But no garden shears. If they're not in the tool-shed, then where in the bloody hell are there?

She leaves the tool-shed and searches the red of the garden, behind the hedges Finnian is supposed to trim, behind the blossom tree or even under the tables near the pond. She even looks down in the pond to see if Finnian might have dropped in the pond. Nothing. Just the pretty water lilies blooming bright, clean and white, just like the lotus flowers do.

"Finny, where on earth did you misplace those bloody things?" she mutters to herself as she looks around. They can be anywhere.

The she looks towards the path that leads to the forest where no one is allowed to go. Finnian couldn't have possibly left them there. He would never disobey the young lord by entering the forest when Ciel strictly forbade it. Still, it wouldn't hurt to check. And yet, she'll be disobeying herself, and that's not good. She has never been disobedient to the young lord.

It will just be a quick look though. 5 minutes at least. If they're not there, Mey-Rin will leave the forest immediately. Who knows? Maybe neither the young lord nor Sebastian will notice.

Heart racing in fear, she walks down the forbidden path, having invisible ropes around her waist trying to pull her back. Trying to keep her from entering the forest. However, when she enters the forest, those invisible ropes are gone.

The forest here feels eerie and less colourful than the gardens. The trees completely grey and lifeless. It still has leafy branches creating a large canopy over her head, but those leaves look dry and dead, not green or orange or any type of colour. This part of the forest is dead. Mey-Rin can see many reasons why not to enter the forest. It's depressing. It makes her wonder why the young lord comes here every week. She also sees stone structures ahead, just a few feet away from her behind the trees. Could that be the Phantomhive Manor?

This area where Mey-Rin is standing looks like an old courtyard. There are pieces of stone floors on
the earthy ground, buried by dirt and with grass poking out between the spaces. Most of them are broken but still withstanding.

She then remembers that she needs to find Finnian's garden shears. She's not supposed to be here in the first place. If Sebastian and/or Ciel find her here, she'll be in enormous trouble.

That's when she spots them.

Finnian's garden shears. Sticking out behind a few dry shrubs.

"There you are," she says as she hurriedly walks over to where the shears are, only to take an immediate step back and scream in horror before running back to Phantomhive Manor.

Behind the shrubs is the body of Lord Damiano, burned to a crisp, his leg twisted, his mouth open in mid-scream, his stomach gutted and Finnian's garden shears stabbed through his throat.

First chapter for The Lotus Flower is done. Yeah, I don't know if it's good. It probably sucks.
Chapter 2: That Maid, the Courageous

Chapter Notes

"Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change."
- Mary Shelley

Knowing that our three favourite stooges don't have last names like some of the other Black Butler characters, I decided to give them last names. Mey-Rin is renamed Mey-Rin Lijuan, Baldroy is Baldroy Gibbons and Finnian is Finnian Bornemann.

After Damiano De Martinis's body was found, Ciel Phantomhive called the police commissioner of Scotland Yard Arthur Randall to recover the body.

"It's a pity what happened to Lord Damiano," Ciel said, "But I can't say I pit him. He sold my company and tried to ask for more money. He was basically robbing me. He also attacked my maid. That sort of behaviour was not acceptable. So I told him to be on his way the next morning. And he did. I don't know how he ended up dead in the garden."

"Did he have any enemies?" Commissioner Randall asks.

"Plenty. And he made a new enemy last night. Me," Ciel takes a sip of tea in a very calm matter. "However, I wouldn't have gone to such lengths as to burning him alive and stabbing him with a garden shear. I am only a child after all. Besides, I was asleep the entire night. I did not hear or see anything. You can ask my staff if you wish."

The commissioner nods. "And that's exactly what we'll do. Lord Phantomhive, Lord Damiano was burned to a crisp. He had a broken leg, obvious sign that he tried to run away but fell and got himself hurt. And then stabbed in the heart with a pair of shears. You have a cook and a gardener, yes?"

"And our maid, yes. However, she was the one who found Lord Damian and informed me. Doubt she had anything to do with it." He offers the commissioner some tea but the old man refuses.

"One of them could have done it," Commissioner Randall assumes. "We'll have to take them into custody for questioning."

Ciel puts down his cup of tea and crosses his leg over the other. "Are you pressing charges?"

"Not yet -."

"Then you'll interrogate them here but they do not leave my mansion."

"Lord Phantomhive -.

"Commissioner," Ciel states sternly. "I understand that you're simply doing your duties but this is my house and as long as your in my house, you will abide by my rules. Mey-Rin, Baldroy and Finnian do not leave this manor. If one of them did it, I would be aware of it. I know these two better than you do."

Commissioner Randall glares at the thirteen-year-old boy but sighs in defeat. "...Very well. I'll
interrogate them here. But if they confess, I will be taking them with me."

Ciel shrugs. "All right then. Go ahead."

Commissioner Randall decides to interrogate the servants in the library. First person to be interrogated is Baldroy, the cook. Since he's the cook, it's possible that he might have shoved Damiano De Martinis in the oven and burned him alive.

Baldroy sits down and puts the cigarette on the ashtray. Commissioner Randall notices that he's a smoker which is rude. Servants are not allowed to smoke or drink. Those are the house rules and he seems to break them without care.

"What is your name?" Commissioner Randall asks.

"Baldroy Gibbons."

"Age?"

"36."

"Where are you from?"

"I'm from New Orleans, Louisiana." Baldroy can see the confused look on Commissioner Randall's face. "Louisiana? It's in fucking America. Please, commissioner. Don't tell me you've never been to America before."

Commissioner Randall ignores him and starts the official interrogation. Bloody foreigners and immigrants. "Have you ever had a confrontation with Lord Damiano?"

"Not really. I only met the man once when the young lord introduced us to him," he says, "I have to say that I wasn't really fond of him when I set eyes on him and after I heard he attacked Mey-Rin, I wanted to give him a good beating but of course, Sebastian already told me he was gone so no, I wasn't able to confront him."

"Were you working in the kitchen last night?"

"Oh God no. After that, I went straight to bed. I was tired as hell. Didn't even bother to clean the dishes. I cleaned them the next morning but not before cleaning the oven first."

"The oven?" Commissioner Randall raises an eyebrow at him.

"That sounds bad, doesn't it?"

"Indeed. Lord Damiano was burned, sir. So is there a possibility you purposely locked him in the oven to burn him alive?"

Baldroy frowns and takes the cigarette in his hands. "Oy, no! I would never do something that savage. I wasn't even in the kitchen last night. I was in my room sleeping. Ask Finnian if you like. Listen, I hated that bastard but not enough to kill him. If I wanted to kill him, I wouldn't put him in the oven. I would cut his nuts off and let him bleed to death."

"At what time did you go to bed?"

"I went to bed at 11pm."
Commissioner Randall sighs in disappointment. "Lord Damiano was murdered at 12am, according to the autopsy."

Finnian is brought into the library, wearing his same uniform. A white long-sleeved shirt, think gardening gloves stained with dirt and the straw hat hanging at the back of his neck. *What the bloody hell? He's just a kid.*

"Name?"

"Finnian Bornemann."

The commissioner frowns. And this kid is German. Another immigrant. *Why does this brat keep hiring foreigners? *"Age?"

"16"

Commissioner Randall looks at him strangely. "You seem awfully young to be a gardener."

Finnian, however, takes this as a compliment and smiles. "Thank you very much. But the master was mostly interested in my skills, not my age. I can carry a pot weighing 20 pounds or more, and I can yank out the toughest plants stuck to the ground."

"That's nice," the commissioner says while writing down the words on a notepad. "Do you spend a lot of times outdoors."

Finnian nods. "Oh yes, I spend a great deal amount of time outdoors. I love it more than indoors. Spent most of my childhood indoors and never got to see the sun much. That was until Lord Phantomhive had me hired as a gardener. And I love it."

Commissioner Randall then asks if he saw Baldroy Gibbons leave his bedroom last night.

"He was sleeping last night. He slept the entire night, I tell you," Finnian says, "I know because I spent the entire night covering my ears from his snoring. He's very loud. I did not sleep one bit." He yawns and rubs his tired eyes.

"Were you out in the garden last night?" the commissioner asks.

"Yes I was, sir," Finnian nods, "I was putting my shears back in the toolshed but Lord Damiano was in the library with the young lord at the time. I only learned that he attacked Mey-Rin when I got back into the house. Such a nasty thing that man did."

"Your shears were found in Lord Damiano's neck."

Finnian's eyes widen when informed of this. "And you think I did it?" He shakes his head. "No, sir. I wouldn't do such things. I was in the room with Baldroy last night. I swear I was. In fact, I have been searching for the shears all morning. I couldn't find them in my toolshed this morning."

"You believe someone took the shears and used them to kill Lord Damiano?"

"If you put it that way, then yes. Not saying that I wouldn't beat him bloody. I would have. Unfortunately, someone beat me to it." Finnian says this in such a calm manner that it unnerves the commissioner. Is everyone in Phantomhive Manor a complete nutcase?

Commissioner Randall then turns his attention to Lord Phantomhive who is clearly smirking in amusement.
"I'd like to speak to your former butler -." 

"Tanaka is incapable of telling you anything, commissioner," Ciel says while taking another sip of his tea. "When the people that killed my parents invaded the house, one of them stabbed Tanaka on the back of the neck. He's lucky to be alive but unfortunately, he hasn't been the same. He can speak once in a while but his energy is mostly spent. I wouldn't even try. Even if he is able to talk to you, doubt he knows anything about Lord Damiano's death."

"I'd like to speak to the girl who found the body then," he says.

Ciel nods. "Very well." He then turns to his butler. "Sebastian, bring Mey-Rin in."

Sebastian nods and leaves the library to fetch the maid.

A few minutes later, Sebastian reenters the library with Mey-Rin following behind him, wearing a scarf around her neck which is odd.

She sits down on a seat in front of the commissioner and he frowns when he sees the scarf around her neck.

"Why are you wearing that?" he asks.

Mey-Rin doesn't answer. Instead, she removes the scarf from around her neck and shows the bruises.

"Did Lord Damian do that to you?"

"Yes," Mey-Rin nods.

"What's your name?"

"Mey-Rin Fan."

The commissioner sighs. And now we have a Chinese girl. What is the matter with this brat? "Age?"

"I'm 19, sir."

"And I'm guessing you're from China."

"Beijing. But yes, I am from China...Can I ask what do these questions have to do with Lord Damiano's death?"

"I'm simply following protocol," Commissioner Randall says. "Do you have any idea why Lord Damiano attacked you?"

She could tell Commissioner Randall about Lord Damiano planning to steal money from the young lord but that's not her business to tell him. She decides to lie to him instead.

"He was drinking a bit yesterday while playing a board game with the young master so it's possible Lord Damiano was drunk. He also looked at me strangely yesterday."

"How strangely?"

"The same way men would look at women if they're pretty enough for them," Mey-Rin says almost sharply. How else does he want her to put it?
"Ahem." Mey-Rin looked over shoulder to see the young master staring at her seriously. "Mind your manners, Mey-Rin."

"Forgive me, master," she says, bowing her head in pardon.

"Did you see Lord Damiano leave the mansion last night?" Commissioner Randall asks.

Mey-Rin shakes her head. "Not really. No. I was in my bedroom last night."

"Can you prove that?"

She shakes her head. That is the most stupid question anyone can ever ask. Of course she can't prove it. But it seems that the commissioner is looking for ways to suspect her of the crime. He wants someone to blame. And she can tell by the look on his face that he doesn't like her very much. And she didn't even do anything.

"Did you see any of your friends leave the room?"

"No. I didn't see them. I was asleep." These questions are tedious and aggravating. It feels like a waste of time. It's like the commissioner wants it to be Baldroy or Finnian, or maybe both. Mey-Rin knows that neither of them did this. How does she know this? Because they would never take action without the young master's orders. If Finnian did kill Lord Damian, he wouldn't have let her search for her shears. And Baldroy threatened to beat the man bloody but she knew he was joking. Both of them were oblivious about Lord Damian's death. And Tanaka didn't do it for sure. If Finnian didn't do it and if Baldroy didn't do, if Tanaka didn't do it and if she didn't do it. Who did? "But I know them too well. As much as they wanted to, they didn't kill Lord Damian."

"Then who did?"

She shrugs her shoulder. "I don't know, sir."

She looks over to the young master who gives her permission to leave. Behind him stands Sebastian, looking calm and collective as ever. She gets up, pads down her skirt and walks out of the library.

As she walks back to the kitchen, she keeps thinking. Where was Sebastian last night Lord Damiano was murdered? Mey-Rin never knew what Sebastian does after everyone goes to bed. Apparently, he almost never sleep. She sometimes hears him in the middle do the night, walking up and down the hallways. He is always busy, even at night. And that's very unnerving. Could he have been the one that killed Damiano De Martinis? If it's not under the young lord's order, he wouldn't? What if the young lord ordered Sebastian to kill Lord Damiano? That would be a completely different turn of events.

"What about your butler?" Commissioner Randall asks Ciel once Mey-Rin is gone. Ciel simply stares at him blankly while the butler is standing behind him saying nothing. "He's the one in charge of the house. He should know everything that goes on around here."

Ciel smiles a little. "But of course. I almost forgot that my butler is a possible suspect. He is in charge of everything here. Though it is predictable for the butler to be the killer, don't you think?"

"All of your servants are suspect, Lord Phantomhive," the commissioner says gruffly.

"Perhaps you're right," the boy chuckles in amusement, "And for that alone, I shall let you interrogate my butler. There you will see he has nothing to do with Lord Damiano's death."
"Very well. Sit down, Mr Michaelis."

Sebastian bows his head. "Of course." He sits down on a chair in front of the commissioner and places his hands on his lap, maintaining his considerate posture as demanded from a butler.

Commissioner Randall begins to write down on the notebook. "Name?"

"But commissioner, you already know my name," Sebastian says with a polite smile.

"I'm following protocol so tell me your name, Mr Michaelis," he says, becoming a little impatient.

Sebastian smiles, not looking the least intimidated by the commissioner. "My name is Sebastian Michaelis. And before you ask for my age, I am 38 years old and yes, I was born in England but of course, I was born in Manchester, not England. After I found my master alive and alone in the freezing cold, he hired me as his butler since Mr Shino is too feeble to take care of him at the moment. Of course, even if he didn't hire me, I still would have volunteered."

Commissioner Randall raises his hand, stopping the butler from speaking any further. He could care less about the Phantomhive boy's life right now. He will not dare show pity for a little brat like him.

"Mr Michaelis, as interesting as the story may be, I am not interested in your meeting with Lord Phantomhive. I am only interested in finding out which one of you killed Damiano De Martinis."

"Well, commissioner, if you're looking for someone to blame for, there's no one else to blame but me," Sebastian says while placing his hand on his chest and bows. "You see, I already sent the servants to bed. The door to the servants quarters are locked by ten."

"The servants must use secret passageways to leave the rooms undetected."

Sebastian shakes his head and tucks his black hair behind his ear. "There are no hidden passageway in their rooms. Only outside the servants quarters and only I have the keys to the passageways. Once the servants went to bed, I continued my work as always. Was I awake at the time of Lord Damiano's death? Yes, I was. Did I see Lord Damiano leave the mansion? Yes, I did. I watched him leave his room in a hurry. He looked absolutely terrified of something. He was claiming to see ghosts. I attempted to calm him down but he wouldn't listen to reason. He fell down the stairs and twisted his ankle. Again, I attempted to assist him but he crawled away from me. That's the last time I saw him. I reported to the master about the issue. He told me to keep searching for him. And that is what I did. I have no idea how he ended up burned to a crisp or who killed him but I can assure you that it was neither of us."

If it wasn't the butler, then who did it? It has to be the older butler then.

"I still wish to interrogate the old man," Commissioner Randall demands. "And I will not leave this house until I do."

Ciel glares at the commissioner for a moment before looking at Sebastian. "Bring Tanaka down here, if you can. Be careful with him when bringing him downstairs. We don't want him falling and hurting himself."

Sebastian bows his head and leaves the library.

After five minutes, Sebastian returns to the library with the old man Tanaka...in a wheelchair. Commissioner Randall stares at the old Japanese man in shock. The old man is white-haired with round-framed glasses and wrinkly face. And he looks feeble and tired.

"Sir Randall, this is my father's previous butler, Tanaka Shino," Ciel says sternly, "If you really
believe that he is a suspect to Lord Damiano's death, go ahead and ask him. You'll see that he really can't tell you anything."

"...No. No, I think I have everything I need. Forgive me, Lord Phantomhive." The commissioner looks down in shame. *Darn, that wicked brat.*

"I know it wasn't. You were only doing your job," he says, "Sebastian, take Tanaka to the kitchen with the other servants. It's almost lunchtime."

Sebastian nods his head and takes Tanaka out of the library. Wanting to leave now, Commissioner Randall stands from his seat. He can no longer stand being defied, humiliated and talked down to by a thirteen-year-old brat who believes he is above Scotland Yard. He will not have it.

"I shall continue my investigation at the station then. I shall return if Abberline and I have any leads." He puts on his top hat before bowing his head. "Good day, my lord."

Ciel nods and sips his tea. "Good day."

With that, the commissioner leaves. He still suspects that one of the servants committed the murderer, the main suspects being the butler and the housemaid. In his head, the Chinese are tricksters and extremely clever, clever enough to commit a crime and get away with it.

The three servants sit around the dinner table, all of them looking and feeling anxious. Mey-Rin rests her head on the table, sighing. Finnian is rocking back and forth nervously. Baldroy is still smoking his cigarette. And Tanaka...is just sipping tea and being...Tanaka. What will happen to them? Will they be going to jail either way? This can't be happening. Finnian doesn't belong behind bars. He's too sensitive. He despises closed spaces. Baldroy could care less about going to jail because he knows that none of them did it. He's willing to take the fall. Mey-Rin is willing to do so as well but she can't let Commissioner Randall arrest Finnian as well.

"Are we all going to prison?" Finnian asks worriedly.

Baldroy sighs and presses the burnt cigarette on the ashtray. "No one is going to prison, ya hear? The commissioner was only here to interrogate us."

"He seems like he was looking for someone to blame for Lord Damiano's death though," Mey-Rin points out.

"Look, we all wanted to beat the shit out of that bastard but it wasn't our position to snuff him out without the master's orders and since he didn't give the order, we didn't do it. If it were that way, we would have let the master know," he says.

"But they found Lord Damiano burned to a crisp and Finnian's shears lodged in his throat," she argues.

"And you think Finnian and I did that?"

"No. I don't think it was you but Commissioner Randall sure thinks it was one of you."

"But we didn't do anything wrong," Finnian snuffles, wiping his tears from his eyes.

Mey-Rin hugs Finnian in comfort, petting his head. All this nasty talk is upsetting him. "It's all right, Finny. We all know it wasn't you or Bard."
Baldroy pats his shoulder. "Yeah. That commissioner is just trying to scare the shit out of us. But don't worry. He ain't gonna touch a hair on your head."

"Then I suggest you all behave the next time we have Scotland Yard visiting us." Sebastian enters the room with the young master. The three servants stand up and bow their heads.

"Listen up, everyone. We, as Baldroy says, dodged a bullet this time but that doesn't mean we're clear from suspicion. Scotland Yard will return to continue the investigation so I suggest for all of you to be cautious" Ciel announces, "We are all worried of what Scotland Yard will do but know this. I know none of you killed Lord Damiano. But I will advise you all to stay alert and not do anything that will have Commissioner Randall raise suspicions. He will look for reasons to arrest one of you...or all of you. I will take care of the problem. In the meantime, I need you all to calm down and prepare for next week's ball. We do not want to have a scandal like this affecting our guests. Do you understand?"

The three servants bow their heads. "Yes, master!"

"Hohoho." Tanaka simply chuckles as he sips his tea.

Ciel continues working behind his desk, creating new designs for the Funtom Company's toy shop. He thinks of making a train looking an exact miniature replica of the Orient Express, a very popular train with an extensive line, going from London all the way to Istanbul. He smiles a little, remembering how his father promised him and his brother that they would travel all over Europe. Calais. Paris. Strasbourg. Vienna. Milan. Venice. Budapest. Bucharest. Athens. And finally Istanbul, the train's final destination before returning all the way here to London.

He sighs to himself, knowing that he might never take the Orient Express and neither will a few poor people. That's why he's making these realistic designs of the Orient Express. To make the children who never seen a train in their lives happy. They will have one in their hands and feel like they're really there even when it's not even close to the real thing.

He hears a knock on the door but continues working. "Come in."

Sebastian enters the study with the tray in his hands. "I brought you some fresh raspberry parfait and some mint tea to freshen you up after a long stressful morning meeting with Commissioner Randall."

He puts the cold parfait on the desk as well as the steaming cup of tea.

Ciel simply sighs and puts the pencil down, pinching the bridge of his nose in frustration. "Bloody Randall. Always such a pest."

"If you wish for me to get rid of him for you, just say so and I'll dispose of him like the rat he is," Sebastian says.

Ciel shakes his head, however, saying no. "I think I prefer if you didn't. As much as I despise him, he's not worth killing over. As I said before, he is only doing his job. Is it a cruel way of doing his job? Yes, it is. But it's still his job. Besides, I wouldn't want the rest of Scotland Yard breathing down my neck because their commissioner dies under mysterious circumstances. We all know they will put the blame on me and we don't want anymore trouble. For now, we'll stay out of his way and continue our own duties. His duty is to Scotland Yard and my duty is to the queen."

"Very well, my lord. Speaking of trouble, master, what should we do about Mey-Rin?" Sebastian asks and Ciel looks at him. "She entered the forest and discovered the body. She knows that one of us killed Lord Damiano."
Ciel sighs. Indeed. Mey-Rin discovering Damiano De Martinis' body has been the cause of all this trouble. But he isn't sure what to do about it. He could simply fire her. But that would be inconvenient as well. Getting rid of her won't get rid of the problem either. It will simply stir up more controversy. The maid who discovered the murdered Damiano De Martinis at Phantomhive Manor getting fired or mysteriously disappearing will have the entire press pouncing on him like hungry dogs and his reputation would be ruined.

"For now, we will do nothing," he says, making his decision, "If she hasn't said anything during the interrogation, it's because she's protecting the others. Let her believe that one of us did it. As long as she didn't find the other bodies, we shall be fine. As an order, you will not do anything to her unless I order you. Do you understand?"

Sebastian sighs, his eyes blood red, and bows his head. "Yes, my young lord."

"And Sebastian..."

"Yes, young master?"

"I know you were tempted in showing yourself to Randall. Never do that unless I order you to."

Sebastian chuckles darkly. "I thought you would have found it amusing, young master. But if that's what you wish, I shall cease my attempts. For the time-being."

It's been a few weeks since Lord Damiano's death. Everything seems to have returned to normal as if nothing happened. Though a few things happened after the interrogation ended and Commissioner Randall left the Phantomhive estate. Ciel and Sebastian have been talking in French whenever they need to speak in private. Clever. They're speaking in French so no one in the household can know what they're saying. Another thing that happened is that Sebastian put a padlock at the gate to the forest. That way to assure no one else enters the forest again. It's strange.

Mey-Rin has been having restless nights, unable to get the image of Lord Damiano's dead body from her head. She finds no peace in her sleep.

"Motherfucker," Baldroy mutters to himself as he checks the wire under the floorboards. It's been chewed off by the rats that have been entering the manor in the middle of the night. "This wire is done for."

"Oh, not the rats again," Mey-Rin groans in despair. She can hear them scurrying in the middle of the night almost all the time. She keeps her feet up to make sure none of them crawls up her leg. Mey-Rin has been having restless nights, unable to get the image of Lord Damiano's dead body from her head. She finds no peace in her sleep. She keeps seeing things moving from the corner of her eye but knows that it is only her imagination getting the best of her.

Baldroy sits up from the hole and scratches the back of his head. "This is getting ridiculous. I mean, I heard they've been plaguing London lately but I never expected them to be such a problem this far out of the city. This shit is getting out of hand."

"Maybe herbicide would do the trick," Finnian suggests.

"Good idea," Baldroy approves. "All right, guys, we'll get the rats this time. We just have to be quiet."

A rat scurries across the floor in front of them. Baldroy jumps back. Mey-Rin squeals. And Finnian screams while picking up one of the statues. Baldroy and Mey-Rin try to stop him but he throws it,
destroying both the statue and the floor in a crash. The dust clears, revealing a large mess in the hallway no thanks to Finnian. Unfortunately, the rat escaped.

"Hehe, oops," he says awkwardly while scratching his head. "I think it got away."

"Why are you laughing for!?" Baldroy snaps at him angrily, "Are you trying to kill us too, you idiot!?"

"Ho-ho-ho," Tanaka simply laughs as he watches the show from his wheelchair.

"Doubt it, but I think Sebastian will if he sees this mess," Mey-Rin says worriedly.

"Did I at least kill the damn thing?" Finnian asks.

"What do you think, dumbass?" Baldroy asks rhetorically.

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Inside the game room, where it's now darkly lit with the curtains, Ciel Phantomhive is playing billiards with her aunt Angelina Dalles (also known as Madam Red), Lau Honghui, his "sister" Ran-Mao Honghui, Diederich Liebermann (a childhood friend of Vincent Phantomhive), Azzurro Vanel and Commissioner Arthur Randall. As much as he despises him, Ciel felt obligated to invite him over at the manor to resolve a different problem, not involving Damiano De Martinis. Commissioner Randall wanted to take Ciel's staff into custody for questioning but Ciel didn't allow them. Apart from the shears and the body burned to a crisp, if the commissioner didn't have any other evidence that would accuse Baldroy, Finian or Mey-Rin of murder, there's no reason to continue pursuing them. If they say they didn't do it, they didn't do it.

Angelina Dalles is beautiful, possibly more beautiful than Ciel's mother Rachel Phantomhive. She possesses red eyes, long wavy crimson hair and her lips are wine red. She's wearing a red skirt with a matching waistcoat and white ruffled blouse as well as a red hat and black gloves. Her beauty is described, by a few gentlemen, to be devilish and sinful. A true temptation that would send them to hell. However, Ciel simply sees her as his aunt and nothing more.

Lau Honghui, a tall man with short black hair and dark brown eyes, which he almost never opens. He has a blue dragon tattoo going up his left arm and is wearing a green changshan. Ran-Mao, Lau's sister, has large, golden eyes and jet-black hair with thick, square bangs. Her hair is arranged in long braids and cat ear-like buns, accompanied by a pink rose. She wears a short, black and lavender cheongsam decorated in dark-pink petals, and a blue jacket over it. Additionally, she dresses in thigh-high tights, black ballet shoes, and gold anklets with bells.

Azzurro Vanel is small eyed with shaggy blonde hair that's tied in a ponytail and stubble chin. He has multiple piercings-one on his right ear, three on his left ear, and two on his left eyebrow- and a scar across his face. He dresses nicely in a clean white suit, although he leaves his purple, button-down shirt worn underneath partially unbuttoned and wears no tie. Ciel made sure that Mey-Rin didn't go near this one, insisting that she stayed in the kitchen with Baldroy until Vanel left. It took her a moment to process his command before remembering the incident with Lord Damiano and immediately did as told.

Diedrich is overweight, has sported a thick handlebar moustache and short black hair. He's wearing a German military suit and black boots.

They are all his allies, for the Aristocrats of Evil. At least, that's what many people called it. Vincent Phantomhive was the leader of the Aristocrats of Evil. Now, it's Ciel's turn to take the reigns.

"Look! There's another one!" Finnian's voice can be heard outside the recreational room as well as
Mey-Rin's and Baldroy's.

"Catch it!" Baldroy shouts.

"What on earth is going on out there?" Madam Red asks in complete shock upon hearing the crashing sounds outside the recreational room.

"I wouldn't worry about it. This happens almost all the time," Lau muses, his "sister" sitting on his lap like a love-sick lover. "Isn't that right, Ciel?"

"Unfortunately, yes," Ciel sighs. He is sitting on an armchair, wearing a burgundy frock Sebastian chose for him this morning, and his propped elbow holding his chin up and his legged crossed over the other. He smirks at his aunt's question.

"Quite the commotion going on out there," Commissioner Randall says as he waits for his turn to play. He still suspects Baldroy and Finnian to be involved with Lord Damian's murder but he decides not to soil Ciel Phantomhive generous invitation by bringing the matter up. "It seems you're experiencing a rat problem as well."

It's Azzurro Vanel's turn to play.

"Speaking of which, how long will you let the vermin run wild?" Sir Diederich asks as he is sitting on a chair eating a sandwich Ciel had Baldroy prepare for them. "Those filthy monsters," he mutters. "Someone really ought to take care of them, don't you think?"

"And someone will," Lau agrees. "He's just waiting for the opportunity to do so."

"Indeed," Madam Red smirks in agreement. She has her butler Grell Sutcliff standing by her side, a man with glasses and long brown hair tied back in a red ribbon. "He simply prefers to settle things with one blow, isn't that right, dear nephew, or will you pass on this turn too?"

"I'll pass," he says, "It's my policy not to shoot if I know that I'll miss."

"That's all very well," Commissioner Randall says, "but when will you handle the problem?"

Ciel shrugs his shoulders. "Anytime you like. The rats will soon come for their forbidden cheese and I have the key to the storehouse."

Azzurro Vanel grunts upon hearing this before striking the white ball with the end of the cue stick. He hits the red ball and the yellow ball but neither of them fall into the pockets, only the white ball he hit did. He missed. He stands up and growls in frustration. The growl could have been heard if it wasn't for the cigarette in his mouth.

"Even so," Ciel continues with his usual confident smirk, "Locating the nest and eliminating the vermin promises to be a tedious task. You should concentrate on preparing me a suitable reward."

Commissioner Randall glowers. "You're a vulture -."  

"Sir Randall!" Ciel snaps warningly, "I'd be careful how you smear my family name."

Azzurro chuckles in amusement. "You're in trouble now, Randall. What's next, Lord Phantomhive?"

It's now his turn. Ciel stands up from his armchair with his cue stick. "It's time to put an end to this nonsense, don't you think?" he says as he walks towards the billiard table, but stops next to Commissioner Randall. "How soon can you secure the payment?"
The commissioner sighs in defeat. He has no choice. Ciel Phantomhive is Queen Victoria's guard dog. He's in charge of reporting everything that happens to the Queen. And the Queen asks a lot of favours from the young lord. Whatever he asks for, Scotland Yard has to oblige. "Tonight. I'll have it by then."

Ciel sits on the edge of the billiard table and prepares to shoot. "Then I'll send a carriage for you later. We can even prepare some light entertainment for you," he says cockily. "Does that sound good?"

"You've passed your turn twice and now you're after them all in one go," Diederich protests. One can't know if he's referring to the drug dealers they're trying to catch or the game itself.

Ciel smirks. "Naturally."

"Careful or your greed will undo you," Commissioner Randall warns him.

Ciel smirks once more. The warnings do not phase him one bit. He strikes the ball in front of him and all of them roll into the pockets. He wins the game.

"Am I undone?"

After the game, Sir Diederich, Commissioner Randall and Azzurro Vanel decide to leave. Ciel had Sebastian fetch their carriages and thanked them for stopping by.

Before Commissioner gets in his carriage, he has a small talk with Ciel Phantomhive. "We will discuss Lord Damiano's death later on."

Ciel nods in agreement. "Of course. But for now, the subject shall remain postponed for the time being."

At the moment, the remaining guests are Madam Red, Lau, Ran-Mao and Madam Red's butler Grell Sutcliff. He's not exactly a guest though. He's still on duty as a butler. However, Sebastian prefers to do all the work instead of letting another butler serve the guests. Despite this, Ciel brought Mey-Rin into it as well. It's not that Sebastian needs the help. Ciel simply wants to make sure Mey-Rin is not suspicious about Lord Damian's death. Having her in the library with them helping Sebastian serve tea is the best way to keep an eye on her.

"Your tea. We have a special blend of chai tea with ginger," Sebastian says. He serves the tea and has Mey-Rin give it to Madam Red.

"Thank you, dear," Madam Red says to Mey-Rin. The young maid nods and steps away.

Lau takes a small whiff of the tea. "Smells lovely," he says. "Tea can be excellent when made well."

"And for times of trouble," Madam Red states in lament before looking over at Mey-Rin, "Wouldn't you like some tea, dear?"

Mey-Rin shakes her head in polite refusal. "No thank, Madam Red. I've had my tea just a few hours ago."

"That's too bad," she says, "I've heard about Lord Damian a few weeks ago. That must have been such a horrific thing to see. Burned to a crisp and stabbed in the neck."

"He, um, had his leg twisted as well," Mey-Rin says.
"Really? Oh dear. I wonder what could have happened that night," Madam Red says.

Ciel shrugs his shoulders without a care in the world. "Who knows? This mansion is so big, anyone could have gotten in and kill Lord Damiano and simply sneak out without any of us noticing."

"Are you sure it wasn't one of your servants?" Lau asks, clearly teasing Ciel Phantomhive, "I mean, the man was burned and then stabbed in the neck with a pair of shears. That makes the cook and the gardener the primary suspects."

"It does, doesn't it?" Ciel chuckles, "but it wasn't them, I can promise you that. If they wanted to kill Lord Damiano, it would have been under my orders."

"It seems that everyone is capable of killing under your instructions," Lau says.

"Of course they would," Ciel says. "But since I didn't give them any instructions to kill Lord Damiano, they didn't do it. Otherwise, I would have known. Maybe I should have killed him. That man sold my company in India and was planning on stealing from me by fraudulently acquiring more money. Isn't that right, Mey-Rin? I mean, you did hear him say it yourself. Isn't that the reason why he tried to strangle you."

The bruises on her neck may have faded but the memory still remains in her mind. Why is Ciel bringing the subject now that Commissioner Randall is gone? Why are they talking about this in general?

Mey-Rin nods either way. "Yes. He caught me listening and got very angry. He then tried to strangle. Luckily I was able to defend myself and Sebastian was there."

"Well, we're glad that you're all right, dear," Madam Red says.

"Yes, indeed," Lau says after sipping his tea, "Otherwise this place would be short on staff again and doubt they can afford another maid."

Mey-Rin's eyes widen when he says this. Is that what he's worried about? She can yell at him in different languages, like Chinese and Cantonese. But decides not to. It's rude for her to snap at the guests without the permission of the young lord. So she remains silent.

"She's a very valuable member of the staff so she's not allowed to die without me saying so," Ciel says, "So I'd be careful how you speak of my servants, Lau."

"Of course," Lau smiles, "I wouldn't want to hurt the girl's feelings, now do we? Bàoqìàn (Sorry)."

"Nǐyuányàngélè (You're forgiven)," she says.

Even if Lau and Ran-Mao are Chinese like her, she doesn't like him much for some reason. He's arrogant and always challenging Ciel whether directly or indirectly. He always tries to pick up an argument with the young that could end with insults or physical fights. But as always, Ciel sees Lau's words as meaningless. Still, this leaves them in a tense and sometimes hostile mood. She has witnessed it so many times, it's become a custom in the Phantomhive household.

Grell is simply standing there admiring Sebastian serving tea. Mey-Rin smiles. He seems to like Sebastian very much. Who wouldn't? He is a handsome man, is he not?

She leans towards him and whispers in his ear. "You'll wet the floor with your drool."

"Oh, um, sorry," Grell apologizes awkwardly while scratching his head, causing Mey-Rin to giggle.
"Grell," Madam Red calls him out.

He quickly straightens up. "Yes, my lady."

"Learn something from Sebastian," she says, almost seriously.

Grell sighs in deception. "Yes."

Mey-Rin sometimes pities Grell. He's been Madam Red's butler for quite a while. So far he hasn't been the best. He's fucked up at his job at the moment, breaking everything in his wake, apologizing more than a thousand times and wanting to kill himself over and over again. Mey-Rin believes that Grell is trying too hard and that's what's making him fuck up on his job. He's pushing himself too much.

"Just look at him. I mean, his physique is absolutely marvellous," Madam Red smiles while rubbing Sebastian's bottom, making Sebastian jump out of his spine. "You should quit this country job and come work for me in the city."

Mey-Rin nearly gasps at Madam Red's unexpected and inappropriate action. This is just uncomfortable to watch, she thinks, and is probably uncomfortable for Sebastian as well.

"Ahem," Ciel interrupts this uncomfortable moment by clearing his throat. "Aunt Angelina, please stop groping my butler's ass."

She simply laughs in amusement. "So sorry. I simply couldn't help myself. It's been a while since I've seen handsome men like him around. He looks like he needed a physical. It's a doctor's habit."

Ciel simply sighs and puts down the teacup on the coffee table below him.

"So, do you believe the drug trafficker we're after was one of our guests today?" Lau asks while putting down his teacup as well. He stands up from the couch and Ran-Mao slips off his lap. She continues drinking her tea silently. Mey-Rin has never heard Ran-Mao talk before. Probably does but only a few words.

"Perhaps," Ciel says.

"While not leave the extermination to Lau?" Madam Red asks.

_Extermination?_ Mey-Rin thinks.

"A rat knows best where a rat's nest is, doesn't he?" Madam Red smirks before taking another sip of tea. She's calling Lau a rat. Interesting.

"I am but a tamed guinea pig, dedicated to my lord," Lau says with a teasing smile as he walks over to where Ciel is sitting and pats the young lord on the head. Ciel tenses up at this gesture. "If the earl instructs me not to act, I'm bound to do nothing."

Funny, Mey-Rin starts recalling. Those are the same instructions the young lord gives her and the others when they have unwanted guess wandering around the estate. If the earl instructs them not to act, they can't do anything. If he instructs them to act, they do it...like obedient dogs...or tamed guinea pigs.

"Lau, if you wish to keep your hands, take them off my nephew," Madam Red warns him with a polite smile which sends shivers up Mey-Rin's spine. The way the red woman said was very sadistic and she made it sound amusing.
"You wound me, Madam Red," Lau smiles but removes his hand from Ciel's head either way. "I would never hurt him in his own home."

"Are you saying that you would do it if you were someplace else? Careful, you're on thin ice now, Lau," she smirks but Mey-Rin knows that vicious look in her eyes. Madam Red loves Ciel dearly, like a son. And it's clear she'll do just about anything to protect him, even if it means cutting Lau's hands off...or worse.

Both Mey-Rin and Sebastian watch Ciel getting up from his seat and walking out of the library.

"Master, is everything all right?" Sebastian asks.

"Yes," Ciel responds without turning around to look at him, "I just need some time for myself."

"Today's dessert is a deep-dish pie prepared with fresh apples and raisins," Sebastian says, "It will be ready soon. Would you like to eat it with your guests?"

"Bring it to my study," Ciel says bitterly, "I'm done here. I can't think straight with these two bickering amongst themselves."

Sebastian smiles and bows his head. "Certainly, my lord."

He leaves while Lau and Madam Red are still arguing passive-aggressively, and shuts the door behind him. This gives the opportunity for Mey-Rin to ask the young lord a few questions. She walks over to Sebastian and asks if she can return to her cleaning duties. He nods in approval and she walks out of the library.

Following Ciel to his study, she sees Baldroy and Finnian still chasing the rats but ignores them.

She finally reaches the study and is able to stop the young master from closing the door in her face.

"Excuse me, young master. May I have a word with you?"

"I'm here for peace and quiet, Mey-Rin, don't disturb me," he says sternly.

"I just want to ask you a question," she says.

"You can ask me now or later."

"I think it would be best if we spoke now and in private," she insists.

Ciel stares at her blankly. After a moment, he sighs in defeat and opens the door for her, stepping aside. Once she enters the study, he shuts the door. "What is it that you want, Mey-Rin?"

"...I wish to talk about Lord Damiano," she says, "I want to know what happened."

Ciel sighs. "Mey-Rin, you've already been through enough," he says, "I've dropped the subject weeks ago. I don't need you or Madam Red bringing it up every now and then. We all know what happened. What's done is done. It's over. So I suggest you get back to your cleaning duties and forget about the murder -.

"Did Sebastian kill him?" she suddenly asks.

"That's none of your business," he says sternly. Mey-Rin can tell by the twitching of his brow that he's getting annoyed and impatient with her.

She doesn't mean to be disrespectful towards him but she doesn't like having to think wrongful of the
people in this how and she certainly doesn’t want to think wrongfully of the young lord Ciel Phantomhive. "I just want to know the truth."

Ciel scoffs and shakes his head. "Oh, I highly doubt that. The truth of certain things can be too scary to handle -.

"I can handle the truth, my lord," she says.

"No you can't," he says, folding his arms over his chest.

"...My lord, I've been serving you for two to three years now," she says, "I've been nothing but loyal to you after everything you've done for me. I vowed to protect Phantomhive Manor. And I've done it by any means necessary. The least you could do is tell me the truth. Did you tell Sebastian to kill Lord Damian?"

"People that learn the truth end up dead," he says darkly.

"It's a threat?" she asks, her voice nearly squeaking in concern. She has never been threatened by the young lord before. If he is, this is her first.

"No. It's a warning. And the only warning you're going to get. Drop it. That's an order," he says harshly. She knows he's being serious this time.

Mey-Rin sighs and hangs her head in shame. "Yes, my lord. I'm sorry if I angered you."

Ciel's angry expression then softens. He sighs before suddenly drops to the floor unconscious. Mey-Rin gasps in shock upon seeing a dart on his neck.

"Master!" she screams. She then feels a sting in her neck. Her mind and body become fuzzy, heavy and tired. She drops to the floor just like Ciel did and everything goes black.

Sebastian arrives at the study door with a tray in his hand containing the pie he prepared for Ciel and the guests, as well as some afternoon tea. He knocks on the door and announces himself. However, there's no response.

He frowns at the silence so he opens the door and lets himself in. Ciel Phantomhive is not his study. The room is completely torn apart with books and papers scattered on the floor and chair knocked over. Even the windows are open.

Sebastian's eyes widen. Someone has been here and attacked the master. That's not the only thing. When he looks down at his feet, he sees Mey-Rin's glasses on the green carpet floor. She was here too. Whoever took the young lord, they took Mey-Rin with him. Probably to not have her warn the others.

Sebastian clicks his tongue in disappointment. "This is terrible. The refreshments will be wasted now."

Ciel wakes up, his eyes and body feeling heavy. His head feels like it's spinning around and around. His eyes can only see blur. He tries to mouth but finds his wrists bound together behind his back and his ankles tied as well. He tugs against his bounds but can't find a way to release. He hears footsteps approaching him. It's him. The rats are here.
He sees his brother again, leaning his face close to him. As always, his eyes are blank and blood spills from his mouth. "Get out," he snarls.

Ciel blinks a couple of times. His brother evaporates into thin air on the first blink. His vision remains blurry though. He continues blinking until his vision becomes clear again. He finds himself tied up in a parlour, sitting on the purple-carpeted floor. He hears a low moan and looks over his shoulder to see Mey-Rin tied up behind him. "Mey-Rin." He uses whatever movement to shake her, trying to wake her up. She's unconscious. Out cold. Their wrists are bound by leather straps and their ankles are cuffed with metal shackles. It seems that the kidnappers don't want any witnesses so they decided to take Mey-Rin with them. *Shit.*

The door opens and three men enter the parlour, one of them being Azzurro Vanel. *It had to be you, fucking bastard.*

"So, you are awake," Azzurro smirks. "Good." He lights up a cigar and begins to smoke. "To be honest, I'm finally glad to have the police of England's underworld in my grasp. One of the most villainous nobles who has done the royal families the dirty work for generations. The Queen's guard dog. He who disposes of everyone who disagrees with her. Not so high and might now, are you?"

Ciel glares at the Italian man. He knew that it would be him but he didn't know when he would strike. *You better wake the hell up, Mey-Rin,* he thinks, *I need you right now.* "You shame your family, Azzurro Vanel."

Azzurro simply chuckles in amusement while puffing up his cigarette. "Do you know how hard it is for the Italian mafia here in England? We can barely get a job because of our roots, not to mention that people like you toss Indians and foreigners into the streets like rats after using them. You Englishmen have nothing but tea on the brain. It's difficult to penetrate those small minds of yours. We have to think outside the box to make money. So we made a drug trade with a few of the Chinamen."

Ciel knows. Lau has been reporting him about a few other Chinese men smuggling opium drugs from across the ocean and selling them to other people in secret.

"The pharmacy act of 1868, the opium is a restricted substance," Ciel says, knowing most of the laws of England by heart, "It is the Queen's decree. And I will eliminate those drugs and the vermin who sell them."

"I'd watch your tongue if I were you, little lord," Azzurro warns as he points his gun at Mey-Rin's head, "You're not the only one being held captive. You know this is why I hate all you English folk. The Queen this. The Queen that. You act like this woman is your own mother." He grabs him by the jaw. "You line your pockets, pretending that you're better than the rest of us. But in the end, we're no different from each other. Why can't we get along?"

"Sorry, I don't associate with disgusting vermin like you."

Azzurro angrily cocks his gun at the young lord. "You little brat, don't underestimate me! My men are already waiting at your estate! Where's the key?"

Ciel stares blankly, with no emotion in his voice whatsoever. "I've left orders about your key. If I don't come back, my servants will make sure the authorities get it." Azzurro starts growling in anger. This only makes Ciel smirk amusingly. "I'm sorry. I have no interest in getting along with someone like you -."

Azzurro Vanel points the gun at Mey-Rin again. "Spit it out or I shoot her and have my men kill the
rest of your servants one by one."

Ciel smirks and tilts his head to the side. "Oh, I think they'll be all right. But you better hope that your lapdogs know how to fetch."

"They might. But she won't make it," Azzurro pulls the trigger. The gun fires and the bullet hits the wall, startling Mey-Rin awake. It was a warning shot.

She looks around in confusion as she struggles to get out of the straps but to no avail. She then notices Azzurro and glares at the man. "You hurt the young master and I will fucking kill you," she snarls threateningly, her voice shaking in anger.

Azzurro simply laughs at her threat, seeing it meaningless. "She's a funny young thing, isn't she, little lord? Making threats to a mafia leader. I'm guessing this is why you hired her? And a pretty thing she is too. She shouldn't be making threats she can't fulfill."

"Oh trust me, Vanel. It wasn't a threat," Ciel says. He knows Mey-Rin more than anyone else, "It's a promise."

Azzurro slaps Ciel in the face and Mey-Rin gasps. The mafia leader picks up his phone and calls his comrades, giving them the orders to kill the servants of the estate.

While he's distracted, Ciel starts plotting a way to escape but he needs Mey-Rin to help him. Sebastian will come for him soon. But he needs Mey-Rin to lure some of the men away, not to mention her as well. He doesn't want her here when Sebastian arrives.

"How many men do you see?" he asks in a whisper, not turning his head to look at Mey-Rin. If Azzurro sees them talking, they're done for.

Mey-Rin looks around the room and counts the number of men with guns. "Seven men. Each with two guns. That makes fourteen guns. Three exit doors. Two windows. A dome-shaped ceiling made of glass" She then spots something under a mahogany table against the wall. "And there's a ventilation hatch on the wall under the commode. Big enough to only fit someone of skin and bones."

"Are you skin and bones?" he asks.

"I've lost a lot of weight these days so yes," she says.

"Do you have your guns?"

"No. They're at home," she sighs. She should have been more vigilant and be ready for anything. She didn't think they'd be attacked by the Italian mafia. However, she does have something that can help get them out of these straps. "But I have a knife."

"Where is it?"

"It's in my boot," she says. She keeps knives in certain places of her clothing where no one can see it. And her skirt is long enough to cover her feet. "I'll have to take it off to get the knife out."

"Do it but don't let them see you," he instructs, "Use the knife to cut the straps and get out through the ventilation vent."

"Me? What about you?"
"I'll distract Vanel," he says, "Free yourself, snatch a gun and shoot your way out of this place. When you're out, go to the authorities and notify them of the kidnapping."

"I can't just leave you -.

"That is an order," he hisses, gritting his teeth so Azzurro Vanel won't see his mouth moving.

Mey-Rin sighs in defeat. "You're lucky my feet are small enough to fit through the shackles," she mumbles as her right foot slips out of the boot where her knife is with ease and slowly squeezes it out of the shackle. For once, she's thankful of having small feet. She uses her foot to slide the boot towards her bound hands. Her fingers slowly reach for the knife in her boot. Once taken out, she turns it upright and starts slicing through the leather strap.

Sebastian walks around the hallway with the pie in his hand, wondering where the young master and Mey-Rin were taken. It's possible that Mey-Rin may be dead. However, he doesn't really care if Mey-Rin is dead or not. He only cares about the master's life. If he dies, then the contract they've made is no longer valid. In order to complete the contract, Ciel has to fulfill his goal and he can't do that if he's dead.

"Oh dear, this is most troublesome. Where could have the master been taken?" he asks to himself.

"Oi, Sebastian!" Baldroy is suddenly walking towards him with a cigarette in his mouth as always. One day that man is going to set the mansion on fire if he leaves the cigarettes near flammable objects. "Finny and I are trying to catch the rats but we need Mey-Rin's help. Have you seen her?"

Sebastian shakes his head. No one must know that she and the young master were taken. "No. I haven't. I asked her to help the young master and that's all."

"Oh well," Baldroy shrugs, "Oh, I almost forgot, there's a letter here I found at the entrance. It's addressed to the servants of the Phantomhive Manor. Don't know what it is though."

He gives Sebastian the letter.

Sebastian turns his head towards the window after hearing a small clicking sound. Outside the Phantomhive Manor, hidden within the trees, is a man sitting on one of the branches and aiming a rifle gun at him.

With that, he pushes Baldroy back as the man shoots. The bullet shatters through the window and hits the large red vase in the hallway, making the ceramic burst and water splatter on the wall.

"What the bloody hell was that!?" Baldroy shouts as he sits up from the floor and sees the broken window and vase. "Did someone just fucking shot at us!?"

"Yes, indeed," Sebastian says as he unfolds the letter, "I suggest you keep your voice down. We don't want to alert the others."

"What on earth is this about?" Baldroy asks as he stands up from the floor and picks up the cigarette that fell from his mouth.

Sebastian ignores his question and reads the letter that has very bad writing, possibly written by someone with a crooked hand:

*If you want the return of your Master and the girl, come to the Nova garden Bethnal Green as soon as possible.*
"If you don't come before sunset, we will slice the girl's throat and cut your Master's fingers one by one, and send them to this address."

"My goodness, what a dreadfully written letter."

"Let me see," Baldroy quickly snatches the letter from Sebastian's hand and reads it himself. "The Master? Girl!?" He then confronts Sebastian angrily. "The young master and Mey-Rin were taken!?"

Sebastian clamps a hand over his mouth as the words escape his mouth, not really caring if the cigarette is burning through the glove. He can get a new one late. "Keep your voice down," Sebastian says sternly. "The others don't know yet. If Madam Red finds out that his nephew was taken, there will surely be a panic and we don't want that, now do we?"

Baldroy smacks his hand away. "They should know! And what about Mey-Rin, they took her too, you know!"

Mey-Rin is probably dead, that's much he knows. And even if she is still alive, Sebastian will obviously prioritize Ciel's safety. He would only save Mey-Rin if the master commands it. But for now, he cannot promise Baldroy that Mey-Rin will be safe. He knows how much Baldroy adores Mey-Rin like a little sister and doesn't want anything bad to happen to her.

"I'll find a way to bring them home safe, I promise," he lies.

"What on earth is going on here?" Madam Red asks as she, Lau, Grell and Finnian appear in the hallway. They probably heard the commotion and arrived to see what the noise was.

"Sorry for the noise, my lady," Sebastian apologizes, "Mr Gibbons accidentally broke the window and flower base while trying to kill a rat. Isn't that right, Baldroy?"

Baldroy sighs in frustration. Madam Red should be the first one to know that his nephew is kidnapped. However, he decides to go along with it. If Sebastian says that he will bring Mey-Rin and the young lord back, he should be given the chance to do so. "Yeah, it was my mistake," he says.

Sebastian smiles gratefully. "Everyone, I have business to attend to." He gives the pie to Finnian. "Help Baldroy clean this mess up."

"Yes, sir," Finnian nods his head.

Sebastian then leaves Phantomhive Manor in search for his master.

It takes a few more minutes before Mey-Rin finally cuts off the straps from around her wrists. Ciel smirks at the sound of the straps snapping in half and lets out a cough to make sure the noise isn't heard. He starts moving his feet to camouflage the sound of Mey-Rin taking out her other foot from the shackles, now completely free and barefoot.

"Ready?" he asks.

"This is a mistake," she whispers, "I shouldn't leave your side."

"Remember why I had you hired you, Mey-Rin. Do as I say."

Mey-Rin nods. What other choice does she have?

She notices one of Azzurro Vanel's men watching her with a very interested look in his eyes. She
knows what's on his mind. Her vagina. She takes this as an advantage and she smiles at him as well as batting her eyelashes flirtatiously.

The man grins at her. One of his teeth has a golden plaque. He walks over to Mey-Rin and crouches next to her. Her hand grips the knife tightly, ready to strike.

"I bet I can make you very happy," the man says.

Mey-Rin smiles. "I'm sure you can."

She brings her knife up and slices the man's throat. Blood gushes out from the cut, some spraying onto her face. His body instantly drops dead to the floor.

The moment she grabs the gun and gets up from the floor, the men in the room (now 6 since the seventh one is dead by knife) starts taking out their guns. However, Mey-Rin pulls the dead body up to shield her and Ciel from the bullets. She starts shooting at the men. She kills two of them.

Azzurro instantly panics and shouts at his men, ordering to kill her. He sends one of his men out of the room to alert the others. He grabs the gun and shoots at Mey-Rin but the bullets only hit the body she's using as a shield and she keeps shooting back. What's worse is that she has an excellent aim. She has already killed four of his men.

Mey-Rin considers taking the young master with her but she's obligated to follow orders. She can't convince him even if she tries. Also, the vent isn't large enough for two people.

She runs to the other side of the room, still using the body as a shield. Once she's there, she drops to the floor, letting go of the body in the process, and slides through the vent.

Ciel smirks at Azzurro's anger. Azzurro responds by smacking the boy in the mouth with the gun.

"Your servant abandoned you!" he yells, grabbing him by the collar and shaking him.

"Actually, I told her to get the authorities," Ciel says. He smiles, blood leaking out of his mouth.

"Don't let her get away! Find her and kill her!" Azzurro commands his guards.

Ciel chuckles darkly. The eye under the black patch starts to glow a bright purple colour. ". . . You don't know who you're messing with...Sebastian, come get me. Now!"

Getting through the ventilation hatch, Mey-Rin ends up sliding into a library. She looks around. The wallpapers are red with paisley patterns, and lined with bookcases full of books. There's a lot of furniture around. Marble statues and marble plants everywhere. She could use either of them as a shield or a weapon. A bay window. Two doors. She looks out the window. Shit. They're on the second floor and the shrubs are too far for her to land on if she decides to jump the window.

She quickly runs as she hears the door burst open and hides behind a sofa as three armed men enter and begin shooting at her. She shoots back but hasn't been able to kill any of them. The bullets only managed to hit the walls and break a vase as well as a mirror behind it. Eight years of bad luck. And it came pretty quickly. Mey-Rin tries to shoot at them again, only to realize that she's run out of bullets. Shit.

Mey-Rin curls up on the floor and covers her head and neck with her hands to protect herself from the shooting, not that that will do any good. It's still possible for her to die if the bullets hit her in any other part of the body like the stomach or the chest where the heart is.
The men stop shooting all of the sudden, much to her surprise. She frowns. What happened? Did they run out of bullets? Readying her gun, she slowly lifts herself up from behind the sofa to take a peek. Standing in the middle of the library, surrounded by a pile of dead guards and his face and suit covered in blood, is the Phantomhive butler.

"Sebastian?"

"It's nice to see that you're still in one piece, Mey-Rin," he says. "Where's the master?"

"Vanel has him in his study," she informs him as she comes out of hiding completely. She ignores the fact that he's covered in blood nor does she ask how he killed the guards so quickly. All she cares about is saving Ciel from Azzurro Vanel. "He's going to kill him."

"Not if I can help it," he says confidently. "Now, get out of here and report to the authorities. I'll take care of this."

Ciel's life is in danger and he wants her to leave. Mey-Rin finally feels she's had enough of this. "You know what? No!" she snaps. She leans down and grabs two guns from one of the dead bodies. "What are you doing?" Sebastian asks.

"My job," she says.

"Remember the vow you made to the young master."

She loads the gun. "I know. But I made a different promise to myself."

"You might not like what you see. But if that's what you want." He takes out three kitchen knives from his pocket, which he used earlier since they're all covered in blood. What does he mean by I won't like what I'll see? What is he talking about?

Sebastian and Mey-Rin get ready to get in there and attack with everything we have. They quickly enter the room. Sebastian starts throwing knives at the guards and Mey-Rin starts shooting. He takes the left side and she takes the right, that way they can kill those bastards faster. Guards drop dead with each shooting and stabbing. Blood splatter, spray and ooze everywhere on the floors and wall. Mey-Rin even gets blood on her pinafore which is such a shame. She had it washed yesterday.

The two manage to kill all the guards in the room but where is Ciel? Vanel must have taken him out of the room.

"There will be more guards coming," Sebastian informs Mey-Rin. "You take care of them. I'll go get the master."

She nods in agreement, despite not wanting to. If something happens to the young lord, she will never forgive herself. However, Sebastian looks like he knows what he's doing. He has already killed these bastards in a very gruesome matter with just kitchen knives. So she lets him go get the master and she stays behind to kill the rest of the vermin.

Azzurro waits in the parlour, holding the young Phantomhive in a choke-hold while pressing the barrel of the gun to his head. His hand shakes as he hears the screaming of his bodyguards outside the parlour. He has eight men guarding the door. And they're all being killed. Who is doing this?
The last thing Azzurro hears of his guards after the screams is a sickening crack. Then silence.

"What is going on?"

"You're so fucked," Ciel says with a chuckle.

The door slowly creaks open. Azzurro prepares to shoot as one man steps into the parlour, completely drenched in blood and holding three bloody kitchen knives in his hand. The tall lean physique and black tailcoat are immediately recognizable. Sebastian Michaelis. The young lord's butler.

"Impossible," Azzurro mutters to himself. There's no way this one butler killed all of his men with just three knives. It's impossible.

"You're late," Ciel says.

"Forgive me, young master," he says, "I just ran into Mey-Rin. She was in quite the predicament."

"Is she safe?"

"I left her to take care the rest of the vermin."

Azzurro aims his gun at the butler. "You stay away from me or I shoot."

"I have come to retrieve my master, sir, so I'm afraid I can't do that," Sebastian says politely, only to get shot in the head. He drops to the floor dead. Ciel shouts angrily. Azzurro smacks him in the face just to shut him up.

"The Butler? Are you fucking kidding me!?" Azzurro bursts out laughing, "Out of all the people you could have sent to rescue you, you send this dandy bastard in a fancy tailcoat." Azzurro walks over to the butler's dead body and searches through his coat. He takes out what he has been looking for. The key to the storehouse. "Ha! Your butler had this all time. Now it's mine! You lose, Lord Phantomhive. I would kill you but then, what would be the fun in that." He grabs Ciel by the hair, pulling him harshly, and removes the eyepatch from his closed eye. "With a face like yours, we're bound to make a lot of money. We might even sell your organs. We'll be rich beyond our wildest dreams."

Ciel suddenly starts laughing darkly. The laugh is almost maddening. "You think this is over?"

"I've got the key to the storehouse and I killed your butler, so yes, I win."

"That's where you're wrong, Vanel. Sebastian, you know what needs to be done," he says.

Before Azzurro Vanel can ask what the hell Ciel is talking about, Sebastian is slowly getting up from the floor, like a puppet being pulled up by strings. There's blood still pouring through the bullet-hole in his forehead. But in an instant, the hole seals shut and coughs out the bloody bullet through his mouth.

He smirks before grabbing Azzurro by the neck, lifting him off from the ground. "Your men owe me a new tailcoat. They ruined it with their blood."

Azzurro kicks wildly and tries to get out of Sebastian's hold to no avail. "What are you!?" he screams in fear.

"As you've noticed, Sir Vanel, I'm simply one hell of a butler," Sebastian says while smiling evilly.
"You see, Azzurro Vanel," Ciel says confidently as he watches Azzurro's limbs twisting and breaking in sickening cracks with Sebastian having to touch him, "When parents died, I decided that I shouldn't simply hire an ordinary butler. I needed someone I can trust. Someone that can protect me and my home at all costs. Sebastian is that very butler I can trust. He is more than just a servant...But I can see you already know that."

Azzurro can't help but look at Sebastian. He is completely petrified by the butler's eyes. Glowing red. The devil's eyes. He is not human. "Mostro! Demone!"

"Enough. I grew tired of playing. Let's finish this nonsense," Ciel says viciously.

"Just say the words, young master," Sebastian says.

"...This is an order. Kill him now!" Ciel commands, his right eye glowing purple and a pentagram appearing.

Sebastian chuckles darkly, his voice becoming deeper and more demonic. "Yes, master."

The last heard of Azzurro Vanel is his blood-curdling scream.

Mey-Rin walks into the parlour after hearing the screams. She already finished killing the rest of the bodyguards before bolting her way to the parlour, hoping that she's not too late. However, those screams aren't Ciel's. They're Azzurro Vanel's.

The moment she bursts through the door, she sees the room completely shadowed in darkness with black feathers falling like snow and Sebastian holding Vanel by the neck. Ciel's supposedly missing eye is glowing purple with a pentagram in the middle. And Sebastian's eyes, they're glowing red. A tall dark mass stands behind Sebastian in the shape of a tall creature with curved horns.

Mey-Rin doesn't move nor does she say anything. She's frozen on spot in complete shock terror. The mafia leader's limbs are twisting and he's screaming in agony. What is Sebastian doing to him? He's killing him. And that mass behind him is not human.

Ciel then sees her standing there watching. "Mey-Rin!"

The moment her name is screamed out, Sebastian stops. The room becomes lit again and Sebastian drops Azzurro Vanel to the floor. Vanel is still alive, twitching and crying out in pain. Sebastian immediately turns around to look at her, his eyes still glowing red.

Mey-Rin gasps and aims the gun at him. He takes a step towards her, the black mass moving with him ~.

"Sebastian, stop!" Ciel commands and Sebastian does as told. He stays still in his spot but remains to stare at her with those blood-red eyes that show murderous intentions.

She doesn't shoot him though. He didn't attack her. Ciel didn't let him. He told Sebastian to stop. Why should she shoot him if he hasn't even attacked her? With that in mind, she lowers the gun but her eyes start filling up with tears.

She looks down and sees Azzurro Vanel dragging himself towards her with one arm and reaches out, grabbing the skirt of her pinafore.

"Help...me," he croaks.
Mey-Rin looks at Ciel before looking back at Azzurro Vanel and puts the end of the gun to his forehead.

"Sorry, but I made a vow," she says and pulls the trigger.

*Bang!* The bullet goes through Azzurro's forehead, splattering blood and brain matter on the ground, and he instantly drops dead. She was showing him a bit of mercy though. A bullet to the brain is quicker and less painful death compared to what Sebastian did to him. Her hands are now left shaking though she doesn't know if they're shaking from the adrenaline or terror. Probably both.

Mey-Rin takes out her knife and walks over to what the young lord is tied up. She notices Sebastian staring attentively and readying one of his kitchen knives. She tosses the knife aside, out of reach. She then kneels on the floor and unties Ciel from the straps. She wasn't planning on hurting the master with the knife. She was going to use it to cut the straps. But it seems that Sebastian no longer trusts her.

"Are you all right, my lord?" she asks, taking a step back from him. She then picks up the eye patch that's still lying on the carpet floor.

Ciel unravels the leather straps from him and tosses them away. "I'm fine," he says while brushing off the dust from his sleeves before getting up from the floor. "Sebastian!" he calls out, "Have you taken care of the rest?"

"Yes, my lord," he says with a nod, his red eyes turning brown again, "All of them are dead."

"Good," Ciel then turns his attention to Mey-Rin who is staring at him with wide eyes. He can see that she is clearly shaking.

"...Yes or no?" she asks, referring to Lord Damiano's murder and if Sebastian did it.

"...Yes," he responds, taking the eyepatch from her hands. "I trust you won't mention this to anyone."

Tears threaten to fill her eyes but takes deep breaths until she's finally calmed. "I won't. I promised to protect Phantomhive Manor. If it means protecting its secrets, then so be it."

His eye widens in surprise at her response. That's it? That's all? She's all right with this? "Help Sebastian clean this mess."

Mey-Rin nods, despite not favouring the actions Ciel and Sebastian are about to do right now. They should be informing all of this to Scotland Yard. She's sure the commissioner would understand why Sebastian killed all of these men and Azzurro Vanel. And she's most certain right now that he is responsible for the death of Lord Damian. The scariest thing is how Sebastian managed to kill these men in less than a few minutes which is impossible and inhuman. And she saw how his eyes turned bright red and his pupils turned cat-like, and how Ciel's supposedly missing eye turned bright purple with a pentagram symbol on it. Baldroy was right about Sebastian and the young lord. Who are these people?

Mey-Rin then hears a soft *click*. The clicking of a *gun*. She turns her head around and sees one of Vanel's men sitting up and aiming a gun at Ciel who is oblivious at the moment.

"No!" she screams, pushing Ciel aside. The gun fires and it hits Mey-Rin at the base of the neck.

Sebastian acts quickly, running towards the man who shot Mey-Rin and twists his head, snapping his neck in half.
Mey-Rin is now lying on the floor trying to breathe, the wound on her neck bleeding heavily. Ciel quickly sits up after being pushed down to the ground by her. He crawls to her side and presses his shaky hands to her neck to stop the bleeding, looking completely shocked at her actions.

"What were you thinking!?!" he snaps angrily at her. However, he sounds more horrified than angry.

"You," she chokes out. Ciel's hands can't stop the bleeding as more red liquid continue to leak between his fingers and pooling on the white marble floor. He looks down at her, his blue eye wide and teary though they did not shed. Mey-Rin simply smiles. "I made a vow to protect Phantomhive Manor...That includes everyone in it."

Ciel then looks up at Sebastian who is simply standing there watching. "Don't just fucking stand there! Help her! That's an order!" However, Sebastian says nothing nor does he do anything but stare in amazement. "I said that's an order! Help her now!"

"Thank you, master...for everything," she croaks, tears leaking from the outer corners of her eyes. She then turns her sight to the glass ceiling where she sees a shadow figure with bright yellow-green eyes staring down at the scene. Her vision becomes cloudy and dark. The last thing she sees before drawing her last breath are those pair of green eyes and Ciel shouting at Sebastian to help her.

Name: Mey-Rin Fan

Age: 19

Date of Birth: March 7, 1869

Date of Death: August 14, 1888

Cause of Death: Gunshot to the neck.
August 14, 1878

She used to live in a beaten down cabin in the far corners of Beijing where there would be a lot of merchants of different kinds and black smoke filling up the skies.

Mey-Rin was nine years old. She was eating dinner with her mother at the table. A simple a loaf a bread, a block of cheese and meat with little money her mother could afford. Then came the knock on the door. Mey-Rin and her mother looked at each other in confusion. Who could outside their home at this hour? It was almost ten at night.

"Mey, go to your room," her mother said as she got up from her seat.

"Yes, Mother," Mey-Rin nodded and went to her bedroom without complaining but she remaining watching through the cracks of the wooden walls. When her mother opened the door, there were two men standing outside their home, both of them dressed formerly and what looked like very fancy coats. One of them is from here in Beijing while the other looked like an Englishman with a brown beard and a bowl hat.

They both greeted each other kindly to Mey-Rin's mother.

"Good evening, Ma'am," the Englishman spoke first, "Allow me to introduce myself first. My name is Vernon Marsden and this is associate Huan Baozha. You must be Lian Fan."

"What do you want?" Lian asked. Even Mey-Rin knew that these two men wanted something from her. They wouldn't just come here for a late-night visit.

"Mind if we come in?" Mr Marsden asked.

"Not unless you tell me what this is all about," Lian said harshly. Mey-Rin knew why her mother didn't want to let two strangers in. Because of her. No one in Beijing knew Mey-Rin existed and Lian preferred to keep it that way until she was at least older. Lian feared for Mey-Rin's life because of her profession and didn't want anyone to know she gave birth to a girl.

"Mr Marsden is giving you an offer, Miss Fan," Mr Baozha explained. "Don't worry. You're not in trouble or anything. May you let us in?"

Mey-Rin watched as her mother reluctantly allowed them to enter the cabin. However, they were not allowed to explore the bedrooms, which was where Mey-Rin was hiding. They were limited to the
kitchen. Nowhere else. Lian offered the two gentlemen some tea. They kindly refused. The two men were looking around the cabin, looking at the tin buckets full of rainwater that dripped from the ceiling. Clearly, the roof needed repairing but Lian didn't have money to fix it. She barely had enough money for food and medicine for both her and Lian.

"May I ask what this is all about?" Lian finally said.

"Miss Fan," Mr Marsden spoke up once more, "We're here to give you a generous offer of 60,000 yuan. You know, to pay for food, medicine and repairs to the house you live in."

Both Mey-Rin and Lian knew that there was a catch to the generous offer Mr Marsden and Mr Baozha were giving. There was also a catch. And Mey-Rin didn't need to be in the outside world to know that. She learned it from her mother, getting rewarded with a sweet every time she was forced to take medicine. Mey-Rin knew they weren't just going to give her 60,000 yuan.

"60,000 yuans? In exchange for what?" Lian asked. However, Lian would regret asking that question. She shouldn't have let them in the first place.

"Your daughter," Mr Marsden said.

Mey-Rin's eyes widened when the Englishman said this. She didn't even let herself be seen when they entered the house nor did she make a noise. How could they possibly have known Lian had a daughter?

"I-I don't know what you mean," Lian stuttered nervously but she knew they've been caught.

"You see, Miss Fan" Mr Baozha continued, "My associate and I are part of a school. Schools for children with special talents. We searched around the city and asked many locals if they had any children with special talents worthy enough for our school. Unfortunately, we found very little with significant talent. That's when the butcher near your home told us that you had a little girl in your room throwing darts at the wall and they hit the same spot every time she threw it. The butcher saw it through one of your windows and decided to share this information with us."

Mey-Rin remembered now. She was the one who opened the window. It was a hot morning and the bedroom was stuffy so she decided to open the window for fresh air. She didn't think anyone would see her.

"Your daughter has great talent, Miss," Mr Marsden said, "We could use someone like her in our school."

"Listen, you two seem like decent men," Lian said, "but my daughter is not for sale."

"I understand but understand this as well," Mr Baozha said, "Would you rather have the information of your daughter's existence to go to the authorities, where they will remove your daughter from your home and possibly kill you? A woman with your type of profession and without a father, imagine what they will do to her."

"Are you threatening me?" Lian asked.

They were threatening her. Mey-Rin knew. They were threatening to tell the authorities about her. God knew what the authorities would have done to her and her mother if she didn't go with the two men. They were being generous into offering Lian money for Mey-Rin but they were nasty for threatening to call the authorities if Lian didn't accept the offer.

Mey-Rin didn't want to go with them. She didn't want to leave her mother. But they were threatening
"I'm not giving my daughter even if you threaten to fucking shoot me right here and now ."

That's when Mey-Rin stepped out of the bedroom, revealing her existence to the two men in the kitchen. She felt so small and vulnerable among them, being nine years old and all.

Mr Marsden smiled at her. Mey-Rin, however, didn't smile back. "Hello there. Aren't you just the most adorable-looking thing? You must be Miss Fan's daughter. What's your name?"

Mey-Rin was small in height, looking more like a six-year-old than a nine-year-old, with a small round face, brown narrow-round eyes, button-like nose and auburn hair. She didn't get her hair from her mother. Lian had brown-black hair. Mey-Rin got her hair from her father whom she never met or saw.

"Mey-Rin," she said. Lian tried very hard not to cry as Mey-Rin continued talking, "Mey-Rin Fan."

"Mey-Rin?" Mr Marsden said with a cooing tone, "That's a very pretty name and a very pretty girl you are. Mey-Rin, we were just talking to your mother about a school for children like you. A school for children with special talents. And we're offering her money so you can go to our school. You'll make friends there. You'll wear nice clothes. And your mother can use the money to buy food and medicine. And she'll probably buy a better house. Here."

Mr Marsden reached into his coat's pocket and took a heavy bag. He gave it to Mey-Rin, claiming that there was more where that came from and that they were happy to give it to her mother if she agreed to go to the school with them.

Mey-Rin looked at her mother, who was shaking her head. A clear sign telling her not to accept their offer. But Mey-Rin wasn't thinking about her mother's warning. She was thinking about her mother's safety. She knew that if she didn't go with them, they would kill her and probably take Mey-Rin either way.

"Mey, don't," Lian said, "We don't need that money. We'll find a way to get by."

But Mey-Rin took her mother's hand and gave her the bag of money. Lian kept shaking her head and told her not to go with them.

"I don't want you to die," Mey-Rin said, tears filling her eyes. She remained strong though. She didn't want to give the two men the satisfaction of seeing her cry. She was being separated from her mother but she only agreed to go with them for her mother's protection.

"Now that we have that settled, we must be off now," Mr Marsden said as he got up from his seat as well as his associate. "Don't worry, Miss Fan. Your daughter will be in good hands."

"Come along, Mey-Rin," Mr Baozha took Mey-Rin by the hand and led her out of the cabin.

The last thing she remembered of her mother Lian was her pleading for the two men not to take her away as she kneeled on the floor and cried.

1883

Fourteen-year-old Mey-Rin continued shooting at the wooden target 30 feet away in front of her with a sniper rifle her superiors gave her, hitting the same red mark every time without having to use a scope. Technically, her superiors called her The Girl with Eagle Eyes as her vision was a hundred
times better than any other. She was top of her class. Best shooter they've ever had. And that made
the other students useless. Failure was no exception at their so-called school, and Mey-Rin never
failed. Mr Marsden and Mr Baozha lied about one thing. They said she would make a lot of friends
at their school. She didn't. She made plenty of enemies, however. Most students envied her ability to
shoot from afar without having to use a scope, and she had a few that tried to kill her in her sleep,
with the result of Mey-Rin killing them either shooting, stabbing, strangling or snapping their neck.

She wasn't a blood-thirsty assassin but she was vicious to anyone who tried to mess with her. She did
all this for survival, nothing more.

Every time a client needed an assassin to execute someone, Mr Marsden would have Mey-Rin hired
as their assassin.

"She may be a girl, but she knows how to shoot seven men in the head with just one bullet," Mr
Marsden once said. It wasn't an exaggeration to have her hired. She did shoot seven men in the head
with one bullet. It was a trick not easy for other assassins to pull off. It took her awhile to practice it.

In truth, she despised her job as an assassin. She hated taking lives she didn't know. The only reason
she did it was to ensure her survival and that of her mother's. The only reward she received from her
superiors was that she was allowed to write a letter to her mother every month but she wasn't
allowed to reveal the location of their base nor was she allowed to mention the jobs and the name of
the victims.

She wanted to see her mother again but her superiors would never allow her to leave their base
unless it involved work.

"You're an assassin. That's the only thing you're good for. You were made for this. That's why you
were born with those inhuman eyes, the better to see your prey," Mr Marsden said to her once. The
only thing you're good for. That remained in her head for a very long time until a certain someone
interfered with her work two years later.

December 27, 1886

Seventeen-year-old Mey-Rin was on top of Big Ben clock at the north end of Palace Westminster
after arriving in London, England, where her next assigned target would be waiting for her.
According to Mr Marsden, a client wanted someone from their school to take care of a pest for them
and it was clear that Mr Marsden and Mr Baozha would recommend Mey-Rin Fan to them. With a
few arrangements, Mey-Rin was able to arrive in England and smuggled her weapons to the
country. She made sure no one saw her in England. She didn't want anyone here to know she
existed. She even wore black to camouflage herself in the shadows, even if her hair didn't help much.
She tied it in a bun so it wouldn't get in her face as there was a breeze and she didn't want her hair
blocking her vision.

She had to remove the scope from her sniper rifle. It was getting in the way. She didn't need a scope,
with her binocular acuity and all. She had her rifle aimed at the Parliament Square where her target
would arrive shortly.

The only thing you're good for.

The only thing she was good for was killing people. Or at least that's what she first thought.

The carriage with her target inside just arrived after an hour. She knew this because the client gave
them a sketch of what the carriage looked like, a black carriage with blood red curtains and a black
horse with a purple sheet draped over its back, and they described the target to be wearing an eye-patch.

Mey-Rin prepared her rifle and maintained on her knee, keeping a good aim at her target.

The carriage door opened and a tall slender man dressed in a black suit walked out. He had black shoulder-length hair and brown eyes like Mey-Rin’s, though they looked darker than hers. He seemed like a very handsome man, young, tall and lean. He was probably a butler, judging by the suit he was wearing and the way he stood aside holding the door after stepping out of the carriage. He wasn’t wearing an eye-patch so he wasn’t her target.

Someone else came out of the carriage after the butler did.

A small boy, probably ten or eleven, stepped out of the carriage wearing a royal blue cape with a top hat resting on his head and a wooden cane in his hand. He looked too young to be dressed so maturely. He had black hair, like the butler, and was wearing an eye-patch over one of his blue eyes.

Mey-Rin stopped cold when she saw the eye-patch over the young boy’s eye. The eye-patch... The boy is the target.

Her superiors said that she didn’t need to know who her targets were. In this case, she did need to know. She was aiming her rifle at a young boy. A boy. Who was he?

"I can’t do it," she muttered to herself, shaking her head in refusal and her eyes becoming watery and hot. She tried to pull the trigger to get it over with but she couldn’t. She couldn’t shoot him. "I can’t."

That’s the only thing you’re good for.

"I can’t kill him," she said.

"Of course you can’t," a voice said, "Why would you want to kill a child?"

Mey-Rin quickly turned around and saw the butler that was with the young boy down at the Parliament Square just a few minutes ago. Mey-Rin’s eyes went wide. How did he get up here? Better yet, how did he know she was here?

"Allow me to introduce myself," he said with a courteous bow, "My name is Sebastian Michaelis. The boy you’re preparing to shoot is my young master, Ciel Earl Phantomhive."

Mey-Rin quickly grabbed her gun and aimed it at the butler but he disappeared in an instant, like a ghost.

She looked around for any signs of him. "Who the hell are you?"

"Someone who is very interested in you," he said, "You have extraordinary eyes. I’d like to offer you a position of work."

"Don’t you think it’s wrong offering a job to someone who was trying to kill your master earlier?" she says.

"Indeed, it is. However..." When Mey-Rin turned around, she was suddenly grabbed by the neck and lifted up from the floor. Her rifle was knocked out her hand and she was now being suspended in the air, her life literally resting in the butler’s hands. She screamed but it only came out in a choking
fashion because her neck was held tightly. She grasped onto the butler's wrist, praying that he didn't let go. "It's also wrong killing you without taking advantage of your skills. You have good eyes. It would be a shame to see them pop out of your skull if I let you fall onto the pavement."

"No, please. Don't drop me," she begged. She never begged before in her life, probably because she never felt threatened until today.

She didn't want to die tonight. If she did, her mother would have died with her. That was one of the other rules her superiors gave her. If she ever died or tried to kill herself, they would kill her mother.

The man holding her life on the line (as well as her mother's) simply chuckled in amusement. "Luckily I have other plans for those eyes of yours. The job I'm offering you is simple. Room and board will be included, of course."

Sebastian brought her back onto the clock tower, practically tossing her to the ground like a rag doll. Mey-Rin coughed and gasped for air, and tried to crawl to her rifle, only to have it stepped on by Sebastian. She looked up to see the young lord's butler looking down at her with a polite smile. Was he mocking her?

"My master has been searching for someone like you to work for him," he said, "Took us a while to realize she was here above us without us noticing. This means that you're perfect."

"Perfect for what?" she asked.

"There are other options, my dear. You can either agree to work for us or I can simply eliminate you for attempting against my master's life," he said.

Tears filled her eyes again. If she decided to leave her profession, her superiors would kill her mother back in Hong Kong. If she didn't accept Sebastian Michaelis' offer, he would snap her neck like a twig or toss her off the clock tower. Either way, she was dead.

"I didn't know my target was a young boy," she said truthfully. "My superiors never mentioned name or age. They simply gave me the descriptions. I didn't know they were hiring me to kill a child. Otherwise, I would have tried to refuse. But even if I don't want to kill him, I don't have any choice."

"Is that so?"

"They'll kill my mother if I don't. One failure and they'll do away with her."

Sebastian knelt in front of her. "Is that right? Well, my dear, if you work for us, you don't have to worry about your superiors threatening your mother ever again."

Mey-Rin simply scoffed as if he were joking. "You don't know who these people are, do you? They'll kill you too."

"I highly doubt that."

"... What do I have to do?"

"The job I'm offering you needs little to no training at all. Just follow my instructions and I'm sure you'll do well. You'll obtain a room, food and water, and the safety of your mother guaranteed."

She thought Sebastian was deceiving her at first. It could have been a trick to kill her easier for trying to assassinate his master. If it were so, she would have already been dead. Sebastian could have simply tossed her off the clock tower. He had the strength and skill to do it. However, the offer
he was giving her was promising. It was certainly better than taking out innocent lives for the benefit of those nasty people she worked for.

When Mey-Rin was introduced to Ciel Phantomhive, he was waiting on a bench at the Parliament Square. When he saw Sebastian, he stood up and grabbed his cane.

"I've engaged a new housemaid," Sebastian said.

"It's about bloody time," Ciel said sternly and bitterly, "I was already getting bored waiting around." He looked at Mey-Rin with a frown. She now had bruises around her neck due to the hold Sebastian had on her. "Is this her?"

"Yes, she is," Sebastian responded.

"Interesting. I've never seen a Chinese girl with red hair before," Ciel says with a cocky smirk. Was he mocking her or something? If so, Mey-Rin would have been more than happy to tell him to fuck off. That wouldn't be polite though, now would it?

"Did you have to treat her so brutally?"

"She was about to shoot you, my lord," Sebastian explained.

"I'm sorry," Mey-Rin apologized. She didn't know that they hired her to kill an eleven-year-old boy. Her superiors wouldn't reveal details of her target. Luckily, she didn't pull the trigger.

The boy looked up and down at her, studying her presence. "What's your name?"

"You already know who I am if you've been searching -.

"Your real name," he said.

None of them knew her real name when they met. Her superiors dubbed her as the Eagle. But they wanted to know her real name. "Mey-Rin. My name is Mey-Rin Fan."

Ciel Phantomhive gave her the job of a housemaid at the Phantomhive Manor out of the city. It seemed like a shitty job but to her, it was everything. She wasn't hurting anyone. She had a real bed and food. She was living in an actual home rather than a facility where she was forced to slice throats of her mates that tried to kill her. And she met a good friend there. Baldroy Gibbons. An American war veteran from New Orleans, Louisiana. He had been working at the manor as a cook for over a year now. Mey-Rin was cautious about him over course since she didn't know anything about him. And his smoking made her cough a few times. It was a little irresponsible of him smoking in the kitchen while cooking but he didn't seem to care.

"So, you're the new maid," he said and shook hands with her. "Pleasure to meet you."

She nodded shyly. "Likewise. So...you're from war?"

"Yeah, I'm a war veteran but don't tell anyone. So, what are you? Daughter of a merchant? A runaway?"

"A sniper," she answered. Baldroy gave her a surprised look.

"You must be a good one if Lord Phantomhive hired you," Bard said with a chuckle, trying to make her feel better by being amusing.

However, her biggest concern was her mother though. It had been more than a month since she worked at the Phantomhive estate and didn't hear any news of her mother. She was getting worried,
scared and even angry at the fact that her mother was probably dead the young lord was lying to her. There were many restless nights. She couldn't sleep well. Every time she closed her eyes, she would picture her mother getting her throat slit or her stomach being gutted open with blood and intestines spilling out. She would curl up in bed and bite the pillow to stifle her cries of terror and sorrow.

She tried escaping the manor once, climbing out of the window and trying to make a run for it through the forest. However, she was caught by Sebastian. She was dragged back to the manor and brought to Ciel's study by force.

"You tried to escape," Ciel said in a monotonous tone, unimpressed or perhaps angry but trying not to show it. "I gave you a job, food and a room to sleep in. Yet you tried to escape my mansion. Why is that?"

She confronted the young lord, expressing how she felt lied to. "I've been working here for over a month and you still haven't confirmed my mother's safety!" she snapped at him. This was the only time she ever snapped at him.

"Miss Fan, I suggest you calm down," he said, "Or do I have to ask Sebastian to restrain you?"

"I'm leaving, young master," she said, "I appreciate what you did for me but I can't stay -.

"Sit down! Now!" he snapped at her.

Mey-Rin hesitated but did as told and sat down on an armchair opposite of the desk. Ciel called in Sebastian. The butler brought entered the library with a folder in his hands. The young lord Phantomhive knew that Mey-Rin wanted to leave. She wasn't seeing her share. And yes, it was unfair. But of course, Ciel never cared about what was fair or not.

He had Sebastian give her the folder, and he did. She had the folder in her hands. She didn't know what it was until Ciel told her to open it.

"You wish to know the details on your mother, go ahead. Take a look," he said.

Mey-Rin opened the folder. Inside the folder, there were large photographs of dismembered bodies and people stabbed or shot to death everywhere. She had to squint her eyes to look closer and that's when she realized the dismembered bodies were the students of the facility he used to live. The students. The teachers. The people that tried to kill her in her sleep or in the showers. They were all dead. There were two photographs of this. The third one was the facility itself, a building that looked like a penitentiary than a school for children with special gifts, burning down. The fire consumed it whole. The facility is gone as well as everyone in it.

"Everyone who has ever been in that facility is now dead," Ciel said, "Unfortunately, the two men that were running the facility Vernon Marsden and Huan Baozha disappeared during the chaos. They must have escaped. The authorities are still in search of them. Those people were involved in an illegal project that including kidnapping children with special abilities and training them to become weapons. Such as you."

It was true. Many of the students that were brought to the facility were mostly involuntary yet they still became ruthless assassins and enjoyed killing. It was like they were brainwashed. Mey-Rin went with them voluntarily, despite not wanting to.

"And my mother?" she asked. If Mr Marsden and Mr Baozha escaped, there was a good chance they would kill Lian Fan. Mey-Rin almost lost hope that moment.
“Your mother is alive,” he said. Ciel, that day, had a pitiful look in his eye. He truly felt sorry for Mey-Rin. How she was separated from her mother and how that was the only thing she thought about for many years. She never considered her own life as a valuable asset. “She’s safe. We had her relocated so your superiors won’t find her.”

"Where?" she wanted to know where Ciel sent her. She wanted to see her.

However, Ciel denied telling her this. "I can't tell you. You see, your superiors are hunting you down as we speak. Telling you the location of your mother's whereabouts will simply put her in danger. The only thing I can allow you to do is to write her a letter every week but they will be sent to her under my name and you're not allowed to look at the address written in the envelope."

The poor dear cried and the young lord gave her a handkerchief to dry out her tears. She has not seen her mother for many years and Ciel Phantomhive wouldn't even tell her where she is now. The only thing that he allowed her to do was to write letters (even in her language, if she wished) but she was never allowed to reveal where she was living now nor was she allowed to see where the letter would be sent. It's been that way for three years now.

For the next three years, she followed the young master's orders. She was his most loyal servant, aside from Sebastian. The young lord even gave her a pair of glasses as a gift. However, those glasses were made specifically to suppress her inhuman vision and was only allowed to take them off when necessary. Despite everything, she was grateful for the young master.

October 19, 1887

"Everyone, I'd like you to meet Finnian Bornemann. He shall be the new gardener of the Phantomhive household. Please help him feel welcomed," Sebastian said as he introduced Mey-Rin and Baldroy their new friend Finnian.

Poor Finnian. He was almost nothing but skin and bones when Mey-Rin and Baldroy met him. His eyes hollow and empty from light, his head clean-shaven, his clothing looking like he came from a mental hospital and his arms covered in puncture wounds. When he first came to the manor, he was scared of being in a new home.

"Welcome, Finnian. I'm Mey-Rin." Mey-Rin reached out to shake hands with him. He simply looked down at it strangely.

"Will I be able to go outside?" he asked.

"You can go outside as much as you like, rain or shine." Why else would Sebastian give him the job as a gardener? Finnian responded to this by putting his arms around Mey-Rin in a tight embrace, though not tight enough to snap her spine in half.

They became the Trio. The Three Musketeers. A team. Siblings. A family. They would chat a lot in the kitchen, even tell jokes to each other to laugh. They would sometimes play around the kitchen and the garden when no one was looking. They were even having a flour war one time when Baldroy accidentally flicked flour in Mey-Rin's face and she tossed a hand full of it back in his face, and when he tried to throw one back, she ducked and the flour hit Finnian. And it went on and on that way until the entire kitchen floor and table were covered in flour and the trio looked like snowmen. They were eventually caught by Sebastian...They accidentally hit Sebastian in the face with flour. The three thought they would get into trouble for it.

"You three are going to clean this up afterwards, aren't you?" he asked.
"Yes, sir," the three said.

Sebastian chuckled in amusement. "Carry on then," he said before walking away.

Sebastian knew. He knew how much this meant to them. They were like children needing a childhood. Seeing everything they went through, they needed a bit of fun every once in a while.

Mey-Rin, Finnian and Baldroy once got together around a campfire outside Phantomhive Manor (with the permission of the young lord, however), and they talked about their past. Finnian Bornemann turned out to be a subject of an experiment in some secret base in Germany which explained the German accent he had. He killed the scientists that were experimenting on him. Sebastian found him just like he found her and offered the same thing but Finnian didn't care about any of those things. He just wanted to go outside. Ciel Phantomhive gave him the name Finnian since he didn't have a real name, just the subject number the scientists gave.

Baldroy then mentioned how he was a veteran from the American Civil War. "I didn't have many friends in the war. Just comrades. They all died after we walked into a trap. I was the only survivor among them."

"My inmates were my only friends," Finnian said, "But the bad men killed them all."

"I didn't have any friends, just enemies," Mey-Rin said, "My mother kept me in isolation for my own protection. But the men that came to my home took me away. They would have killed my mother if I didn't go with them. They said I would make friends. But the other students tried to kill me for being a top student. What's worse is that I went voluntarily with them."

She didn't have much but she had something, and she gave it all up for that something. She gave up her freedom for her mother. And thanks to Sebastian, she gained her freedom back and much more. Sebastian got rid of the bad people, including Mr Marsden and Mr Baozha. Her mother was safe. She had a new home, a better job and new best friends that understood and loved her, and she returned the same favour to them. She had a family and a home now.

"Promise that we'll always be friends," Finnian practically begged. "That we'll always be together even when the master no longer has need of us."

"Oh Finny," Mey-Rin and Baldroy embraced him.

Always is almost the same word as forever, and forever is a very long tie. There is no such thing as forever and that's what humans have yet to understand. There is no such thing as forever. But Mey-Rin Fan knew this. There is no forever. She only made this promise to Finnian because he didn't have anything else. No family. No other friends. He didn't have a home until this day. And making that promise to always be together was important to him, even when she knew it would only last until one of them dies.

July 29, 1888

When she saw the young lord thrashing and crying out, she took action and tried to wake the young lord by shaking him.

"It's just a nightmare, young lord."

Ciel sat up from his bed, opening his one blue eye. When he saw Mey-Rin standing next to his bed, he quickly pushed her away harshly, clearly startled by her unexpected presence.
"Forgive me, my lord."

"What are you doing in here?" he snapped at her sternly.

"I, um, you were screaming in your sleep," she said meekly.

She cared more about Ciel Phantomhive's well-being than the fact that he pushed her and snapped at her.

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**August 14, 1888**

"No!" she screamed, pushing Ciel aside. Mey-Rin was shot in the neck and lost a lot of blood to the point where she should be dead.

Ciel quickly sat up after being pushed down to the ground by her. He crawled to her side and pressed his hands to her neck to stop the bleeding. For once, he actually tried to help her. After seeing her take a bullet for him, something emerged from him. That was the moment he woke up.

"What were you thinking!?!" he snapped angrily at her. However, he sounded more horrified than angry.

"You," she choked out. Ciel's hands couldn't stop the bleeding as more red liquid continue to leak between his fingers and pooling on the white marble floor. He looks down at her, his blue eye wide and teary though they did not shed. Mey-Rin simply smiles. "I made a vow to protect Phantomhive Manor...That includes everyone in it."

She was willing to die for him, no matter what. Despite not being allowed to have any type of communication with her mother aside from a letter, she was willing to die for him. Sebastian could have taken the bullet, knowing that he can't die. Mey-Rin, however, took the bullet, knowing that she could die. She didn't care. She only cared about the young lord's life. A girl who had a mother to think yet she gave her life for someone else.

**Interesting, is it not? You would rarely find mortals like her willing to sacrifice everything for someone else, whether its a mother or a young boy she barely knew for three years. When you do find someone like that, they either end up dead or losing themselves in darkness.**

Why should she be allowed to die? She hasn't done anything wrong. She only followed orders and killed to survive. She gave up everything for someone she loved. She acted like an older sister towards Finnian Bormann. She cared for the people of the Phantomhive household and vowed to protect it with her life. And she kept that promise by taking a bullet for a young boy she only knew for three years.

There's already too much evil in this world. Letting one good soul live wouldn't do much harm, now would it?

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Mey-Rin sits up gasping for air and her eyes wide open. She is alive and sitting on a hospital bed. Standing next to her bed is none other than Dr Angelina Dalles, wearing a red-coloured doctor's robe.

Madam Red gasps in shock upon seeing Mey-Rin abruptly sit up from her bed.

"Oh my God! You're awake!"
Mey-Rin looked at her surroundings. There were other hospital beds in the large room organized in rows, some with patients and some empty. How did she get here? Where are Ciel and Sebastian? And how is she still alive?
That Maid Who Lives

Chapter Notes

Mey-Rin is back from the dead but now has to face a new problem. She knows Ciel Phantomhive's secret. She saw what she's not supposed to see and now her life will never be the same again.

She was supposed to be dead. Yet, she's now sitting on the hospital bed, alive and practically scared the shit out of Madam Red.

Mey-Rin opens her mouth to speak but no sound or words seem to come out of her mouth. And her throat hurts. She touches her throat, only to realize that she has bandages around it. Did I truly lose my voice? She hears Madam Red call out to Grell Sutcliff, ordering him to notify Ciel and Sebastian that she is awake. At least she knows that Ciel and Sebastian are safe.

Madam Red sits down on the edge of the hospital bed and puts her arms around Mey-Rin, much to the servant girl's surprise. Why is she hugging me? "Thank goodness you're all right," she says. Mey-Rin frowns at her in confusion. "You were in a coma for an entire week. We lost you a couple of times but we were able to save you."

Mey-Rin's eyes widen upon hearing this. I was asleep for a week?

Grell returns, with Ciel Phantomhive and Sebastian Michaelis following behind them. Grell smiles kindly at her. She smiles back.

How long have they been here? Mey-Rin asks herself. Sebastian smiles at her with glad. However, Ciel doesn't smile at her. He looks rather upset. She remembers him leaning over her, trying to stop the bleeding and yelling at Sebastian to help her. Sebastian probably brought her here under Ciel's orders.

"What were you thinking?" he asks her sternly, his gloved hand grasping the walking stick firmly. She wishes she can speak so she can ask why the young master is so angry with her. She was only doing what he hired her for. All she can do is point a finger at him, silently stating that she was thinking of his safety. "What you did was foolish."

"Now Ciel, don't be so harsh on her," Madam Red says, "She just woke up from a coma. Snapping at her is unnecessary. And as a doctor, I highly forbid yelling in a hospital. You'll scare the rest of my patients. Besides, you should be more thankful that she saved your life."

Mey-Rin looks at Ciel in complete shock though he tries not to look at her in return. Did he tell his aunt about Azzurro Vanel kidnapping them both and threatening to kill Ciel?

"Doubt she even remembers what happened that day," he lies.

"You do remember what happened that day, don't you dear?" Madam Red asks Mey-Rin, putting a hand on her shoulder.

Mey-Rin takes consideration before answering. She remembers a lot of things before getting shot. Ciel's supposedly missing eye glowing purple. Sebastian killing Azzurro Vanel while his eyes
glowed red. Black feathers fell like snow and turned into ash as soon as they touch the floor. The room fell into darkness, making everything ominous. And the look Sebastian had in his eyes when he caught Mey-Rin watching. It was a murderous look. And he looked like he was going to kill if it weren't Ciel telling him to stop. She remembers it all but is she willing to betray Ciel's trust by telling his aunt about what happened that day (even if she wrote it down) after Ciel spared her life and she saved his?

Mey-Rin shakes her head. Even if she can't speak at the moment, she hopes Madam Red will fall for her lie. She'll try to act like the stupid amnesiac, like nothing happened that day. She would only remember getting shot and nothing before that.

Madam Red gives Mey-Rin a pitiful look. "Well, um, you were accompanying Ciel to the city without telling us when you two were attacked by assailants. They shot Ciel and you jumped in front of him to take the bullet. Not saying that I blame you. Ciel is always doing things without telling me." She says this while giving Ciel a stern look to which he responds with an eye roll.

He lied after all, and to his own aunt. If she looks at Ciel in any way that Madam Red will consider to be strange, she would know Ciel lied to her face and they would both be in trouble. For this reason, Mey-Rin decides not to look Ciel.

Madam Red holds Mey-Rin's hand and smiles at her gratefully. "Thank you for what you did for my nephew."

Mey-Rin smiles softly and nods. She would do it again too. After all, he is still a young boy.

"Mey-Rin!"

She looks over her shoulder to see Baldroy and Finnian running right towards her at full speed with their arms spread open. She grins excitedly, getting up on her knees and welcoming them with open arms. The trio hug each other, with Finnian bawling profusely.

"We were so worried about you!" he cries.

"You scared the shit out of us!" Baldroy is crying as well. He kisses her head.

She wishes to tell Finnian and Baldroy that she's all right, that everything is okay and that she's alive and well. If only she can speak. But Madam Red already told her that she wouldn't be able to speak for an entire week. Despite not being able to speak, she's glad to be alive and embraced by her two brothers.

However, looking at Sebastian, she's now concerned. Would Sebastian hurt Baldroy and Finnian now after what she saw? Would the young master order him to kill them? Will her two brothers be threatened? What will happen once they leave the hospital? What will the young master do to make sure she remains quiet?

Ciel is lying on the bench after after sitting up straight for days, waiting for Mey-Rin to wake up. He lies on his side, using his cape as a blanket to keep warm. His eye is closed and his breathing soft but shallow.

He jolts awake, startled when feeling his head being lifted up. He sees that it is only Sebastian.

The demon butler gives him a smile, holding one of his pillows. "Forgive me, my lord. I thought I'd bring you a pillow for your comfort."
Ciel nods and takes the pillow from him. He suddenly sees Undertaker walking down the hall, pushing a metal cart containing a body. The mortician stops when seeing the young lord and grins.

"Well, if it isn't Lord Phantomhive. What brings you here, eh?"

The boy sighs and sits up, rubbing his sore back. The bench is definitely not a comfortable place to sleep on. "I'm here because my maid was shot in the neck."

Undertaker's grin widens. "Oh? Do you need me to fit her for one of me coffins?"

He shakes his head. "That won't be necessary. She's alive and well. She just needs rest."

"Oh she lives? She talks and breathes and functions as a human being once more?"

He frowns at the mortician. "The talking part is still at works but the rest of her is all right."

"Hehehe. Very well, my lord. See you soon," Undertaker tips his hat and continues away with the cart.

Ciel finds his invasive questions strange. *What was that all about?*

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Madam Red had Mey-Rin stay at the hospital for another night to make sure she's physically well before making the decision to leave. Not being able to eat any solids, Madam Red had Grell feed Mey-Rin soup and drink only water.

However, she doesn't like how the soup tastes so she refuses to eat it.

"Oh come now, Mey-Rin," Grell keeps insisting. "I'm sure the soup doesn't taste all bad." He tries the soup for himself, only to make a disgusted expression and gags. He grabs a napkin and tries to scrape off the bad taste from his tongue. "Oh no, you're right. This is most dreadful. Who on Earth made this!? I should probably kill the cook for making such horrible food."

Mey-Rin smiles as a response. She would laugh if it weren't for the fact that it hurts when she does. *So that's why I'm not allowed to talk.* Grell was right though. The food in the hospitals are terrible.

And then hospitals get a bad reputation for having horrible food and for good reason. They have horrible cooks. Do they even care about their patients when it comes to their meals?

Mey-Rin leaves the hospital the next morning...in a wheelchair of course. She can still walk. However, due to her health, Madam Red wouldn't recommend her to stand on her feet just yet.

"Master, I think we should talk about what should be done with Mey-Rin," Sebastian whispers to Ciel once they leave the hospital.

"What do you think should be done about Mey-Rin?" the boy says in his usual monotonous tone.

"She knows too much -."

"She doesn't remember anything."

"She's lying," Sebastian says, "I saw it in her eyes. She knows what she saw."

Ciel lets out a sigh. "Then we'll have to make sure she doesn't say a word to anyone."

"How do you plan to do that, Master?"
Ciel watches Finnian pushing the wheelchair fast with Mey-Rin extending her arms to the side, pretending to fly. Finnian then turns the wheelchair around and does the same process. Mey-Rin looks like she's laughing from the way she's smiling and opening her mouth in a silent scream. She's enjoying herself. Enjoying the sunlight. Happy to be alive. Happy that Ciel is alive.

Ciel lets out the tiniest of smiles. She saved his life. He has never had anyone do that for him before. Sebastian could have done it without a problem. He cannot die. But Mey-Rin knew she was going to die if she took the bullet for him. She didn't care. She simply did it. And Ciel knows that he should be more than grateful about it.

But Sebastian is right. She knows too much. She saw everything. And it needs to be dealt with immediately before shit goes to hell more than it already did. He doubts killing her will be the best solution.

"I'll have a talk with her," he says. A real talk.

"Wouldn't it be simpler to do away with her or are you being sentimental?" Sebastian asks with a smirk.

Normally, Ciel would have ordered Sebastian to kill those who know their secret. Azzurro Vanel was one of those people. However, the revelation to Vanel was on purpose. To Mey-Rin, it was unintentional. She just walked in unexpected. Not everything can be solved by killing though.

"Neither," Ciel says, "I just find my solutions a lot more cleaner than yours. Besides, it would be wrong to kill someone who just saved my life."

"I will have to agree with you on that, Master."

Ciel scoffs at that last sentence. He knows very well when Sebastian is lying.

Mey-Rin hasn't been able to eat well these days. Madam Red has made it clear that Mey-Rin shouldn't any solids for a week. She's only allowed to eat soups and drink water. But she's having a hard time to even keep that down her throat without it hurting. The soup burns down her throat and ever the cold water burns. What's worse is that the soups barely have any flavour. Every time she eats, it's like her taste buds have died out and can only taste very small hints of saltiness and sweetness in Baldroy's soups. She can barely even eat the ones Sebastian makes for her. Not only that. No matter what she eats, she still feels slightly empty. Hollow, even. And it's frustrating. She can only hope that she can get better. Maybe the whole thing is just until she recovers.

She's also getting tired of staying in bed for long periods of time. Madam Red told Ciel that Mey-Rin needs to stay in bed for the entire week and Mey-Rin is forced to follow his instructions with his usual "That's an order!" phrase. She sometimes hates it but she knows that his instructions are well-meaning. But she really wants to go outside for once. Finnian and Baldroy would take turns watching over her with the two making conversation she can't respond to.

At nights, she has nightmares. Nightmares of Sebastian killing Azzurro Vanel. Nightmares of her being grabbed by the throat, either being strangled or tossed off the clock tower if London like he said he would the first time they met. Nightmares of her sinking into murky waters and failing to swim back up the surface. Drowning. It's unbearable.

It has already been a week since she got out of the hospital. She's able to speak again but her voice would come out in squeaks and croaks whenever she spoke. Despite her recover, the young master still won't let her out of bed until the next day. How inconvenient and with so many things to do
around the house. Ciel has Grell cleaning the house for the moment but he's just as bad as her, breaking China and crashing into things. He's probably worse than her. She misses cleaning the house. It made things seem less boring. If she has to stay another day in bed, she is sure to go mad.

One morning, she is sitting on her bed in her nightgown with her auburn hair loose in waves. She's simply sitting there reading Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* when she hears a knock on the door. She snaps the book shut and puts it down on her nightstand.

"Come in," she says, expecting it to be either Baldroy or Finnian. She wouldn't be surprised if it was Grell. However, her heart sinks when she sees Sebastian entering her bedroom.

"The young master would like to have a word with you, Mey-Rin," he says.

"I'm not properly dressed," she says. Judging by the stern look he's giving her, he doesn't seem to care that she's not wearing a corset.

"Do you think you can walk on your own?" he asks.

Mey-Rin nods before grabbing a brown shawl from the nightstand drawer and wrapping it over shoulders to avoid revealing herself despite being small chested. She then gets out of bed and follows Sebastian out the door.

The moment she leaves the safety of her bedroom, she immediately feels uneasy. Exposed. Unsafe. A chill ran down her back as Sebastian leads her to the study where the young master wants to meet with her. She doesn't know who to fear most. Sebastian or the young master. Sebastian may be capable of murder but Ciel is the only who gives the order. So she fears more for the young master if he decides to give the order to Sebastian.

The silence in the corridors is broken by Baldroy and Finnian yelling at Grell.

"Grell, stop setting the curtains in fire!" That's Baldroy.

"I am so sorry!" That's Grell.

"Someone get some water!" And that's definitely Finnian.

Sebastian lets out a deep sigh and pinches the bridge of his nose. Once at the study door, Sebastian leaves Mey-Rin there.

"Go ahead," he says, "There's a small issue that needs attending."

If he's referring to the curtains Grell set fire to then yes, perhaps he should... before Grell ends up burning the mansion down.

"Why are you dressed like that?" he asks.

"Sebastian says you wanted to speak with me urgently," she says.

"Not *that* urgent," he says before pointing at one of the armchairs. "Have a seat. You're already here."

Mey-Rin nods before sitting down on the armchair as told. This is the first time the young lord wanted to speak with her alone. It probably has to do with Azzurro Vanel. She's sure of it.

"The first thing I want to do is express my gratitude for what you did for me," he says, "I told you to stay out of it yet you went back for me. Pushing me down and taking a bullet for me was the
stupidest thing you've ever done. But still, thank you."

She smiles softly. "...You've been good to me, young master. Despite my recklessness, you still let me keep my job. I made a vow and I'm willing to keep my vow." Despite Sebastian threatening to throw her off the clock tower the night they met, he and the young lord were still kind to her. They only asked for her loyalty and nothing more. She didn't ask for anything else in return but the safety of her mother. They have been good to her so far. But now, there's no telling if everything will change with her little discovery.

Ciel nods in agreement. "Another thing I want to talk about is -.

"Azzurro Vanel," she says. The young earl simply stares at her. "I know, my lord. I'm sorry. I should have listened to you in the first place but I didn't."

"You already saw what Sebastian can do," he says. She saw what Sebastian can do. She saw how the man's body twisting in ways that would make you cringe. She saw how Sebastian's brown eyes turned blood red. She saw the pentagram in Ciel's right eye that was supposedly missing. She saw it all. The question is, what did she see? "What if I tell you it was all in your head?"

Mey-Rin shakes her head in denial. "I was scared. Terrified, even. But I know what I saw. I wish I could have unseen it." She then asks him the question she's been avoiding to ask. 'Am I going to die?' The question should have been Is Sebastian going to kill me? But Ciel seems to have gotten the message quickly.

"No. No, you're not. But I do advise for you not to mention any of this to anyone," he says, "Not to Finnian. Not to Baldroy. Not to Tanaka. Don't even mention it to my aunt. I don't want her to get worried."

She will be forced to keep secrets from the people she trusts most. The people she loves the most. That's going to be the worse part of her life now.

"My lord, I hope you don't mind me asking but...what is he?" she asks, referring to Sebastian. She knows that he's not human but wants to know what exactly is he. Is he some kind of monster? A devil?

Ciel sighs and shakes his head. "It's better off you not knowing what Sebastian is. Trust me."

Perhaps the young lord is right. Perhaps it's better off not knowing what Sebastian is. But she can't help but feel like she should know. She doesn't know if Sebastian is dangerous or not. What if he is? What if Ciel Phantomhive is in danger because of Sebastian Michaelis?

"What happens if I do tell?" she asks. That's a stupid question with a very easy answer.

"I only have two options," he says, "Either have Sebastian kill you or fire you."

Mey-Rin continues shaking her head. No, not fired. Anything but that. "If I have to choose between death and getting fired, I rather choose death." Ciel's eye widen in surprise at her response. "Young lord. This is my home. Phantomhive Manor and everyone in it are everything to me. Even if I go home to my mother, what will I have? A constant reminder of what I will no longer have and the thought of my superiors pursuing me. They'd kill her and I will have nothing." In truth, she's too afraid to see her mother. She doesn't know what her mother looks like now or how she will be received if she ever saw her again. The unknown terrified her more than knowing.

"So you're saying that if you do happen to tell, you prefer death?"
She nods. "Yes, my lord. That's exactly what I'm saying."

"Mey-Rin, I have to remind you that you almost died last week and you're acting like you want to die a second time."

Tears start falling down her face. "I don't want to die, my lord. But I can't live like that." Being fired would mean that her life and that of her mother's will be over.

Ciel simply stares at her in shock. He never expected her to respond to him like that. "All right, Mey-Rin, if that's what you want. Just don't tell anyone and I won't have to kill you. Do you understand?"
Mey-Rin sniffles while failing to hold back her tears. "Tell me you understand."

She nods. "...Yes."

Ciel stands up from his seat and walks around the table towards her. He takes out a napkin from his breast pocket and offers it to her. "Don't cry. It's unsightly."

Mey-Rin takes the napkin from his hand and wipes away the tears from her eyes. "Thank you," she says. "Can I ask you for a favour, my lord?"

"What is it?"

"Can I get back to work?" she asks, "I've been in bed for over a week. I'm tired of sitting around doing nothing. I really want to get back to work."

"Are you sure you're capable of working?" he asks, raising an eyebrow.

She nods surely. "Yes, I am."

"You're lucky that I'm getting tired of Grell messing things up. At least you don't set things on fire. I swear if I hear he set fire to another part of the house again, I will go mad. Also, Elizabeth is coming today at lunchtime and I rather not have the house a mess because of him."

It wouldn't be a good idea to mention him that Grell set the curtains on fire this morning. He should really stay away from candles...and the stove...or anything to do with fire in general.

"Get to work then," he says before returning to his desk to continue working.

Mey-Rin stands up and bows her head gratefully before leaving the study.

She finds herself face to face with Sebastian on the way out. Her body stiffens at their sudden encounter and feels her heart skips a beat. She needs to find a way to not look terrified in front of the others every time she's in front of Sebastian. They'll suspect something is amiss and she doesn't want them to worry. She'll have to practice and pretend to be happy to see him each day.

Sebastian gives her a warm smiles. She can't tell if it's fake or genuine. "I trust everything went."

Mey-Rin nods and gives him a small smile. "It did. Thank you, Mister Sebastian."

"And did you come to an agreement?" he asks. 'Are you going to stay quiet?' is what he means.

"Yes," she sighs.

He puts a hand on her shoulder and gives it a gentle squeeze. "Good. I'm glad everything worked out just fine," he smiles again before releasing her and disappears into the young master's study.
Mey-Rin puts a hand to her forehead, feeling it throb, and sighs in relief. *Oh God.*

Once she returns to her bedroom, she gets dressed in her maid attire. She misses it so much. She likes how the dress clings around her small body. She also misses the boots around her feet. They help her walk without stumbling or tripping everywhere. And then her glasses. Her round-framed glasses. How she misses wearing them despite not being able to see properly through them. She smiles at her reflection and gives a small twirl. She doesn't feel so empty anymore.

Mey-Rin wakes up in the middle of the night with the urge to pee. She gets out of bed and goes to the washroom. She sits on the toilet and starts urinating, sighing tiredly. However, when she looks down, she finds herself pissing blood instead which is odd. She's not supposed to be on her menstruation until next month, why is she pissing blood?

Once she cleans herself up, she walks out of the washroom and heads back to bed, only to realize that something isn't quite right. The room has gotten darker than usual. The curtains to her room have been drawn shut. *I swear they were open,* she thought to herself.

A sharp pain suddenly shoot through her left thigh and she falls to the floor crying out in pain. Something warm and thick trickles down her leg. She lifts up the skirt of her nightgown to see what happened. Her thigh has two bloody puncture wounds. They're the bites of a snake. But the puncture wounds are a little too big to be an ordinary snake bite. Trembling in fear, she slowly sits up and looks around for any signs of the snake that bit her.

The next bite strikes her in the arm and she cries out once more. She catches a glimpse of the snake in the shadows. It is large and black as night. Its eyes are red as blood. It hisses at her, showing long sharp fangs of ivory. Mey-Rin whimpers in terror and crawls back, trying to keep a distance from the snake that resembles a giant king cobra. It slithers towards her and strikes at her again, biting her in the calf.

"No!" she screams as it strikes her in the hip. She grabs a book from her nightstand and tosses it at the snake, nailing it on the head. However, this makes the snake angry and charges at her again. It wraps itself around her neck, squeezing her in an attempt to strangle her.

"You tell anyone about this, and you will suffer a much greater pain than this," the animal hisses viciously, sticking out its fork-like tongue.

*Sebastian?*

"I...promise...I wont," she chokes out.

"Good." The snake releases her and hisses, staring at her with those blood red eyes. It slithers back into the shadows. "You've been warned."

Once Sebastian is gone, Mey-Rin curls up into a ball shaking in terror. *Oh my god.* The room becomes lighter again and the door suddenly opens with Baldroy and the young master standing outside, looking shocked and terrified.

"Call my aunt," the master instructs Baldroy. "Call Madam Red right now!"

Baldroy nods and runs down the hall. Ciel hurries into Mey-Rin's room. He kneels next to her, staring at her wounds in shock.

"Mey-Rin, what happened?" he asks. She simply shakes her head, not willing to answer. Too afraid.
"Did something bite you?" he asks as he examines her. Mey-Rin is shaking in both pain and terror. "Don't worry, we're going to get you some help." Tears fall down her cheeks and she nearly passes out. Doctor Dalles arrives at the Phantomhive Manor the next morning to see her wounds. Mey-Rin is considered lucky that the bites were not poisonous. Doctor Dalles identified it to be snake bites but there were no signs of a large snake around the house. As much as she wants to, she will never tell the master of what happened that night, for the fear that Sebastian might hurt her again. Or worse, he might hurt the master.
Welcome to Phantomhive Manor

Chapter Notes

Mey-Rin isn't feeling exactly like herself lately after coming back from the dead. And you'll find out why.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Grell accidentally drops the silver tray with the tea set and they shatter all over the floor, spilling all the tea, cream and sugar. He tries to grab a napkin from the table where Ciel is having breakfast but ends pulling the tablecloth, knocking down everything to the floor. Mey-Rin gasps in complete shock and Baldroy groans in frustration. Tanaka simply chuckles in the corner. Ciel shakes his head in disappointment.

"Mey-Rin, please clean this mess up," the young lord commands while pinching the bridge of his nose.

She nods and goes to clean the mess Grell made.

Baldroy walks over to Ciel and whispers in his ear. "Master, why did you take in such a useless idiot?"

Ciel scoffs. "You're one to talk, Bard." It wasn't exactly by choice that he took Grell Sutcliff into his mansion. It was Madam Red who insisted, stating that Grell is incompetent and wanted Sebastian to teach him to be a more efficient butler. As much as he wanted to refuse, he couldn't refuse his aunt. So far, he has broken more plates and tea sets than Mey-Rin. And it's getting irritating.

"I'm so sorry for causing all this trouble," Grell apologizes once more. He apologizes too much.

"It's all right, Grell," Mey-Rin says though she too is getting irritated by him constantly destroying things. And she thought she was the messiest one. She continues picking up the broken shards of porcelain, accidentally cutting the palm of her hand in the process. She hisses but hides her hand instantly so the master doesn't see. She'll attend to it later once she's done.

"I honestly don't know how to apologize enough," he says before grabbing one of the butter knife from the floor. "Don't worry. I shall atone my errors with my death."

"Somebody take the knife away from him, please," Mey-Rin says in a panic tone.

Baldroy quickly does this and snatches the knife from Grell's hands. "Give me that. Are you fucking crazy?"

Sebastian puts a hand on Grell's shoulder in order to calm him down. "That's not necessary. Just imagine the terrible mess you'll leave. It would take hours for me to clean up all the blood."

"Oh thank you, Sebastian, you're so kind," Grell says gratefully.

"How is that even kind!?" Baldroy snaps in outrage.

"Now what I'd like to know is how you thought it was acceptable to serve my master such weak
tea?” Sebastian asks as he takes out a new teapot out of goddam nowhere. He demonstrates how to serve tea properly. A spoon full for each and one more for the pot, and finally add half of boiling water and let it steep until dark...No one actually understood that despite writing it down and Grell is simply admiring Sebastian rather than learning. Sebastian then serves the tea to Ciel. "Master, are you ready to leave? I have the carriage waiting for you on the front drive now."

Ciel sighs and puts down his teacup. "Fine." He then gets up from his seat and leaves the dining room.

"As for you three," Sebastian turns his attention to Baldroy, Finnian and Mey-Rin, "Try not to mess up the house while we're gone. I want this place spotless by the time Lady Elizabeth arrives. As for you, Grell, just sit tight and don't touch anything. If you wish to take your life, do it outside."

Grell smiles. "Oh, thank you Sebastian, you're so generous."

"How is that even generous!?" Baldroy shouts again, "Are you demented or something!?"

After cleaning up the mess Grell made in the dining room, Mey-Rin heads for the bathroom in her bedroom to wash (and possibly bandage) her hand after getting cut with the broken tea set. It's frustrating having to do this though it's not the first time she cut her hand while picking up broken china or glass and probably won't be the last. She kept her hand hidden in her apron so no one can see. She doesn't want to worry Baldroy or Finnian over a silly cut.

She opens the sink with her other hand. However, when she takes out her wounded hand from the apron, she notices something strange about the cut. "...I'm not bleeding."

"That bloody Grell is a menace," Ciel comments in frustration after getting his new cane which Grell broke, "If it weren't for him, we wouldn't be out here getting a new cane."

Sebastian simply chuckles in amusement. "He is trying to be a better butler, my lord," he says, "Perhaps a bit too much but still tries over all."

"Well, it's affecting everyone and I thought Finnian's strength was the most problematic."

"Speaking of the servants, we still need to discuss about Mey-Rin," Sebastian says.

Ciel simply rolls his eye. When is Sebastian going to drop the subject already? "Mey-Rin this. Mey-Rin that. You're starting to sound like Elizabeth's brother. I've already spoken to her. She won't say anything about us to anyone. You don't have to worry."

"That's not what I'm worried about, young master," Sebastian says. Ciel turns to look at him sternly. "The first time I met her, she tried to kill you. When we took her in, I didn't think she'd be a menace. However, when she saw me kill Azzurro Vanel, she aimed a gun at me."

"I saw. She was terrified beyond belief. A normal reaction." She was petrified. He even saw her cry. She actually told him she rather be dead than be fired though. It surprised him.

"Perhaps, but that won't stop her from doing it again."

"Are you implying that Mey-Rin can't be trusted?"

"I don't trust her much...not anymore at least. You shouldn't trust her so much either." Sebastian is right. Ciel shouldn't put too much trust in Mey-Rin now that she knows his secret but he can't have
her killed either. It would raise too much suspicion. Sir Randall already suspects one of them killed Lord Damian. They don't need Scotland Yard on their ass more than they are now.

"We will pretend like nothing happened, Sebastian," Ciel hisses firmly, "This discussion is over. That's an order."

Sebastian smiles and bows his head. "Yes, my lord."

As they continue walking through the city, Ciel catches eye of a little boy with his mother pointing at a stuffed rabbit wearing a top hat display behind glass in a toy shop.

"Look, Mother, it's the new Peter Rabbit from the Phantom Company!" he exclaims excitedly while tugging on his mother's sleeve.

Ciel remembers doing the exact same thing to his mother and father when smaller, tugging at their sleeves whenever he wanted something or when he needed to tell them something. He was always too small for his voice to reach their ears, that's why he tugged at their sleeves. He misses tugging at their sleeves.

The Phantom Company is a growing enterprise built by the powerful support of the wealthy. It's England's confectionary company that grows rapidly under three years with original novelties other classes haven't seen. Now there isn't a day when you don't see the name. There isn't a single person who doesn't recognize it. It would confuse the children who become slaves to the toys if that leader was there.

"Who's Lady Elizabeth?" Finnian asks as he's trimming the hedges with Mey-Rin raking the fallen leaves Finnian trims from the grassy ground and Grell trimming the trees into shape. Baldroy is simply sitting on the grass smoking another of his cigarettes, doing absolutely nothing.

Mey-Rin simply shrugs. It's the first time she's ever heard of Lady Elizabeth. "Not really sure. I heard the young master mention it but only once. She must be important, perhaps."

"Anyone who arrived at Phantomhive Manor is always important," Baldroy says between teeth since he's busy smoking. Annoying, Mey-Rin tosses him another rake.

"At least help me clean this up, Bard!"

"All right, all right. Jeez." Baldroy quickly gets up from the grass and grabs the rake she threw at him.

Finnian runs over to Grell and stops him from trimming the tree any further. It's already an egg-shaped, just like the master wants. He instructs him to start with the next tree.

"This is a very lovely manor," Grell gives a compliment while trimming the other tree, "The estate truly testifies to the prosperity, don't you agree?"

"The manor's only been here for three years now," Baldroy says as he continues raking the leaves.

"Hmm. Odd. It looks so stately and dignified. It doesn't look like it was built two years ago," Grell says.

"Of course it was, that was the intention." A voice suddenly says. Everyone turns their heads to see Tanaka standing before them and speaking again. The trio smile pleasantly. However, Grell squeals in surprise and terror.
"Tanaka!" Finnian and Mey-Rin run over to embrace him.

"I thought the young lord said Tanaka can't speak," Grell says to Baldroy.

"Oh no, Tanaka can speak," Baldroy assures him, "But gets exhausted every now and then, that's why he doesn't speak much and spends most of his time sitting while drinking his tea. Why do you think the young master didn't want Commissioner Randall interrogating him?"

"Phantomhive Manor was specifically built to be an exact replica of the previous one," Tanaka explains, "It's identical in every way from the windowpanes to the stairways and even the cracks in the pillars. The original Phantomhive Manor burned down three years ago. All of it became engulfed in flames. A great tragedy."

"I'd hate to intrude," Grell says awkwardly, "but did Master Ciel's parents -?"

"Indeed, they both died in the fire," Tanaka confirms with a deceptive sigh, "As well as other servants from the manor. I and a few others survived the fire. The surviving staff quit. I stayed because of the young Master Ciel."

Grell nearly gasps in shock. "How terrible, that poor boy!"

Tanaka suddenly starts coughing and slowly starts lowering himself down to the ground. Mey-Rin, however, grabs his arm to hold him steady.

"What's happening to him?" Grell asks in panic.

"Like I said," Baldroy explains, "His energy and stamina are way below an average person's. Talking and standing exhausts him. He just needs to rest. Mey, you think you can take him back inside?"

She nods and holds the old man upright. "Come along, Tanaka. I'll make you some tea."

Mey-Rin takes Tanaka back inside Phantomhive Manor where she takes him back into kitchen to make him his favourite gyokuro tea, a shaded green tea from Japan. She follows the instructions on how to make the tea, using twice the weight in dry tea leaves for a given quantity of water, at least 2 to 3 heaped spoons for two small cups. She then uses a lower brewing temperature of 40 and lets it steep a little while longer.

She serves the tea to the former butler of the Phantomhive Manor. When he drinks it, he smiles at her in satisfactory. It means the tea is good. Mey-Rin smiles back. Sebastian would be proud.

"Just sit and relax and drink your tea," she tells him, patting the back of his hand. "I need to get back to work before the young lord arrives -.

"Grell, quit trying to die all the time!" she suddenly hears Baldroy yell in anger outside the manor.

Grell is trying to kill himself again. Mey-Rin quickly leaves the kitchen and runs out of Phantomhive Manor where she sees Grell climbing up a ladder and putting a rope around his neck while Baldroy and Finnian are trying so desperately to get him down. Whatever Grell did wrong this time, trying to hang himself is not a solution. She quickly goes to help Baldroy and Finnian get him down from there.

At the same time a carriage arrives to the estate.
Ciel and Sebastian return to the Phantomhive estate when they see a carriage at the front drive. Ciel's eye widens and mentally curses. *Fuck.*

"It looks like Lady Elizabeth and her mother are here," Sebastian says but not with his usual smiles. He looks a bit concerned, even afraid. He should.

"Oh lord, not Aunt Francis," Ciel mutters bitterly, "I thought Elizabeth was coming alone. Now I have to deal with Aunt Francis."

Unlike Madam Red, Ciel happens to both hate and fear Elizabeth's mother Francis Midford. He hopes that Elizabeth's brother isn't here also. Francis Phantomhive-Midford is the sister of Vincent Phantomhive while Edward and Elizabeth are his cousins. Not only that, Elizabeth is also Ciel's fiancée. It's not like everyone doesn't know Ciel and Elizabeth are betrothed.

Ciel has always found his cousins irritating but Elizabeth is at least tolerable. As for Francis Midford, she's a completely different story. Despite being his father's sister, Ciel can't seem to tolerate his aunt though respects her great dearly. Francis is proud and strict, and is renowned for her tremendous ambition and prowess. She is a candid critic, and often directly voices her opinions of others. She abides by the rules, abstains from desire and temptation, and never hides her actions. Prompt and committed, she has a tendency to arrive at destinations earlier than expected or planned. Ciel didn't expect her to arrive until at least five in the afternoon as well as the other guests. It's two o' clock in the afternoon. She's *way* too early. They haven't even finished preparing the mansion for their arrival.

What concerns him most is Madam Red. He knows that she and Aunt Francis don't get along. And Madam Red will be arriving this evening to check on Grell's progress.

Ciel pinches the bridge of his nose and groans in frustration. "Kill me, just kill me."

"Our contract doesn't allow me to do that, young master," Sebastian says, "How am I supposed to consume your soul if you're dead -.""

"It's a figure of speech!"

Ciel watches Elizabeth and Francis Midford get out of their carriages, already dressed for this evening’s party. Elizabeth looks a lot like her mother (except a lot younger) with blonde hair and green eyes. There's a difference though. Elizabeth's face is always soft, sweet and innocent-looking. Francis's face on the other hand, is always cold and stern and almost never looks happy. Elizabeth is wearing a lovely burgundy dress with a crinoline and white jabot collar. Francis is wearing a similar dress by in lavender with a bustle and lace capelet. Elizabeth's hair is formed in ringlets while Francis has her hair tied back in a tight bun.

The carriage Ciel and Sebastian are on stops behind theirs, and the two gentlemen quickly get out to greet the ladies.

"Ciel," Francis says his name in her usual cold tone. "You weren't here to receive us. That's not gentleman-like."

"I was in the city picking up a new cane," he says in his monotone way, "I didn't expect for you to arrive until later."

"Always expect the unexpected, my boy," she says sternly. "Didn't my brother teach you that before his unfortunate death."

Ciel tries very hard not to get easily angered by his aunt's snarkiness. She's always bringing his father up, whether it's intensional or not. It drives him crazy.
"No," he says, "Anyways, it's good to see you both. What of Edward?"

"He decided to stay at home," she says.

Elizabeth walks over to Ciel and puts her arms around him. "I'm so happy to see you again, Ciel," she says in a very excited tone. She hugs him tightly, almost squeezing the air out of him.

"It's good to see you too, Lizzie," he chokes out. She then releases him and bows her head to Sebastian.

"It's nice to see you again as well, Sebastian," she says.

"Why aren't the rest of the servants out here to greet us?" Francis asks.

"I gave them specific instructions to attend the house till I return," he says, "Just like me, they didn't know you were coming at this hour."

"Well, now that I'm here, Lizzie and I can help get things done," she smirks proudly.

Once they enter the mansion, Ciel can see the disappointed look on Francis's face upon seeing the foyer. Despite being completely clean and spotless, the foyer is not decorated for tonight's party. Sebastian will do it in a matter of minutes but can't let Francis Midford see him do it. Not only that, her eyes grow wide in complete shock when she sees the four servants Baldroy Gibbons, Finnian Bornemann, Mey-Rin Lijaun and Grell Sutcliff sitting at the end of the staircase dirty and covered with grass and leaves on their clothing. Mey-Rin is dabbing cold water upon a red mark around Grell's neck. Ciel sighs and smacks his forehead. The fool tried to kill himself again.

"What on Earth is this!?" Francis exclaims upon seeing the servants in complete simply smacks his hand to his forehead. "Ciel Phantomhive, why are your servants so filthy!??"

"We just had a little accident in the garden," Finnian lies.

Francis folds her arms over her chest and clicks her tongue in disappointment. "Well, this just won't do. We only have a few hours before the party and your servants look like pigs in a mud. Really, nephew, I thought you'd put more effort into this."

If you hadn't come so early, maybe I'd have time to get them ready. But Ciel remains silent throughout his aunt's rants.

"I'll be in charge of the decorations," she says "Lizzie, get the servants cleaned up and dressed."

Lizzie nods excitedly and runs over to the Phantomhive staff, grabbing Mey-Rin and Grell by the wrists. "You two will come with me. I will make you look so adorable."

"But we -." Lizzie is already dragging Mey-Rin and Grell upstairs before they can protest.

Ciel rolls his eyes. He then instructs Baldroy and Finnian to get cleaned and dressed before they fall victim to Lizzie. And they do so without questioning.

"Ciel?"

"Yes, Aunt Francis?"

"Will Angelina be joining us this evening?" she asks with distaste. Ciel knew that question would come soon.
"Yes, she will," he says.

In fact, he invited a lot of people to the party, not just Madam Red and Elizabeth. He invited Diederich, Klaus (which Ciel sometimes refers to Uncle Klaus), Commissioner Arthur Randall, Nina Hopkins (his tailor), Pitt (a reporter and former alley of Vincent Phantomhive) Lau and Ran-Mao, a young lord who goes by the name Alois Trancy and Undertaker. He didn't want to invite Lau to the party since he's a nosy arrogant provoking bastard but knowing that he'll just invite himself in, Ciel had no choice. The reason why Ciel invited Commissioner Randall is to appease the odds between them. Scotland Yard still suspects that one of his servants did it, either Baldroy or Finnian. Ciel is not willing to have Scotland Yard accuse those two. It would be convenient to accuse them of murder just to get Commissioner Randall off his back. Still, it would be a betrayal to have them accused of something they didn't do after everything Ciel did for them. He'll have the commissioner at the Phantomhive Manor just to prove to him that none of them are capable of murder. Killing two birds in one shot. As for Undertaker, Ciel is not surprised if he doesn't arrive to the party. Just by the look of it, Undertaker isn't much for social activities. He only attends social activities when it's convenient.

"Hmm, that's too bad," Francis sighs before disappearing into the dining room.

Ciel sighs and pinches the bridge of his nose. "Fuck my life."

"Your aunt is quite persistent, master," Sebastian says.

"Just make sure she doesn't ruin the house."

"Is this really necessary, my lady?" Mey-Rin struggles to ask as Elizabeth continues adjusting the corset she's forced to wear. She can barely breathe in it. Grell is in another part of the room putting on clothing Elizabeth chose for him. It was probably a bad idea to bring him here since he's a man.

"Of course it is," she says. "You're going to love the dress. The color will make your pretty face stand out perfectly."

"I could have simply taken a bath and I'd be fine -."

"Nonsense! Since all the guests are going to be dressed so beautifully, I decided the staff should look beautiful as well. It's not nice to force servants into wearing plain clothing while on duty."

*It's not nice to force them into dressing up either.* Mey-Rin doesn't complain though. She lets Elizabeth finish adjusting the corset before taking out a dress from one of the traveling cases. Mey-Rin slips it on and Elizabeth tugs it down to make sure it hugs around Mey-Rin's slender build correctly.

Elizabeth gasps as she takes a step back to take a better look at her. "Oh my God, you look so beautiful! Here! Have a look!" She tugs Mey-Rin by the arm, pulling her in front of a full-length mirror.

Despite her protests, Mey-Rin realizes that the dress she's wearing isn't that bad. It's actually quite pretty. It's a dusty rose colour lace dress with ruffle sleeve cuffs and a white jabot collar. The jabot might be slightly overdone but it's not enough to be distracting.

"My lady, don't you think this might draw too much attention?" she asks.

"That's the point, silly," Elizabeth giggles.

"Can I come out now?" Grell asks from inside the wardrobe. "It's getting quite stuffy in here."
Elizabeth opens the wardrobe and Grell falls tumbling out wearing a sparkling champagne coloured
dress. It actually makes Mey-Rin question Lady Elizabeth's sanity. Yes, the dress is quite lovely but
was it really necessary to force Grell into a dress? He's already having a hard time trying to be a
competent butler, let alone humiliating in public by forcing him to wear a dress.

"Oh my, this just dreadful," he expresses in despair.

"Lady Elizabeth, is it really necessary to have Grell in a dress?" Mey-Rin asks.

"There are already two male servants in the Phantomhive Manor. It's best to keep an even number,"
Elizabeth smiles.

That makes no sense...at all.

After getting dressed, Mey-Rin and Grell are dragged back downstairs to be shown to Ciel.

"Mother, have you seen Ciel? I want to see how beautiful I made Mey-Rin and Grell," Elizabeth
says excitedly.

The young maid's cheeks turn red in humiliation as everyone look at both her and Grell. Finnian
becomes excited upon seeing Mey-Rin's dress.

"Oh Mey-Rin, you look so beautiful!" he exclaims cheerfully. "You look like a princess!" That
comment makes her blush even more.

"Finny's right, Mey, you look fetching," Baldroy says and laughs, "Can't say the same for Grell
though."

Poor Grell. His face is completely red in embarrassment. "This dress is so girly and frilly," Grell
continues despairing for the dress he's wearing. Mey-Rin gently pats him on the back to comfort him.
"If I have to wear a dress, why can't it be in a sexy shade of red with a waistline that will flatter my
figure!?"

"Really? That's your problem with it!?" Baldroy really is getting frustrated with Grell. Perhaps Grell
really is demented.

"I can't bare this humiliation any longer! No, I rather die!" Grell cries out sorrowfully as he walks
over to an open window, only to be pulled back by Baldroy.

"Would you stop that already!?"

Sebastian suddenly walks into the dining room. He doesn't stop Francis from decorating which is
supposed to be his job. Instead, he walks over to Mey-Rin, completely ignoring the pink dress she's
wearing.

"The master wishes to see you in his study," he says. Mey-Rin frowns at this. Again?

Baldroy quickly steps in. "Hey, wait a second, what's going on here? Why does the master keep
calling Mey so much?"

"It's nothing to be concerned about," Sebastian says in his usual calm demeanor. "The master simply
needs a favour from her."

"What sort of favour?" Baldroy asks suspiciously. Over the past few days, he witnesses Sebastian
call Mey-Rin from her duties under the young master's order. Mey-Rin never seems to talk about it
afterwards. However, Baldroy noticed how quiet and withdrawn she becomes once she returns from the study, and that's making him feel concerned. He doesn't know what's going on behind the study's closed doors. But judging by the look on Mey-Rin's face, it doesn't sound good.

"Is there a problem, Baldroy?" Sebastian asks, frowning with his arms crossed.

"No, not really. I just like to know what exactly is that the master needs her for," Baldroy says with his arms also crossed and chewing the end of his cigarette.

"Sorry if I'm interpreting this incorrectly, Baldroy, but it sounds like you're questioning my master's orders."

"Baldroy, it's fine!" Mey-Rin gets in between them to stop the hostile conversation from becoming punches. "I'm sure it's nothing," she assures him before leaving the dining room with Sebastian. She knows that things can get nasty if the hostility becomes physical. She'd hate to see Baldroy get hurt because of her.

On the way to the study, Sebastian grabs her by the arm in a tight grasp which makes her hiss as it's a bit too tight and his fingers are digging into her skin.

"Does he know?" he whispers the question into her ear.

Mey-Rin quickly shakes her head. "No. I promise he doesn't."

"If either of them find out, there will be consequences," he threatens. Is he threatening her or Baldroy? Maybe both.

"I'm sorry," she apologizes.

"Next time, keep those human emotions of yours under control," he says in warning. She notices his eyes turning blood red. This is not the man she met at the clock tower three years ago. The Sebastian she met at the clock tower was a mask. Now that she knows the young master's secret, she's seeing his true face.

"Just leave her alone, Sebastian," Ciel demands harshly as he steps out of his study to see how harshly Sebastian is treating her. "Didn't I give you an order earlier?"

Sebastian smiles at the young master. "Of course, master."

"Then why are you still holding her arm like that?"

Sebastian lets go if Mey-Rin's arm and smiles down at her as if nothing had happened. "Forgive my rudeness, Mey-Rin. I'm simply concerned about for my young master's safety."

She knows there are going to be bruises on her arm by the time the evening ends. She can already feel the bruise forming on her arm.

"Why should you? You know I would never hurt him," she affirms him.

Ciel puts a hand on her shoulder and leads her away from Sebastian and into the study. "I asked Sebastian to bring you here because I need a favour. Clearly, he forgot to not intimidate you on the way."

"It wouldn't be the first time, my lord," Mey-Rin reminds him of the first time they met. She still remembers looking at the pavement a hundred feet below while Sebastian held her by the neck.
"What is that you need me for?"

"The young master's ability to dance is non-existent," Sebastian explains. "I tried to teach him but he keeps complaining about our unmatched height making it difficult for. So I suggested for him to find someone of his height to learn how to dance with."

"I'm guessing I was the first person that came to mind," she says. She looks over at Ciel who's pinching his nose again and his eye is closed. "Young master, you can't dance?"

"No. So don't remind me," he says.

That would explain why he keeps rejecting invitations to parties and when he does throw a party, he's always sitting while watching. It's not because he's shy. It's because he can't dance.

"You're a few inches taller than the young master but your height is almost a match so you'll do fine," Sebastian says.

She wonders why they can't have Elizabeth help him. Perhaps the reason why they called Mey-Rin in instead of Elizabeth is because the lady doesn't know the young master can't dance.

Sebastian makes Mey-Rin and Ciel stand close to face each other. Ciel takes in on the dress she's wearing.

"Did Lizzie do that?" he asks.

"I resisted but yes," she says.

"It looks nice on you."

"Was that a compliment, my lord?" she asks and his cheeks turn into a pinkish colour. He's blushing?

Sebastian claps his hands to get their attention. They both look at him. "Now, let us begin our lessons. Master, hold your partner's hand and lift them both to the side. Then put your other hand on her waist."

Ciel does as told and puts his hand around Mey-Rin's waist. His hand seems to shake upon holding her waist. He's nervous. He has never danced with a girl in his life. Of course he would be nervous. Sebastian then asks Mey-Rin to put her free hand on the young master's shoulder and she does.

"Don't be afraid, my lord," she tells him, "If it makes you feel any better, I don't know how to dance either."

"Honestly...it actually does," he confesses awkwardly.

They'd both be stepping over their own feet while trying to dance and they have, for about twenty minutes after Sebastian got them both started. Neither of them knew how to dance so they kept stepping on their feet whenever Sebastian asked for one to step back and the other to step forward. Both of their dancing skills are non-existence and that made Sebastian frustrated. "You're both hopeless," he says.

The point of dancing is having fun though. It doesn't have to be exact or perfect. The point is to make sure your partner is enjoying themselves. It doesn't really matter how terrible their dances are. Mey-Rin seems to be enjoying Ciel's lack of dance skills, just from the way she's giggling every time he messes up. Ciel tries very hard not to laugh but in his mind, he admits it's kind of funny. He never felt like laughing before. Now he does.
After the disastrous dancing lessons (with Ciel probably in need of hot water for his feet before the dance), Mey-Rin heads for the guest room to deliver some blankets for Lady Elizabeth since she'll be staying over for the night once the ball is over. However, as she enters the guest room, she doesn't find Lady Elizabeth. Instead...

"Grell?"

She finds Grell in front of the dresser, rummaging through perfume bottles, lipsticks and other types of make-up. He finds a red lipstick on the dresser and opens it before applying the red colour over his lips. He presses his lips together and looks at his reflection in the dresser mirror. Mey-Rin's eyes widen when seeing this.

Grell suddenly sees Mey-Rin through the mirror and instantly turns around completely startled.

"I am so sorry," he apologizes while wiping off the lipstick from his mouth.

Mey-Rin sets the blankets down on the queen-sized bed and pads down her skirt. "Grell, what are you doing in here? If Lady Elizabeth sees you touching her belongings you could get into trouble."

"I'm sorry," he apologizes again, "I just..."

"What?"

"...I've never wore a dress before and I feel ugly wearing such a lovely dress like this," he says, his face turning slightly red. Mey-Rin simply stares at him.

She takes his hands in hers and smiles. "We'll just have to fix that."

Mey-Rin takes Grell to her room where she makes him look pretty for tonight's ball. She releases his brown hair from the red ribbon and turns them into ringlets with curling tongs. Despite being a maid, Mey-Rin does have make-up. She rarely uses them, however. She covers Grell's face with white rice powder and paints his lips in a light shade of red. Lastly, she takes out a small container full of black sticky substance. She uses a small brush to apply over the edges of Grell's eyelids to make his eyes pop. Mey-Rin then ties the upper half of his hair into a bun and pins it down with a comb.

Both her and Grell smile at their reflection with Mey-Rin resting her chin on his shoulder.

"See, you look lovely now," she says. Grell looks like he's about to cry, his eyes looking watery. Mey-Rin frowns, noticing something strange in his eyes. His eyes are usually brown but now they're in some sort of brownish green colour which she finds odd. Perhaps it's the sunlight.

Grell looks over his shoulder and smiles gratefully at her. "Thank you so much."

"What should we call you for tonight?" Mey-Rin asks with a teasing smile.

"Hmmm...Gretta," he says.

"Gretta sounds like a wonderful name," she says and they both giggle.

"How about I do your hair?" he asks as he stands up from his seat.

"Oh no, I'm fine," Mey-Rin says. However, Grell insists. After much insistence, Mey-Rin sits down in defeat.

Grell releases Mey-Rin's auburn red hair and begins to braid it. This catches her by surprise. She
didn't know Grell can braid hair.

"I think a braid might suit you much nicer with your young face. We can even put flowers in it." he says and Mey-Rin smiles. Who knew Grell had a taste in style. "I hope you don't mind me saying this but, you have such lovely hair. Almost as red as Lady Dalles' hair."

"Have you ever braided Madam Red's hair?" she asks.

Grall shakes his head. "Not really, no. I've never been able to braid hair. She barely lets me even go near it. That's why I wanted to do yours for once. Also to thank you for the make over."

"Does Madam Red treat you badly, Grell?" she asks a bit more concerned.

Grell scoffs at the question. "Don't be silly, child. Of course not. She simply likes doing it herself. But you have no idea how fascinated I am with the color red. In flowers. In fruits. I especially like roses and pomegranates. Red is such a vivid and beautiful colour. I both admire and envy those who have red hair."

"If Madam Red allows you, you'd be running around Phantomhive Manor wearing nothing but red," Mey-Rin says and they both laugh.

"Oh dear, we'll see what she has to say if she sees me like this," he says.

"Would Madam Red really be angry at you for wanting to dress like us ladies for tonight?"


"Grell, can I ask you a question?"

"What is it?"

"Where did you learn how to braid hair?"

Grell stops braiding Mey-Rin's hair for a moment. Mey-Rin watches him through the mirror in concern. He seems to have frozen in his spot, lost in thought. Mey-Rin's eyes grow wide when she sees his eyes turning green. A yellow green colour, just like the ones she saw before apparently dying.

After a moment of silence, Grell shakes his head out of his inner thoughts and his eyes turn brown again. He smiles at Mey-Rin and continues braiding her hair.

"My sister taught me," he says.

"You have a sister?" Mey-Rin didn't know Grell had a family. He's never mentioned it before. However, she and the others barely know anything about Grell Sutcliff. He started working as a butler for Madam Red the day Ciel was brought home, the same day Sebastian Michaelis appeared, apparently. Mey-Rin, Baldroy and Finnian only started working a year after Sebastian Michaelis.

"Had a sister," he says.

"Did she die?" she asks. She doesn't mean to pry. She's just curious. And as they say, curiosity can kill the cat. Curiosity almost killed her a week ago.

Grell simply shrugs. "I don't really know. I haven't seen her or my family in a long while."

That's sad. "Do you miss her?"
"Yes, sweet child, very much." He finishes tying her hair into a beautiful French braid with small white flowers inserted into it. He then puts his hands on her shoulders and leans close to her head. "There we go. White, pink and red. Ain't that a lovely combination? I'd do your make up but you already have such a wonderful face. It makes me even wonder if the young master will avert his eyes from Lady Elizabeth just to look at you." He says this while smiling teasingly.

Mey-Rin turns to look at him with a shocked expression. "Honestly you must be joking."

"It was only a joke," he says. "You seem very sensitive about it."

"I am," she sighs. "Sorry." She then gets up from her chair. She is a bit sensitive today, probably because of the discussion she had with the young early this morning. She can't expect Grell to understand if he doesn't know what's going on. "I think I might have a few necklaces that will go wonderfully with your dress."

Mey-Rin has a small box hidden beneath her bed. She sometimes goes to the market to buy something for herself with the money she's paid with. She bought herself a nice white pearl necklace and decides to lend it to Grell. White and champagne make a lovely combination.

It's almost time for the party to start. The guests are already starting to arrive and are waiting at the foyer. From the top of the staircase, Ciel can see the people that have arrived to Phantomhive Manor, aside from Elizabeth and her mother. Madam Red. Lau and Ran-Mao. Nina Hopkins. Diederich. Klaus. Pitt. Commissioner Arthur Randall and his partner Frederick Abberline. And the young lord Alois Trancy along with his butler. As expected, Undertaker is not here. Ciel expected this. However, it still irritates him. Sebastian can see the frustration on his face and his gloved hand gripping the cane tightly.

"I hope you don't mind me asking, master, but why is it so important for the undertaker to arrive?" he asks, "It's not like he ever arrives at any party, let alone yours."

Ciel sighs. "According to Klaus and Diederich, Undertaker was a part of the Aristocrats of Evil and was one of my father's closest friends. Father told me that he almost never arrives to parties unless it's convenient to him. Surprisingly, he arranged my parents' funeral yet he didn't bother to show up during that or at their burial."

"And how does that bother you?"

"What kind of man obsessed with death doesn't show up for one funeral yet visits other funerals?" Ciel says. Sebastian nods in understanding. It is a bit strange.

Ciel never went to his parents' funeral either. He was too busy being abused and branded by his captors after his parents were killed in the fire. The mark on his back still itches. Everyone in his family thought he was dead but they couldn't find the young boy's body. They only had pictures of him at the funeral. A lot of people were surprised when he came back alive and with a new butler on his side. But he never mentioned to anyone about what happened that day, how he made a deal with a demon and that demon slaughtered the entire cult. It's something that should never be mentioned, not even to the maid with glasses. She knows that Sebastian is not human. She doesn't need to know the rest.

He sees the Phantomhive servants hidden in a corner, mumbling to each other quietly and making sure everything is ready before revealing themselves to the guest. Mey-Rin is helping Finnian adjust his bow that suddenly leaned to the side. Baldroy is adjusted his tie which came loose a few minutes ago. And Grell? He's looking into a mirror and making sure the red lipstick isn't running or fading.
Ciel rolls his eye in annoyance. Honestly, Mey-Rin, what were you thinking? The moment he saw Grell dressed as a woman, he thought he would have a heart attack. How is he supposed to explain this if Madam Red or any of the other guests see him? Mey-Rin didn't seem to think of the consequences. Neither did Elizabeth. While Elizabeth dressed him as a woman, Mey-Rin did the make-up. Even if Grell does look like a woman, the guests are still going to notice and probably scorn or laugh at him. There's nothing he can do about it now. It's already time to start.

Ciel looks over at Sebastian and gestures a nod, signaling him to go. Sebastian nods in return and leans over the railing, snapping his fingers in a silent attempt to catch the servants' attention. The first who hears the finger snapping is Baldroy and looks up. Sebastian silently orders him to get the others to get a move on. Baldroy reluctantly nods.

Afterwards he walks back to Ciel. "They're ready."

"Good. Let's get started then." He claps his hands, the echoing sound grabbing everyone's attention. Ciel smiles, despite it being a fake smile but they will never notice the difference between real and fake. "Good evening, everyone. I hope you all had a safe trip. For those who have not been here in a while, I would like to welcome you to Phantomhive Manor."

Chapter End Notes

End of Chapter 5...I think it's Chapter 5.

I understand that some fans of Sebastian might not like the way I wrote him in this chapter, making him a little more hostile but let's be honest here, if someone found you were a demon, wouldn't you have a bit of hostile and suspicious towards them because you might believe they'll expose you're secret to the entire world? Just saying.

I hope you like this chapter. Let me know what you think in the comments below.
With Alois Trancy around, it's possible that the party will not end well. Since Hurricane Irma is coming soon, the chapter might be seen as a rushed and a bit messy so if there are any mistakes so sorry.

The party has already started. The servants serve champagne and wine to all the guests present. Although, they seem to try to avoid Commissioner Randall and his partner Inspector Frederick Abberline. This party was something Ciel was urged to do, by both Queen Victoria and Elizabeth Midford. Elizabeth simply wants to spend more time with Ciel. However, Queen Victoria has a different reason and its name is Earl Alois Trancy, the head of the Trancy household and son of Former Trancy Head. The party was arranged as a welcoming gift for the Trancy Earl who returned after being kidnapped at a young age from his home. His mother, in her grief, committed suicide and left his father to search for him alone. Apparently, he was found in a village in Scotland that was unfortunately burned down with most of the villagers. Only he and a few other children survived.

Ciel and Alois greet each other by shaking hands. "You must be the Spider the queen has been talking about. Welcome to Phantomhive Manor. I hope you had a safe trip. I am Earl Ciel Phantomhive."

Alois smiles warmly and nods. "I know. You're the queen's Watchdog. It's an honour to meet you, Lord Phantomhive. She spoke a lot about you. I am Alois Trancy and this is my butler Claude Faustus."

Taking a closer look, Ciel realizes that Alois Trancy is about his age but taller and more well-built. Blond-haired and blue-eyes, the appearance of many charming princes from those ridiculous fairy tales he used to read when smaller. In simple words, Alois is physically superior than Ciel. His butler Claude Faustus looks almost exactly like Sebastian but with shorter hair, golden eyes and is wearing rectangular-framed spectacles that make him look sharper.

Sebastian bows politely to the other butler in front of him. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Faustus. I am Sebastian Michaelis."

"Likewise," Claude says.

"Your mansion is quite lovely," Alois compliments while looking the adornments of the mansion. "Father would have loved it."

"This party is a way of welcoming you to London and to express our condolences for your father's untimely death," Ciel laments.

Just a year after his return, Alois' father fell ill and perished. At least it was a peaceful death and didn't end up engulfed in flames like Vincent and Rachel Phantomhive.

"Yes, thank you," Alois says with a smile but with also a sad look in his eyes, "I appreciate it."

Ciel continues looking around the ballroom for any signs of their final guest but he's not here. He's
"Expecting someone?" Alois asks.

Ciel shakes his head. "No. Just making sure the guests are accounted for."

He won't come. Probably never will.

"What on earth is that man wearing?" Diederich asks Klaus while glaring bitterly at Grell who's dressed as a woman.

Klaus simply laughs in amusement. "Clearly the work of Elizabeth Midford. It's just for fun. Let it be."

Diederich makes an irritating grumbling sound. Grell approaches the two men with a tray of two champagne glasses. However, Diederich immediately rejects the champagne, much to Grell's dismay.

"I'll take them off your hands," Klaus laughs and takes the two glasses of champagne from the tray. "Thank you, my dear."

Grell nods sadly and leaves.

Mey-Rin serves red Hungarian wine to Madam Red and Nina Hopkins. Ciel made it very clear that it's preferable to sit Madam Red next to Nina Hopkins rather than sit her next to Francis Midford since they don't get along very well. Apparently, they always bicker with one another and Ciel prefers not to have family drama when they have a new guest this evening. Nina Hopkins is the tailor of the Phantomhive household. She's the one who makes Ciel's clothes as well as Elizabeth's. She even tailored Mey-Rin's maid uniform.

"How was your trip, Miss Nina?" Mey-Rin asks while serving the wine to the two women. Nina Hopkins has insisted to always be called by her first name instead of her last name and Mey-Rin does so respectively.

"Fine dear," Nina grins at the young maid. "It's been far too long since I've been here. You look very beautiful tonight. But wait, didn't I make that dress for Lady Elizabeth?"

"I'm letting her borrow it," Elizabeth says as she approaches the three women in her jittery and excited way. "Doesn't she look absolutely adorable?"

"Huh, we'll just have to see about that," Nina smirks. Mey-Rin closes her eyes and sighs, knowing where this is going. Her eyes fly open the moment she feels Nina's hand grabbing her right breast. Mey-Rin and Elizabeth gasp in complete shock. Nina turns the young maid around and smacks her hand on the rear. Mey-Rin squeals and quickly jumps back. She always does this. "You're right, Lizzie, she does feel lovely."

"Nina!" Elizabeth exclaims in shock.

"Nina, that's inappropriate. There are men here," Madam Red says.

"So?"

"Oh dear," Madam Red sighs before looking over at Mey-Rin. "And then she asks why I don't hire her as my tailor."
"You still hire me, you liar," Nina laughs, "Who makes your red coats? Me. Who makes your dresses? Me. Who makes your hats?"

"All right, I get it. I was only joking," Madam Red drinks her glass of wine before turning to Mey-Rin again. "Anyways, don't be ashamed of what you wear, girls. That goes for you as well, Mey-Rin. If you think your beautiful, share your beauty with everyone. Don't hide it. Trust me when I say this from experience."

Elizabeth giggles innocently. "I know I'm beautiful and I'm not ashamed to show it. What of you, Mey-Rin? Do you think yourself as beautiful?"

"I, um, I guess so," she stammers awkwardly, "At least I think I am."

"That settles it then," Nina says, "We are all beautiful!"

"I think Nina has had too much wine, don't you think?" Elizabeth whispers to Mey-Rin and the young maid nods in agreement. This is Nina's third glass of wine though.

Mey-Rin then sees Grell standing in a dark corner behind the curtains by himself, looking rather sad. Why is he hiding? She hears Lord Diederich talking bitterly about Grell to Klaus, how a man-woman like Grell has no place in high society and that Madam Red letting him dress like that is inconsiderate, disrespectful and distasteful. However, he doesn't know that it was actually Lady Elizabeth who dressed him as a lady. Mey-Rin simply used a bit of make-up to make her look like a lady. Ciel is greeting and talking to the young lord Alois Trancy so he's oblivious about what's happening. The same thing with Madam Red as she's talking and laughing with the tailor Nina Hopkins.

Mey-Rin puts the empty tray on the food table near the ballroom door and quickly walks over to where Grell is hiding. "Why such a sad face?"

"Lord Diederich despised me after seeing me as a woman," he says with such as sad tone, Mey-Rin is surprised he hasn't tried killing himself again. Thank God.

"So? Lord Diederich knows nothing of you," Mey-Rin tells him firmly. "Don't let him shame you like that. You're a lady tonight. Act like one...Would this lady care to dance with me?"

Grell smiles. It's a small smile but still a smile. "Two ladies dancing together? That will certainly anger Lord Diederich."

Mey-Rin smiles back. "I'm sure it will." She takes Grell by the hand and leads him out of hiding to the ballroom.

Mey-Rin doesn't know how to dance the waltz like Sebastian so she might need to improvise. Instead of doing that absurd back and forth step Sebastian tried to teach her and Ciel, it's preferable to do side steps, that way they won't step on each other's feet. Grell puts his hand around Mey-Rin's waist and holds her hand. Mey-Rin puts her other hand on Grell's shoulder. And they begin to dance. There's a bit of laughter going on. Ciel turns his head and sees Mey-Rin dancing with Grell in the middle of the ballroom. The two are using side steps instead of the ones Sebastian tried teaching him. They are both clumsy with their dancing, with Mey-Rin nearly stumbling and Grell stepping on his own dress. It looks like they're dancing Baroque, a popular dance used in France during the 18th century, probably before the French Revolution even began. The Baroque dance Ciel is witnessing right now is messy and similar to folk dance but it looks like Mey-Rin and Grell are having fun as they're both smiling and laughing. It seems that Ciel is not the only one watching. Madam Red, Nina,
Lau, Klaus, Pitt, Elizabeth, Baldroy and Finnian are watching as well as clapping rhythmically and laughing. Diederich and Aunt Francis are the only two people that do not seem amused one bit. Francis probably sees this as rude and distasteful. You're the one who allowed your daughter to dress him as woman in the first place so why so bitter about it?

"Hehe, the servants are making a fool of themselves," Alois chuckles.

"They're simply having fun," Ciel states. He then see Baldroy drag Finnian to dance. Two men and two women (sort of) dancing non-sensical movements that makes even the stern butler Claude Faustus laugh. "I think that's the point of a dance."

"Indeed and it looks like a lot of fun. Oley!" Alois exclaims while lifting a leg back and clapping his hand twice. He then turns his attention to Claude. "Let's dance together, shall we?"

Claude bows down to the blonde earl. "Yes, your Highness." He grabs Alois by the hand as if he were a lady and leads him to dance the waltz (or whatever it is they're dancing) together. Despite Claude being incredibly taller than Alois, they're dancing exceptionally well, unlike Ciel with Sebastian or Mey-Rin. He will never dance as good as them. It won't stop him from trying though.

"Will you join the dance, my lord?" Sebastian asks.

"As head of the Phantomhive estate, I am obligated to participate in activities that will maintain my social status and reputation stable. Not participating in a dance will prove to be inconvenient. So yes, I will join the dance."

Sebastian smiles proudly. "That's good to hear, sir. Shall I set the mood with some music?"

"Yes, you shall."

Sebastian immediately takes out a violin and bow from the inside of his coat and starts playing it, much to Ciel's surprise. Was he actually keeping a violin in there the entire time?

Leaving that a mystery, Ciel heads over to the table where Madam Red and Nina are sitting. He watches Uncle Klaus ask Nina to dance and she gratefully accepts. Elizabeth walks over to Ciel and asks him to dance with her.

"Such lovely music shouldn't be wasted by us standing around, now should it?" she says.

It looks like Diederich, Commissioner Randall, Inspector Abberline and Aunt Francis are letting it go to waste as they're sitting there with sour looks on their faces. Pitt is also sitting there but looks more eager to dance than sour.

"Lizzie, do me a favour and dance with Pitt for awhile," he tells her.

Elizabeth gives him a confused look. "But I wanted to dance with you."

"I know. But..." He points at Madam Red who is now sitting alone drinking wine, "There's someone else I'd like to dance with tonight."

"Oh," She nods in understanding. "All right then. I'll leave you to it. Promise you'll dance with me later, won't you?"

Ciel nods. "Yes, of course." Elizabeth smiles before running over to where Pitt is sitting and pulls him up from his chair to the dance. Ciel chuckles in amusement as he sees Pitt's face turning red as a tomate. He's slightly taller but Elizabeth has no problem dancing with him. Ciel walks over to his
aunt Madam Red and bows his head, offering his hand to her. "Aunt Ann."

Madam Red smiles gratefully at her dear nephew and takes his hand, putting down her glass of wine in the process. They both dance. It's been awhile since he has done anything with Madam Red. As her nephew, he should find his time to be around his family more often but almost never does. He never seemed to care about making time for family, not since his parents died. His trust in adults diminished during the time he spent imprisoned and tortured by the cultists. Ciel really does love his aunt Madam Red but his love for her grew less. It's not her fault though.

"You always wanted to dance with me, Aunt Ann," he says as he tries to step on her feet or stumble himself. "Now you're getting a chance."

Madam Red smiles sadly. "Ever since you came back, all I wanted to do is to hold you in my arms forever," she says. "I thought I lost everything in that fire."

"I'm still here, aren't I?" he says in a tone that clearly states that he doesn't like talking about the subject. He always tries to avoid but with Madam Red, it's almost impossible.

She nods in agreement. However, there's still doubt on her face. "Most of you is still here. Yet, I feel like some part of you died in the fire along with your mother and father."

Ciel still remembers it. His parents were already dead when the fire started. He saw their corpses sitting there while being engulfed by the raging flames. He knew he was too late to save them. But it wasn't too late to save those who were still alive. He went to get Tanaka. When he found Tanaka, he was lying wounded on the floor. Despite being stabbed in the neck, Tanaka was still alive. And with very little strength Ciel had, he dragged Tanaka out of the mansion to safety. That's when Ciel was snatched by his parents' murderers, leaving Tanaka there on the gravel ground, and sold to the cultists. "Maybe it's because a part of me did die in that fire. Once something is truly lost, one can never get it back."

"You're probably right," she says, "But what if you can get it back? It wouldn't hurt to fight to get back what you lost."

Ciel smiles softly. He did fight and lost. Perhaps I should have fought harder. "That's why I love you so much, Aunt Ann. You seem to be the only one who actually cares about my well-being and not my reputation. You always check to make sure I'm still in one piece."

"Because Ciel, what's worth of having a good reputation if it's only going end up hurting you?"

He blinks, taking in at what Madam Red's words. He knows she has good intentions for him but he feels like her intentions are no longer worth it. "...Aunt Ann, I really don't want to talk about this anymore."

"I know you don't. Let's leave it for another time then, shall we?" she says and they continue dancing without saying another word to each other.

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After dancing with her nephew, Madam Red leaves him to dance with his cousin/fiancé Elizabeth while she gets another glass of wine instead of asking one of her servants to get her one. As much as she adores Elizabeth, she feels it's not the right time for Ciel to get married to her. His parents just died and now he is obligated to take his father's place as the Queen's Watchdog instead of trying to recuperate from his trauma. He doesn't need this: parties, balls, marriage and work. He needs help. Professional help.

She sees Francis Midford approaching her in her cold yet calm demeanor. Madam Red knows where
this is going. "What are you playing at, Angelina?" As expected, another attempt to start a fight with her. She and Francis never got along, not even when Madam Red's sister Rachel and Francis' brother Vincent got married. Francis always disliked Madam Red's eccentric way of acting and dressing, especially the colour red. Always found it scandalous and inappropriate which is one of the reasons Francis rarely lets Madam Red near Elizabeth.

She frowns at Francis when this question was asked. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Ciel," Francis says, "Your nephew. What sort of game your playing at here?"

"I'm not playing any game," Madam Red shakes her head, "But what of you? What kind of game you're playing at?"

"What do you mean?"

Madam Red suddenly starts ranting. "This entire Earl thing, being the queen's Watchdog, dealing with the underworld and being engaged to Elizabeth when he's only thirteen years old. That's what I mean."

"He's the head of the Phantomhive now -.

"He's a boy, Francis. I lost my sister in that fire -.

"And I lost my brother, Angelina," Francis reminds her. "Do you think I don't understand? Do I look like I want this for Ciel? I don't and it looks like you don't either. But this is his life so the decisions he makes are his and his alone -.

"It shouldn't. Ciel may old enough to be Queen Victoria's Watchdog but he's certainly young enough to have someone looking after him -.

"We are looking after him -.

"Only on visits. But we don't know what he does once we leave."

"Let's be honest here, Angelina. As much as I respect your job as a doctor, you haven't done a decent job as an aunt either. If you care about our nephew, why don't you move to Phantomhive Manor or is your job at the hospital more important than our nephew's well-being?"

"You know that Ciel is the most important thing in my life -.

"If he is important to you, why not be here everyday. Wake him up in the mornings, take him to school, train him to be a better person and help him recuperate from the trauma he experienced. That's a job for both doctor and aunt. But let's be honest, you can't take care of him. You're blinded by the death of Rachel, your husband and child. You work day and night nonstop yet you grieve when you should be taking care of Ciel like you said you wanted to. How do you expect to take care of him if you can't even take care of yourself? Really, Angelina, it's pathetic."

With that, Madam Red slaps Francis hard in the face. Francis looks at the red woman in complete shock. Madam Red has never laid a hand Francis before in her entire.

"That goes to show that you don't know anything about me, Francis. You never lost a husband and an unborn child in a carriage accident. But I did," Madam Red wipes away the tears that threatened to come out of her eyes. "I shall be taking my leave tonight. Let's pretend this never happened. I'll see you around, Francis."
Madam Red walks away, leaving Francis still in shock. She returns to the ballroom and walks towards Grell who is still dancing with Mey-Rin. She taps him on the shoulder to get his attention.

Grell and Mey-Rin stop dancing and he looks at his mistress in confusion. "What is it, my lady?"

"We're leaving, Grell," she says. "Now."

"Right now?"

"Am I speaking in a different language? Yes, right now."

"Are you sure you can't stay a little longer, Madam Red? It's a bit early." Mey-Rin asks, her eyes pleading her and Grell to stay.

Madam Red smiles and brushes her knuckles against the young maid's face. "I'm afraid so. Unfortunately, I have some work to do at the hospital. I'll still be checking on Ciel and your health. If there's anything you need, just give the hospital a call and ask for me. All right?"

Mey-Rin nods. "Yes, Dr. Dalles."

"Let's go, Grell." Madam Red goes to say goodbye to Ciel; Grell lingers a little longer to say goodbye to Mey-Rin, Sebastian, Baldroy and Finnian. Ciel is actually surprised to hear that she and Grell are leaving. "The hospital requires my attention," she tells him.

"I'm sure they can wait," Ciel insists sternly. He wants her to stay.

"Unfortunately they can't. I'll see you later," Madam Red kisses Ciel on the cheek. She finally leaves Phantomhive Manor with Grell Sutcliff.

5 minutes ago...

"Are you sure you can't stay a little longer?" Mey-Rin asks Grell while Madam Red says her goodbyes to Ciel and Elizabeth.

"Oh, I wish I could," Grell sighs, "But I'm Madam Red's butler. Wherever she goes, I follow."

Baldroy and Finnian approach the two after hearing what Grell just said. "So you're really leaving?" Baldroy asks. Grell nods in disappointment. Baldroy scratches the back of his head awkward. "Gosh, I know that you're not the best butler in the world, but that doesn't mean you have to leave. You can stay a little longer if you want."

"You have no idea how much I want to stay, especially now that I made friends, but I have to make sure Madam Red returns home safely. If I can't do that, what kind of butler would I be?" The same thing Sebastian says to a lot of people.

"You took the words out of my mouth, Grell," Sebastian says as he is now standing behind them while playing the violin, much to everyone's surprise. He just appeared out of nowhere like a ghost. "Are you sure you can handle this on your own?"

Grell nods. "Indeed. Trust me, I'm more efficient than I appear." He smiles at the handsome butler. "Thank you so much, Sebastian. I am in your debt. You've taught me so much in what it means to be a butler. They say that when a person dies, their lives flashes before their lives. And when I die, I shall be seeing this momentous evening in my dying vision."
Sebastian frowns at Grell strangely. "Funny you would say that."

Finnian chuckles in amusement. "That's true. He hasn't been good at dying, now hasn't he?"

Grell then turns his attention to Mey-Rin and embraces her. "Thank you for showing me a good time. You're actually the first friend I've ever had."

"Well, you have four now, Grell," she says, referring to her, Baldroy, Finnian and Sebastian, "And don't worry, if you need anything, let us know or come visit us whenever you like."

"I would like that very much, thank you. And don't worry about the necklace, I'll make sure to return it to you soon" he says and releases her. He can keep it if he wanted, Mey-Rin thought. She never wore it anyways."Have a goodnight everyone."

Grell leaves with Madam Red that night. Mey-Rin actually feels a bad for him. She really wishes he had stayed. Despite not being a well-trained butler, he has shown to be a good man. It's a pity he had to leave so soon.

When the carriage is finally far from Phantomhive Manor, Madam Red removes her hat and pinches the bridge of her nose, sighing in frustration. A habit Ciel inherited from her. Her face and body are burning with anger.

"I should kill Francis," she growls to herself. "I could strangle her."

"You know can't do that, right?" Grell says as he's sitting across her, his fingers playing with the pearl necklace around his neck, "She is still aunt to your nephew, remember?"

She huffs and sits upright. "I suppose your right. She is still family, no matter how much I despise her. Besides, we have more important things to attend to back in London."

Mey-Rin sees Commissioner Randall and Inspector Frederick Abberline glaring at them suspiciously. How long have they been watching us like that? Those two are still suspicious of Baldroy and Finnian. Ciel invited them to ease the odds between them. However, their cold presence is only making Mey-Rin and the others uncomfortable. What to do?

"Bard. Finny. Give Commissioner Randall and Inspector Abberline some champagne," she instructs them. Sebastian should be the one giving orders but he's too busy playing the violin for the guests. The two don't seem to like the idea of going anywhere near the Scotland Yard police.

"Surely you must be joking," Baldroy scoffs, "Those two think we're murderers. And we didn't do anything wrong."

"And as long as you keep avoiding them, they'll continue suspecting the lot of you unless you face them like the men you are," she says. "Or are you actually going to let them scare you?" Neither of them respond to that question. Good. Because it was a rhetorical question. "That's what I thought. Now, please, do this for the three of us and serve those two gentlemen some wine. Don't worry. I'll be right with you guys. However, we can't be serving them all at the same time. Baldroy, you serve Commissioner Randall and Inspector Abberline. Finnian, serve Nina champagne since she's the closest to the Scotland Yard police. I'll be serving the guest of honour. He and his butler are sitting behind Scotland Yard."

The three finally got into an agreement and they do as instructed. Sebastian is not the only person that can give out orders. Baldroy and Mey-Rin grab a bottle of wine while Finnian grabs a bottle of
champagne.

Mey-Rin walks over to Alois and his butler Claude who are now sitting after dancing. "Would you like some wine, Lord Trancy?"

"I sure would, thank you," Alois says with a smile. He seems like a nice boy. It makes Mey-Rin wonder why he is dubbed the Spider by Queen Victoria and what his involvement would be. Ciel Phantomhive is the Watchdog and he cleans up the streets of London from crime lords and other gruesome phenomenon from the underworld under the queen's orders. What role does Alois Trancy have?

As she thinks of this while pouring the wine into the glass, the bottle nearly slips from her hands. She catches it. However, the wine pours onto the table and spills on Alois' lap. Mey-Rin gasps and sets the bottle upright on the table as quickly as possible.

"I'm so sorry, sir," she apologizes and grabs a napkin to help clean up the wine. Alois Trancy pushes her away, however, and back-hands her in the face, knocking her to the floor.

The music stops and everyone gasps upon seeing the sudden and unexpected event.

Mey-Rin is now curled up on the floor, holding a shaky hand to her throbbing face as she processes what just happened. One moment Earl Alois Trancy was acting kind, next thing she knew she was hit in the face for spilling the wine on his lap. She swears it was an accident. She didn't mean to spill the wine. Why did the young earl resort to violence?

This did not go down she thought it would. She hears Baldroy yell out angrily after seeing Mey-Rin getting smacked in the face by the blonde earl. "What the bloody hell was that for!?

"Mey-Rin, are you all right?" Finnian asks as he runs over to her and carefully pulls her back on her feet. Mey-Rin puts her hand on her temple as her mind becomes fuzzy. "Your nosy is all bloody."

Yes, she can feel it on her nose. However, it smells more like wine than blood. She looks at the blonde earl's hands. They're covered with the red wine she accidentally spilled on his lap. It's not blood that she has on her nose, it's wine. It still hurt. Despite getting punched in the face many times by enemies, getting slapped is just as painful. And why is it always in the face?

"It's wine, Finny," she says, "It's nothing."

"Nothing!? You call that nothing!?" Baldroy snaps angrily and confronts the blonde earl, despite Mey-Rin trying to tug him back by the arm. "Listen you —!

"I suggest you step away from my lord," Claude immediately gets in the way in order to keep Baldroy from getting closer to Lord Trancy. He is taller than Baldroy. Despite his military skills, Mey-Rin has a feeling Baldroy will lose if he gets into a fight with Claude Faustus.

"You going to allow that —!?"

"Bard!"

Everyone turns their attention to Ciel Phantomhive who was standing behind them with an almost appalled Elizabeth by his side, his face clearly showing signs of anger. In fact, he looks furious. He walks towards Mey-Rin to examine her face. Her right cheek is beginning to bruise. It was a very harsh blow to the face, and simply because she accidentally spilled wine on Lord Trancy's lap.

"Are you all right, Mey-Rin?" he asks. She nods. Ciel is not convinced though. She looks like she's
about to pass out. "No, you're not. Baldroy. Finnian. Get her out of here."

Baldroy glares at the golden-eyed butler for another moment before obeying the young master and he and Finnian take Mey-Rin out of the ballroom, leaving Ciel to confront Lord Trancy on his own while everyone watches in complete shock. First he has to get passed Claude Faustus.

"As head of the Phantomhive, I command you to step aside so I can speak with your master," he says.

"Claude only listens to me," Alois says as he steps out of hiding and gently pushes the butler aside. "It wasn't my intention to strike your maid."

"Perhaps it's my fault for not warning you of Mey-Rin's clumsiness. She is quite far-sighted and the proportions of her feet don't allow her to walk properly. However, it's not an excuse for you to strike her," Ciel says. The many times she broke the dishes, the many times she spilled drinks and food on the floor and carpet, he never laid a hand on Mey-Rin even he did get angry with her for her constant recklessness. He never hit her.

"Forgive me, Lord Phantomhive. As I said before, it wasn't my intention to hit her," Alois repeats. But there's something in that boy's tone that doesn't sound right. It doesn't sound like he actually means it. It sounded like he actually enjoyed hitting Mey-Rin. Ciel does not like it one bit. Violent behaviour is not accepted in the Phantomhive Manor. If he allows Lord Trancy to stay, there's no telling if he might hurt someone else.

"For the sake of the other guests, Lord Trancy, I'll have to ask you to leave my estate," Ciel says. Alois glares at Ciel with those icy blue eyes of his, his expression full of anger and abhor. Eventually, his expression softens and smiles softly at Ciel. "It's getting late anyways. After all, I'm still a child. Can't be up all night. I have other important things to do." He pats Ciel on the shoulder firmly and continues smiling as he and his butler Claude leave the ballroom. "We'll be seeing each other again, Lord Phantomhive. I bid you all a good night."

The moment they leave the ballroom, the air becomes lighter again. The other guests will be mumbling about this to each other, however. This will not be good for Ciel's reputation. Neither will it be for Alois Trancy once he writes a complaint to the queen.

"I will have to ask for forgiveness from all of you!" Ciel says to the remaining guests: Diederich, Klaus, Nina, Pitt, Commissioner Randall, Inspector Abberline, Francis and Elizabeth. "I did not expect for Lord Alois Trancy to behave so violently. It's my fault for inviting him under the queen's command. In an hour or two, I expect you all to return home safely after tonight's unpleasant event. Sebastian?"

His butler nods and he starts playing the violin again. At this point, no one seems to be in a pleasant mood to dance, not even Elizabeth herself. They remain chatting among each other though. This party has turned sour. Not even Sebastian can fix it since the event was sudden. Ciel knows that everyone will go home eventually. He won't stop them.

Ciel watches the carriage containing Lord Alois Trancy leave the Phantomhive estate through the bay window of his study. The carriage disappears into the night. Ciel prefers not to meet with the blonde earl again, not for a long time. How could the queen herself insist inviting this bastard to my mansion? If he had knew this would happen, he would have never invited Lord Trancy in the first place. How come the father saw past this issue? How was he able to allow a child like Alois Trancy
to become so impulse and aggressive? And then Sebastian calls Ciel a *brat*. This event is going to cause a lot of problems in the future, not just for Ciel but for Lord Trancy and the Queen of England for allowing herself to be allied with such an impulsive creature. Spiders attack and eat whatever gets caught in their web. They don't care if the fangs hurt them. They don't think of the pain they cause to their prey. Alois didn't care when he struck Mey-Rin in the face. He didn't care how much it hurt her nor did he care how much it could damage his reputation of being a respectful Trancy lord. That moment when Mey-Rin accidentally spilled the wine, pain is the only thing Lord Trancy wanted to inflict on her. Just like the people that took Ciel and other children as slaves. All they wanted was to cause him and the other children pain and humiliation. Despite his irritation towards Mey-Rin, Ciel would never allow anyone to hurt and humiliate her or Finnian or Baldroy or Tanaka. Basically anyone close to him. However…

There's a knock on the door. *They're here. Right on time.*

"Come in," he says.

Sebastian enters the study with Commissioner Randall and Inspector Frederick Abberline following behind him. "I've brought Scotland Yard as you requested, Master."

"Good," Ciel nods in approval, "I'll handle this on my own, Sebastian."

"Will there be anything else, Master?" the butler asks.

"Yes. Take Pitt to the kitchen and have him take pictures of Mey-Rin's injury," he instructs, "I want to send them to the queen along with a complaint letter. Do it now."

"Yes, my lord." Sebastian allows the commissioner and the inspector to enter the study. Afterwards, he leaves and shuts the door behind him.

*Let's get this over with. *"Have a seat, gentlemen. It was an honour to have you at my party, Sir Randall as well as your partner. What is name again? Underline?"

"It's Abberline!" the inspector says as they both take a seat.

"Anyways, I hope you and the others can forgive the earlier mishap. It won't happen again," Ciel says.

"Something tells me you didn't bring us here for an apology," Commissioner Randall says, "The same thing goes for the invitation I received."

Ciel huffs. The commissioner is not as foolish as he thought. "I'll be brief about it then. I need you and the rest of Scotland Yard police to stop pursuing and pestering my servants. I've already told you many times that Baldroy Gibbons and Finnian Bornemann are not involved in Lord Damian's death."

"Then who killed Lord Damian?" Inspector Abberline asks. Ciel simply shrugs. "Does it look like I know the name of our killer? If so, I would have told you already. However, I don't have the name of Lord Damian's killer. Still, this is not about Lord Damian's killer. This is about you and Scotland harassing my servants. And when they feel threatened, so do I. So I'm politely asking for you two to hold off your dogs."

"And if we say no?" Inspector Abberline asks sternly. Commissioner Randall says nothing. He just lets the young inspector to ramble words that have no meaning to the young earl.
Ciel smirks. "How much money would you ask in order to keep this case between the three of us, Sir Randall?"

Inspector Abberline gasps in astonishment. "If you think you can simply buy our silence —."

"60,000 pounds," Commissioner Randall interrupts. The young inspector stares at the commissioner in disbelief. He's letting himself be manipulated by a thirteen-year-old.

"That's quite a lot of money," Ciel chuckles, "Wouldn't fifty thousand do just fine?"

"Sixty thousand and tonight's incident will not be mentioned to anyone. Not even the press will know about it."

Ciel smirks and shrugs, pretending to be defeated when he's actually winning. Killing two birds in one shot, just as like he wanted. "Sixty thousand will do just fine then. I'll make sure the payment is delivered by morning. I thank you both for your cooperation. I bid you a good night."

"Wait a second now! Sir Randall, you can't be agreeing to —."

"Abberline!" Commissioner Randall snaps at the young inspector, "That's enough out of you. We will accept Earl Phantomhive's request. Unless you wish to lose your job as inspector, you will keep quiet about this. Understand?"

The inspector sighs in defeat. Ciel knows that the inspector has no choice but to side with the commissioner in order to maintain his job with Scotland Yard and that satisfies the young master greatly. They finally come to an agreement to maintain silent and not speak a word of the party's incident nor will they continue pursuing Baldroy and Finnian. The moment the inspector and commissioner leave the study, Ciel takes out his handgun and aims it at the door. He makes a popping sound with his mouth and smirks in amusement. Killing two birds in one shot.

Mey-Rin hisses as Tanaka applies a cloth dampened in hot water on her bruised cheek. "Ow, ow, Tanaka, that hurts, ow," she complains. She feels Tanaka is lucky not to have witness that horrible moment. It would have made him physically ill.

"You were right, Mey-Rin," Finnian says as he helps wipe off the wine stain from her nose. "This isn't blood. But that blow was enough force to break your nose. How are you not bleeding?"

She shrugs. She doesn't know why she's not bleeding through her nose after getting hit. She even heard it crack when the back of Lord Trancy's hand came in contact with her face. Just like the cut in her hand, she didn't bleed. Why? She doesn't know.

"Good thing we have a doctor in the house," Baldroy says as he pours himself a glass of wine he managed to smuggle from the party. Sebastian might get angry about it but Baldroy doesn't really care. He prefers to drink his anger away with a nice bottle of red wine. He looks at the bowl of white water on the table Tanaka is using for the bruise on Mey-Rin's face. "What is that, anyway?"

"Soba," he says in a raspy wheezing tone as he continues to dab the young maid's cheek with the warm cloth.

"So— what now?" Baldroy says.

"Water from Buckwheat noodles. My mother used them to reduce bruises," Tanaka responds.

"How do you know it works?"
"Because I say so," Tanaka says almost sternly. Baldroy raises his hands in surrender and instantly backs off, knowing that you should never underestimate the power of Tanaka. If he says that water from Buckwheat noodles works, you are bound to listen because he's always right. Despite not having much energy to talk or walk, he knows when to put others in order and knows when to put his foot down. That's why he's in charge of Phantomhive Manor when Sebastian is not around. Never mess with Tanaka or you will regret it. He stops to cough for a few moments before continuing applying the noodle water to Mey-Rin's face. Indeed, it was best for Tanaka not to be at the party; he preferred to stay at the kitchen sipping his tea and listening to the music that was playing upstairs.

"I should have punched that little bastard in the face," Baldroy says.

"If you had, we would have been arrested," Finnian says, "We're already suspected for murder, attacking Lord Trancy would just make things even worse."

"Finny is right, Bard," Mey-Rin says, "It's my fault, anyways. I was the one who had the idea. I was the one who spilled the wine on the earl's lap and because of that, the party was ruined."

"The master blames himself, actually." Sebastian appears in the kitchen, again like a phantom, making Baldroy and Finnian jump. Mey-Rin (who knows he's not human) and Tanaka (who doesn't seem to care) are no longer surprise. "He did not expect for Lord Trancy to exhibit such violent behavior over a small mishap. However, Mey-Rin, tonight's event will be a reminder for you to be careful next time. Do you understand?" Mey-Rin nods in agreement. Next to Sebastian is a man in his mid-thirties of short height, dirty blonde hair and freckles. It's Pitt, the freelance reporter and former friend of Vincent Phantomhive. He's carrying a large camera in his arms as he follows Sebastian into the kitchen. Why is carrying a camera? "Baldroy. Finnian. Tanaka. I need you three to step aside. This will only take a moment," Sebastian instructs.

The three men move aside, only Mey-Rin remaining sitting, despite not knowing what is going on. Pitt positions the camera in front of her face, a little bit too close for her taste.

"Um, Sebastian, what is this?" she asks in confusion.

"Keep looking at the camera, dear," Pitt instructs. "And could you lift your chin up a bit so the camera can capture your face better?"

"The young master is going to send a complaint to Queen Victoria and needs a photograph of Mey-Rin's face to prove that he's not making false claims so we asked Mr. Pitt to take a picture before he takes his leave," Sebastian explains to all of them.

"It's the least I can do for Ciel, after everything his father's done for me when he was still alive," Pitt smiles softly as he glances at Mey-Rin, "I'm really sorry about what happened to you, Miss. I didn't think a child would have the strength to deliver such a blow."

Children can fight just as good as adults, that's much Mey-Rin knows from experience. As a child, she already broke a nose on one of the older students face and she was only ten. It simply takes practice. Lots and lots of practice. She wonders how many people Alois Trancy hit to deliver such a harsh blow. She rather not find out though. She prefers not to go near him again.

She remains still as Pitt takes a few pictures of her face, at least three pictures should do the trick. Once the pictures are taken, Pitt covers the camera with a brown blanket and carries it out of the kitchen. Mey-Rin blinks a few times to get rid of the white light that flashed in her eyes when Pitt was taking the photographs. He could have warned her about the flashing or at least told her to close her eyes but perhaps he wanted her to keep her eyes open.
After Pitt leaves, Sebastian speaks to the servants of the house. "Luckily for us, some of the guests decided to stay for a little while longer to enjoy the remaining hours of the party. Lord Alois Trancy took his leave with Claude Faustus already so none of you have to worry facing them again."

Baldroy sighs of relief after he swallowed a mouth full of wine. "That's good. I swear I'd punch the bastard's butler for getting in my face."

"Actually, Baldroy, you were getting in his face," Finnian reminds him.

"Whose side are you on?"

"Obviously your side."

"Baldroy, we will later talk about your unruly behavior towards our current situation, not to mention your habit of smuggling wine from parties without the master's permission," Sebastian tells him. Busted. "The next thing I wish to talk about is Scotland Yard."

The mention of Scotland Yard makes everything fall into dead eerie silence. Sebastian can see the distress in everyone's eyes, including Tanaka. Ever since Lord Damian's death, Scotland Yard have been pestering to the point where it's getting irritating. Simply saying the word Scotland Yard brings concern for the three servants and the former butler.

"I shall first mention the bad news," Sebastian continues.

"Which is…?" Baldroy asks.

"The bad news is that Scotland Yard still suspects you and Finnian to be the murderers of Lord Damian and the suspicion grew when you confronted Lord Trancy. Commissioner Randall believes that your protective behavior towards Mey-Rin is the motive for murder," he says. This causes for the three servants to groan in frustration. Tanaka doesn't even laugh; he remains silent. "There are some good news, however. The young master and the commissioner have come to an agreement. Scotland Yard will stop pursuing Baldroy and Finnian if the young master pays them a good amount of money -.

"Lord Phantomhive is paying Scotland Yard to keep them quiet for something we didn't do?" Finnian says in disbelief. "But that's unfair. He knows we didn't do it."

"Finny, the young master doesn't give a fuck about who did it," Baldroy says, "He just wants the police to get off our backs."

"I'd watch your language if I were you, Bard," Sebastian warns, his features growing dark, "Now I know where the young master is getting his habit of cursing. Keep it up and I'll have to wash both of your mouths with soap and sulfuric acid."

With that, he leaves the kitchen. Baldroy gulps nervously. Soap and sulfuric acid. SULFURIC ACID!

Mey-Rin gets up from her seat and leaves the kitchen to go after Sebastian.

"Sebastian, wait!" she calls out to him. Luckily, he only manages to walk a few feet away from the kitchen. For a second, she thought he'd do that creepy disappearing act again. The moment she calls him out, he stops on his tracks and looks at her over his shoulder. "I'm sorry," she says.

His eyes suddenly turn red again and his pupils become slit, causing Mey-Rin to take a step back.

"You're lucky the master is containing the situation. But if this happens again with any other guest, I
shall punish you myself. Do you understand?"

Mey-Rin nods in understanding. She knows that Sebastian can't hurt her unless Ciel gives the order and possibly never will give the order. Would Sebastian actually disobey the master?

Once the party is over and all the guests have gone home, Ciel is prepared for bed. It's been a long day and a long night. He's not in the mood to talk about the situation to anyone. He already bid goodnight to Elizabeth and Aunt Francis as well as Nina and Uncle Klaus. Diederich left before he could say goodbye. Ciel finally got Scotland Yard to remain silent and Pitt gave him the developed photos of Mey-Rin's injury. The night could have certainly gotten much better if Alois Trancy hadn't attacked one of his servants.

"Tomorrow I want you to find out everything there is to know about Alois Trancy," he says to Sebastian while placing the covers over his body. The young master's eyepatch has already been removed, the pentagram in his right eye glowing a faint shade of purple. "I have a feeling that there's more to him than what the queen is letting us know. I don't like having secrets kept from me."

"Yes, my lord. Anything else?"

Ciel narrows his eyes at the butler. "No, that will be all for tonight. Get some rest."

Sebastian bows his head once more and leaves the chamber, closing the door behind him. Ciel huffs in annoyance and lies back on his bed, closing his eyes. It might

He opens his eyes as soon as he hears the door open. He sits up from his bed, believing it to be Sebastian. However, it turns out to be Mey-Rin standing by the chamber door. He grabs his patch and covers his marked eye. However, what would be the point of hiding it if she already saw it?

"What are you doing in here?" he asks while rubbing his other eye tiredly. The bruise Alois gave her on the cheek is still visible and took on a faint purple hue.

"I - I just wanted to see if you're all right," she says meekly while putting the lantern down on the nightstand. "I also wanted to apologize for what happened earlier. It's my fault the party ended terribly. I just wanted you to know how much I regret -.

Ciel scoffs, interrupting her. "For goodness sake, Mey-Rin, grow a backbone. You know it wasn't your fault. Why do you keep blaming yourself for something had no control of?"

"Well, it did happen with Lord Damian," she reminds him as she sits down on the edge of his bed, "I couldn't stop spilling the wine. I didn't expect to get slapped for it though."

"Exactly. You spilled wine on me many times and I never laid a hand on you," he tells her, "So, how could you have predicted that Alois Trancy would strike you? You didn't and neither did I so I don't blame you. I blame myself for not taking precautions."

"But as you said before, no one could have predicted Lord Trancy's action so I don't see why you blame yourself," she says. This makes Ciel roll his eye in annoyance. Mey-Rin, sometimes you can be such an idiot.

"It doesn't matter now. Not anymore," he sighs, "People will whisper about me now. I paid Scotland Yard to stay away from Baldroy and Finnian, and to not mention tonight's incident but that doesn't mean others will remain quiet."

"...Thank you, my lord," Mey-Rin says. Ciel simply stares at her. "You didn't have to do that for us
"The reason why I paid Scotland Yard to leave us alone is because their constant lingering bothered me as well," he interrupts her harshly, "It has nothing to do with Baldroy and Finnian. Do you understand?"

Mey-Rin nods, her eyelashes fluttering as she looks down sadly. "I - I don't believe you, Master."

"If you think I did all this out of generosity and kindness, you have another thing coming," he grits his teeth at her, making her jump slightly, "If you see me as a good man, then you're more blind than a bloody bat."

"I don't see you as a good man, Ciel Phantomhive," she smiles softly at him. "But I don't see you as bad either. You saved my life when you could have let me die from blood loss. Any man who prefers to bury his secrets would have done so without a second thought."

"Do you have any idea how difficult it is to find a maid with your type of abilities?" he asks rhetorically, "It's quite difficult. I would probably never find another one like you. That's why I let you live."

She smiles again and hold his hand in a gentle squeeze. "Maybe. But I still want to thank you."

He looks down at his hand held in hers and sighs before pulling away. "You seem to be the only one who sees me as a good person."

"You are...At least, to me you are," she says.

They remain staring at each other, not having to say anything else. Ciel sighs and looks down in shame. Mey-Rin may not be the best maid but she has always been loyal and good. It almost make him feel like the evil one. Yet here she is, telling him that he's not a bad person he thinks himself to be, even after the little discovery.

Minutes go by of the two sitting there in silence. Mey-Rin reaches out and slowly removes the eyepatch from Ciel's eye, exposing the pentagram. However, she doesn't look afraid of it this time. She leans forward and kisses the young master on the forehead before getting up and leaving the chamber, leaving Ciel completely stunned. *What just happened?*
A prostitute named Catherine Eddowes, brown-haired and long faced, is walking down the empty and nightly streets of Whitechapel in Mitre Square and lying with tonight's costumer. She decides to go home and call it a night. Tomorrow is another day of work. Men to fuck for money, that's basically her lifestyle these days.

As she's walking down Mitre Square, she hears footsteps following behind her. Steady and patient footsteps. It's odd. Almost everyone in London has gone home to sleep, minus some men that are drinking at the pubs. Perhaps it's one of them wanting to pay her for a good blow on his cock.

"Sorry, good sir, but these legs won't be open until morning," she says as she turns around. To her surprise, there's no one there which is quite strange. She was sure someone was following her. Thinking that it's probably her imagination, she shrugs it off and turns back to continue her way. However, the moment she rounds the corner of Mitre Square, she gets slashed in the throat by a sharp-pointed knife. Blood gushes out of Catherine's neck and the body drops dead in seconds.

The dark figure that killed Catherine looks down at her body in distaste. It kicks the body roughly and kneels down to proceed stabbing her in the face and abdomen until the face deformed, the abdomen was torn open and the pavement was painted in blood.

The paperboy tosses the newspaper at the door of Phantomhive Manor and rides away in his bicycle. The folded newspaper bangs against the door and falls onto the gravel down below. The door slowly creaks open and Mey-Rin steps out of the manor in her nightgown and shawl to pick up the newspaper from the ground. The bruise on her ace slowly faded over the past week thanks to Tanaka's noodle water. It worked just like he said it would. She unfolds the newspaper in her hands and reads the headlines on the cover. JACK THE RIPPER KILLS PROSTITUTE IN WHITECHAPEL. She frowns at the title before getting back inside.

She goes to the study where the master usually is in the morning. She knocks on the door and awaits for someone to answer. The door opens and Sebastian appears. He looks up and down at her with a frown. "Why are you still in your nightgown?"

"I overslept," she explains, "I haven't been able to sleep last night."

"Really? Odd. You haven't been able to sleep well for over a week," he says. "Perhaps I should have the master call Madam Red to have her check on you."

"Maybe later. Another Jack the Ripper attack in Whitechapel," she tells him, "The victim was another prostitute called Catherine Eddowes. Her body was found in Mitre Square at 1:45 a.m."

"And you read all that in the newspaper in just a few minutes?"
"I'm a fast reader and I have a good memory," she says, in an almost offended tone, "I'm not that stupid."

"And for that comment, you're washing the windows from the second floor," he says harshly. Mey-Rin nods and turns to leave, only for Sebastian to stop her by putting a hand on her shoulder, "Mey-Rin, I hope there are no hard feelings about the day before the party." The day when he grabbed her by the arm and practically threatened her. The bruise on her arm was already gone (she was glad Baldroy didn't see it), almost as gone as the one on her face.

She shakes her head. "No, of course not," she says, "I'll tell Baldroy to have the master's breakfast ready."

Ciel's brow furrows as he reads the newspaper Mey-Rin has brought to him. Another victim of Jack the Ripper. A prostitute brutally slaughtered at the Whitechapel. This is getting out of hand. He'll have to leave Alois Trancy for another time. Sebastian spend a few days searching for more information on Alois Trancy but nothing else came up aside from the basic story. His full name is Alois Trancy, he is fourteen years old, his mother and father were Laura and Harold Trancy. His mother committed suicide when Alois was kidnapped at an infant age. He was found years later at a village that burned down and returned to his father. And Harold Trancy died of a strange illness the doctors could not identify. Alois inherited the Trancy Manor, he now earl and the Queen's spider, a spy that watches London's every move and reports everything to the Queen. Ciel looks over at a small spider crawling over the ceiling, building its web. A spider watching you without noticing, its eight legs silent and its four eyes watching your every move. Get too close and you will be caught in it and the spider will devour you.

Alois Trancy. Such a mystery but one that will be postponed for another time, once he deals with Jack the Ripper.

"The Queen is highly concerned about these Jack the Ripper cases," he says while he continues reading, "She sent me another letter, urging me to investigate the case."

"I'm quite surprised that the queen is concerned for the deaths of prostitutes," Sebastian says while standing next to him with his hands clamped behind his back, "Honestly, women selling their bodies for money without a care in the world of the consequences and pester those who do not share their sinful pleasures. I could are less about them. But you...I'm guessing you will be investigating the murders as the queen urges you to do."

Ciel gives Sebastian a scornful look. "It's my job as the queen's watchdog. I'm not simply going to let this slide. Besides, it's not the prostitutes the queen is concerned about. It's the other civilians. Imagine if Jack the Ripper becomes bored of the prostitutes and decides to hunt fresher meat. They're like children. They become tired of their toys and decide to play with new ones. We can't let that child have the new toy if he hasn't earned it, now can we?" He says this with a smirk. Sebastian nods in agreement.

A knock is heard on the door. Clearly Mey-Rin with the young master's breakfast.

"You may enter," Ciel says.

Mey-Rin pushes the door open with her booted foot and enters the study, now in her maid's uniform. She nearly loses balance as the silver tray is heavy in her hands but finds balance again. She walks over to the desk and puts the tray down in front of the young master. "Bard nearly used the flamethrower again."
"Honestly, will he never learn? Sebastian once you're done, go to the kitchen and confiscate that blasted thing," he commands. "I rather not have my mansion burned down a second time."

"Yes, Master," Sebastian says with his usual bow before turning to Mey-Rin, "I already gave you this morning's assignment. Make sure the windows are spotless, do you understand? And try not to fall off the ladder."

"Yes, Sebastian," Mey-Rin grumbles in irritation and turns to leave to do as command.

"No, Mey-Rin, you're not going anywhere. Come back here." The way the young master spoke to her made her freeze on the spot she is standing now. He sounds bitter. Is she in trouble? Mey-Rin slowly turns around and gulps nervously, her hands fiddling with each other. "One thing I do not tolerate from you is your attitude. I understand your concern but I would suggest not to provoke Sebastian or me." He must have heard her from inside the study. "Knowing my secret doesn't give you the right to be sharp-tongued towards my butler, do you understand?"

"Yes, sir. I'm sorry."

"Tell me, what was the name of the victim again?"

"You mean, from the Jack the Ripper case? Catherine Eddowes. She was born on the fourth of April, 1842 and died just last night. Her body was found at the Mitre Square at 1 in the morning," she tells him.

"And you've read it all in the newspaper?" Ciel asks her. She nods. "How long did it took you to read all of that while bringing the paper to Sebastian?"

"Five seconds," she says and confirms him that she's a fast reader and has a good memory of certain sentences in the paragraphs she finds most interesting. She loves reading, including horror novels and the penny dreadful stories to which she finds most fascinating.

"Hmmm. A photographic memory. Interesting," he says as he closes the newspaper and sets it down on his desk. He looks at his cup for a little while before picking it up and taking a sip of his tea. "After breakfast, Sebastian and I will be heading for London to investigate Jack the Ripper. So I suggest you get dressed."

"I'm already dressed, sir," Mey-Rin tells him.

"I meant in civilian clothes or do you prefer to go to London in your maid's uniform?" Ciel says while giving her a stern look.

Mey-Rin's eyes widen. She and Sebastian look at each other in confusion before looking back at Ciel. "What?" they both say.

"You heard me," he says, "Get dressed. We're going to London."

"I'm sorry for being rude, young master, but why do you want me to go to London with you and Sebastian?" Mey-Rin asks.

"I was wondering the same thing," Sebastian says.

"Do I need to give a reason why I want our maid to go to London with us?" Ciel asks Sebastian harshly, "Despite her incompetence as a maid, her skills can serve us of good use. Besides, it's better to keep an eye on her that way and make sure she doesn't say a word about us to Bard and Finny while we're gone."
"You still do not trust me, my lord?" Mey-Rin asks with her eyes watering a bit.

A small smirk splays on the Ciel's lips. "Not at all," he says with the tilt of his head, "Why should I put my trust in someone who knows my secret?"

"I already told you, my lord, I would never tell anyone."

The young master shrugs, not really caring what she says. "Or so you say. I'm finding this conversation tedious. Get dressed, Mey-Rin. You're going to London with us. That's the end of it."

Mey-Rin sighs in defeat and nods her head. "Yes, my lord. I shall have everything ready before lunch."

"You may go now," he says. Mey-Rin then leaves the study. Despite her impeccable skills and surprising intelligence, Mey-Rin can sometimes be quite naïve. It can be utterly frustrating for Ciel and Sebastian.

"Young Master," Sebastian says, "I don't think it's a good idea for you to bring Mey-Rin to London with us. She'll be a nuisance."

"I don't care what you think," Ciel says harshly as he stands from his seat. "Or would you like to stay behind instead?"

"...Is there something I should know, Master?" Sebastian asks, staring at Ciel suspiciously.

The two continue to stare at each other sternly. However, Ciel doesn't respond to his question. Instead, he sits back down on his chair. He takes a scone from his plate and bites into it.

"Have the carriage ready. Then you'll return to my chamber to help me get dressed," he says, "That's an order."

Sebastian smirks and nods before leaving the study himself. The moment he shuts the door, Ciel pinches the bridge of his nose and lets out a deep sigh. Just like the servants, the butler can be a pest as well. He has no tolerance for unnecessary questions nor did he tolerate Sebastian questioning his orders. Ciel has his reasons to bring Mey-Rin to London and unbeknownst to Sebastian, it has nothing to do with her photographic memory or her skills. It has to do with what happened in the bedroom after the party.

Mey-Rin gets dressed for her unwilling trip to London. She removes her maid's uniform and unties her auburn hair from her pigtails. She knows she shouldn't be questioning the young master's orders but she is still wondering why does he want her to go to London with them, aside to making sure she doesn't say a word about them to Baldroy and Finnian while they're in the city. And she's not very sure that she's of any good use with the Jack the Ripper case. She has a theory though and does not like this one bit.

She dresses up in a white Edwardian blouse with ruffles on front, a slim black hobble skirt and finally a grey tweed coat. She ties her hair back in a bun and puts on a dark grey hat that has a round crown and a flat brim. She keeps her boots on since they're the only things keeping her from stumbling or falling to the floor but looking at herself in the mirror, she feels looks and feels like a school teacher. The last thing she slips on are her round-framed glasses which she cherishes very much.

Mey-Rin already has her suitcase packed with her belongings. Well, few of them. The young master did say they would be there in London for a few days, probably three. If it takes any longer, she'll
have to return to Phantomhive Manor to pick up a few more clothes, or she'll have to wear the same
clothes which wouldn't be appropriate. After packing what she could, she leaves her bedroom and
goes down to the kitchen to inform Baldroy and Finnian that she's leaving for London with Sebastian
and the young master. Mey-Rin knows that Baldroy will not like this at all and will probably try to
stop her from going which will be impossible. Master's orders.

She goes down to the kitchen where Baldroy is cleaning the dishes. Finnian is not here. He's
probably attending the garden. She prays he doesn't use the herbicide again if he doesn't want to hear
lip from Sebastian for thousandth time.

When he turns around, he nearly drops the plate upon seeing how Mey-Rin is dressed.

"What are you dressed for?" he asks.

"Um, the master wants me to accompany him to London for a few days," she explains, "Something
about Jack the Ripper and is need of my service."

"Why?"

Mey-Rin simply shrugs. "I don't know."

Baldroy sighs and puts the plate back into the sink with the other dishes before walking over to Mey-
Rin, throwing the damp towel over his shoulder. "I don't think you should be going to London with
them, Mey-Rin."

"I know that you don't trust Sebastian," she tells him. "But I do trust the young master and so far,
he's never let anything happen to me."

"Isn't he kind of the reason why you almost died -?"

"Baldroy. I chose this life and so did you and Finny. What would we be if the master had not found
us? You and Finny would be dead and I would be nothing but a merciless killer. Despite everything,
I'm still alive because of him and Sebastian. As much as I don't like this, I trust the master."

"I just don't like to see you get hurt again."

"And I won't. I'm a lot stronger than I look, remember? You've seen what I can do. You know what
I'm capable of. So you shouldn't be worried," she says. Baldroy puts his arms around her in a tight
embrace. "I'll be fine."

"You better be," he says.

However, Mey-Rin knows she can never keep that sort of promise. She was lucky the night she
almost died. This time she might not be so lucky.

After saying goodbye to Finnian and Tanaka, she returns to her room to grab her suitcase and heads
downstairs to meet Ciel and Sebastian at foyer. The carriage is waiting for them outside the mansion.
The three get inside the carriage and leave Phantomhive Estate. She's actually inside the carriage.
Truth be told, she has never been inside the carriage with the young master. She, Baldroy and
Finnian always sat out of the carriage, sometimes with Baldroy driving. But she's never been in the
carriage so she now feels odd being here.

Mey-Rin still doesn't understand why the master needs her for the investigation. Photographic
memory is not enough excuse to take her to London. And Ciel doesn't need her protection. He has
"It's my first time inside the carriage," she says as she looks out the door's window. The carriage continues driving through the dirt lane with the tall trees at either side.

"Would you prefer to sit outside the carriage?" Ciel asks.

"Depends if you'll be stopping the carriage."

"I'm not stopping the carriage, Mey-Rin."

"Then no thanks. I'm fine," she says. Sebastian simply chuckles in amusement.

Reaching London, Mey-Rin's bottom is starting to become numb and already finds it uncomfortable being inside the carriage. She brought one of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories *Ligeia*, one of the stories she finds most terrifying but overall very intriguing. The narrator's wife falls ill and dies. He marries another woman but she too falls ill and dies. The distraught narrator stays with her body overnight and watches as Rowena slowly comes back from the dead – though she has transformed into Ligeia, his first wife. Terrifying yet tragic and beautifully written. How can something so horrifying be beautiful at the same time? That something Mey-Rin never understood but is still fascinated by it.

"Is *Ligeia* your favourite story?" Ciel suddenly asks.

"My favourite story is actually *Carmilla* but it's in my suitcase," she tells him. "However, I do enjoy *Ligeia* and *The Black Cat*.

The young master chuckles in amusement. "Edgar Allan Poe's short stories and poetry have always been intriguing. *The Masque of Red Death* is my preference. However, I find *The Raven* to be the greatest of them all. The combination of short story and poetry is most ingenious. Do you not agree?"

Mey-Rin nods in agreement. It's not just to please the young master. She agrees because it's the truth. *The Raven* has an ingenious blend of both poetry and story she found to be brilliant.

"It's sad that such talent had to got to waste with his death," Sebastian says.

Sadly, Mey-Rin agrees with him. Mr. Poe's incredible talent was devastatingly waste via poverty, depression and alcoholism. He died at just the age of forty, not old or young. He had a lot to offer to the world. However, his talent was not completely wasted. His books still sell and they're masterpieces, especially *The Raven*.

They finally arrive at a house Ciel Phantomhive bought to reside in. Ciel vocally expresses his distaste for the city because there are too many people. He bought the house in case the queen needs him to investigate murders and would have to stay in London for awhile or just in case something happens at the manor and only he has the key to the place. Once they arrive, Sebastian and Mey-Rin help unload the bags and follow the young master to their temporary home. According to Sebastian, there are six bedrooms in the house and four washrooms. One of the bedrooms is the master suite. Mey-Rin and Sebastian will have the guest bedrooms.

Speaking of guests, the moment Sebastian opens the front door to the house, they find themselves with unexpected visitors. Madam Red, Lau and Grell Sutcliff.

"Aunt Angelina!?" Ciel exclaims in complete shock.

Mey-Rin leans in to whisper in his ear. "My lord, I thought only you had the key to the house."
"So did I," he growls irritably.

They're in the drawing room rummaging through drawers and bookshelf with the books removed from the shelves and stacked on top of each other. Grell is looking into the drawers. And Lau is looking into a flower vase.

"For goodness sake, where do they keep the blasted tea in this house?" Madam Red asks.

"I can't find it either," Lau says as he continues looking into the flower vase.

"Don't be ridiculous, of course it's not in there!" she snaps at him. "Grell, keep looking. There must be tea around here somewhere."

"Madam Red! Lau! Why are you here!?" Ciel shouts. Actually it's three. Grell is here too.

The three uninvited guests turn to look at Ciel, Mey-Rin and Sebastian.

"Ciel, you're early," Madam Red smiles at her nephew.

"Your sudden appearance in London must mean that the queen's Watchdog has a new scent to follow," Lau says with a cunning smirk.

They know. They know Ciel Phantomhive is hunting down Jack the Ripper.

Ciel has Sebastian, Mey-Rin and Grell make lunch after having everything is settled. Knowing that Madam Red and Lau will not leave, he's letting them stay...for the moment. They can't stay for too long. He has too much to do now. The queen needs him to catch the killer before he strikes once more. Sebastian makes sandwiches, scones and an apple n' raisin cake. Mey-Rin and Grell serve them rose tea before returning to the kitchen to wash the pans and trays.

"The killer has struck again," Ciel informs to Madam Red and Lau as they drink their tea. "Another prostitute was found gruesomely murdered in Mitre Square, Whitechapel. These killings are far from normal. The level of violence we're seeing is unprecedented."

"The most recent victim was a woman named Catherine Eddowes," Sebastian says while Ciel continues eating his cake, "It seems that a very special blade was used on her. She was torn up beyond recognition."

"The murders' distinctive style of killing has earned him a unique nickname from the press. Jack the Ripper," Ciel says.

"A frightening name, isn't it?" Lau says. Clearly, this is a serious topic and very concerning but Lau will always find a way to tease the young master. Ciel is waiting for the moment to happen. Wait for it...

"That's why I arrived here earlier than expected," Ciel says. "I needed to look into the situation for myself as soon as possible."

Lau chuckles in amusement. "But are you sure you'll be brave enough to stomach the crime scene?"

And there it is. Ciel's eyes narrow at the question. "What do you mean?"

"The sight of a dismembered body will certainly be horrific," Lau says as he sets down his cup of tea and stands up from his seat. "And imagine the stench. Blood and gore everywhere. Sure it will make anyone vomit. Are you prepared to see such a thing?" He reaches out and grabs Ciel by the ear.
"You're just a young boy after all."

Annoying by Lau's statement and inappropriate gesture, Ciel smacks his hand away. "I am the head of the Phantomhive in service to my queen. Don't ask foolish questions!"

Lau smirks amusingly. "My apologies, my lord."

"Ciel, I hope I'm not being rude by asking this," Madam Red says after sipping her own tea, "But why is Mey-Rin here? She certainly shouldn't be out of the house just yet until she recovered completely. Bringing her to the city is certainly against doctor's orders."

"She might be of good use for our case," the young lord simply says. Mey-Rin and Grell return to pick up the used plates from the table. Mey-Rin already knows about Jack the Ripper. There's no need of hiding it from Madam Red and Lau. "She has certain talents aside from cleaning the house. Isn't that right, Mey-Rin?"

Everyone stares at Mey-Rin. The young maid freezes on the spot with the tray in her arms. "Um, I do have certain talents besides cleaning, yes... Excuse me, my lord."

She takes the tray as well as the empty teacup and hurries back into the kitchen with Grell.

"That wasn't very nice, Ciel," Madam Red says.

"I said she'll be of good use," he says with an amusing smirk. "I didn't say I have to be nice about it."

"I'm quite surprised you decided to come to London with Lord Phantomhive and Sebastian," Grell says as he helps Mey-Rin dry the dishes while she washes them. Grell is no longer dressed in the gown Elizabeth gave him. He's back in his butler uniform with his brown hair tied in his usual ponytail and no longer wearing make-up.

Mey-Rin simply shrugs. "It wasn't my decision though. It was the Master's. Still, it's actually very nice to be out of the house for awhile. Fresh air. Sight-seeing."

"Oh, yes, I agree," he says, "Being inside that mansion cleaning for long periods of time must be very tiring, if I do say so myself."

"Actually, it's not at all bad. It's rather enjoyable, better than my old job." *Definitely a thousand times better.*

Grell's eyes widen in surprise. "Oh? I didn't know you had another job before becoming a maid. I thought you were always a maid."

She shakes her head. "Not always. However, my old job was less favourable. I was very happy when Sebastian hired me." *Less favourable* as in killing for hire. Sometimes killing innocent lives. She remembers killing a man who had a wife and two children. She would have nightmares of that man's face and his family pointing accusing fingers at her, calling her a murderer. It was definitely not a pleasant job to have.

"I hope you don't mind me asking this but, what was your old job?" he asks.

Mey-Rin stops washing the dishes and sighs. She really hoped he wouldn't ask that. She really hates going back to those dreadful memories. It's not his fault though. Grell is just a curious man. Still, she can't let him know of her previous job as an assassin.
"I honestly don't like talking about it," she says, looking over her shoulder to smile at him. "All I can say is that it was very unpleasant job."

"I'm terribly sorry for prying," he apologizes instantly.

"It's all right. It's not your fault." After she finishes washing the last dish, she dries her hands with a cloth.

"I think I might have something that will make you feel better." Grell suddenly takes out the pearl necklace from his coat's pocket. The necklace Mey-Rin let him borrow. "I forgot to give this back to you at the party."

He gives it to her. However, Mey-Rin smiles and gives it back to him, putting it in the palm of his gloved hand and closing the fingers. "Here. I think it looks much better on you."

Grell smiles softly. "You're too kind."

She was glad of giving up the necklace to him. It's better to see him happy than gloomy.

After lunch, Ciel, Sebastian, Mey-Rin, Grell, Madam Red and Lau head out for London to see the crime scene of the recent murder. Mitre Square. Mey-Rin is quite nervous about it. Despite the many horror novels and the men she has killed, she has never seen an innocent woman brutally murdered and that makes her stomach twists. It brings back a recent memory she wishes to forget. She can see that Grell is a bit nervous as well. He keeps fidgeting his shaking hands in uneasy ways.

"Have you ever seen a dead body before?" she asks him in order to distract herself from what will await them.

Grell shakes his head. "Not really, no. And you?"

"Too many to count," she says with a sigh.

As the group approach the crime scene, they see a crowd surrounding the area with the Scotland Yard police keeping them back. Sebastian politely ushers the people to move aside. Ciel approaches the crime scene, only to be stopped by a young man with light brown shoulder-length hair and is wearing a brown trenchcoat, black gloves and a bowler hat. It's the inspector Frederick Abberline, Commissioner Randall's partner. He was one of the guests at Phantomhive Manor's party.

"Sorry my lord," he says, giving the young master a sulky look, "I'm afraid a crime scene like this is no place for a child. So why don't you just run along home?"

"Abberline!" Commissioner Randall appears from around the corner wearing his usual top hat and square-framed glasses. He sees Ciel and makes an unpleasant sound. "Well, if it isn't Lord Phantomhive. What brings you here?"

Ciel takes out the letter from the insides of his cape and hands it over to the commissioner. "I'm here to help, Sir Arthur," he says with a cocky smirk, "It seems that your investigation is dragging a bit. You know how insistent the queen is."
The commissioner glares at the young earl before his attention is suddenly caught by Mey-Rin who is standing next to Grell Sutcliff. She instantly shies away behind Grell's back. Ciel suddenly snatches a few papers from Abberline's hands. Documents on the recent victims. No vital clues that could lead them to the killer. Just the basic information of the dead victim, the same information Mey-Rin gave him back at the manor. This is useless to him.

"It seems that you haven't found any clues that could lead us to Jack the Ripper," he says in boredom, "How incompetent and pathetic. Really, Sir Randall, I expected better from you."

Commissioner Randall harshly snatches the papers back. "We of Scotland Yard are more than capable of handling this just fine. There's no need for you to interfere."

Ciel simply shrugs his shoulders. "Splendid." He walks over to Sebastian and whispers to him. The butler looks at him in surprise but then smiles and nods in understanding.

Sebastian walks over to where Mey-Rin and Grell are standing. He tugs Mey-Rin from behind Grell's back and whispers in her ear. "You'll be angry about this later," he says this while removing her glasses.

"What -?" Before she can finish the question, Sebastian pushes her roughly. She felt like she was tossed like a ragdoll as she falls face-first on the cobblestone ground. She pushes herself back up but as she does, she is suddenly looking at the butchered corpse of Catherine Eddowes. Her face is crushed and bloody, her nose is missing, and her upper half has been split open with blood and organs spilling out. An intestine is draped over her shoulders. The sight suddenly reminds her of how she found Lord Damian's body.

Mey-Rin cries out in terror before getting pulled away from the crime scene by Inspector Abberline.

"What the bloody hell is wrong with you!? Why on earth would you do that!?!" he snaps at Ciel's butler as he leads a trembling Mey-Rin back to the group. She quickly puts her arms around Grell as she cries. Grell pets her head in comfort. Madam Red checks if she hurt herself during the fall. Luckily, Mey-Rin didn't break her nose after falling face-first to the ground.

"It was clearly an accident," Sebastian lies. Mey-Rin immediately snatches her glasses back from his hands, clearly unhappy. The commissioner and the inspector were not born yesterday though. They both saw the butler push her. Abberline is the only one who decided to be vocal about it. Sir Randall decided to stay quiet, just like the night after the party when Ciel paid him to have Scotland Yard to stop pursuing Baldroy and Finnian.

"Shall we go, Sebastian?" Ciel asks.

"Yes, sir," he nods in agreement and they all leave the crime, much to Scotland Yard's shock.

"That wasn't necessary," Madam Red says after they left the crime scene. She is referring to how Sebastian abruptly pushed Mey-Rin closer to the dead body. The poor maid was so close that she could even smell it. It was cruel and brutal. "You know she could have gotten injured."

"Yes, it was," he says before walking over to Mey-Rin, "Tell me what you saw."

Mey-Rin removes her glasses as she wipes away the tears from her eyes and takes a deep breath to calm herself down. "Catherine Eddowes was butchered quite brutally. Her faces was stabbed multiple times. Her torso was ripped open down to her womb. Her nose is missing and there were entrails around her shoulders."
"So he kills them and takes a body part as prize. Anything else?" he asks. She shakes her head. Ciel sighs and puts an assuring hand on her shoulder. "That will be all for the moment, Mey-Rin. Thank you."

"I really don't want to do that again, Master," she tells him, sniffling.

"You've seen dead bodies before. This is no different," he says, "We need to focus on the task in hand. Scotland Yard are following a case that's growing cold every second. Their evidence are useless and they have no clues that can lead us to Jack the Ripper."

"What should we do now, then, dear?" Madam Red asks.

"We go to see someone who may know more than Scotland Yard," he says.

Lau suddenly gasps. "My lord, you don't mean...?"

The young lord nods, his face neutral. "Yes, indeed."

They arrive at a shabby shop at the emptiest part of London where there are no people walking about. A large purple sign in a black frame with a skull on top resides above the black windowed door that says UNDERTAKER. The place looks eerie and creepy-looking, reminding Mey-Rin of one of the haunted houses she has read in her many horror novels with a coffin and two tombstones displayed outside and all.

"So, where are we exactly?" Lau asks. Everyone looks at the merchant in complete shock.

"You don't know!? Then what was all that about!?" Madam Red snaps at him irritably. Lau clearly wanted to be dramatic on purpose.

"It's a funeral parlour run by an acquaintance of my lord's," Sebastian explains.

"An undertaker?" Mey-Rin says. She has never been to a funeral to know what an undertaker is. "What's that?"

"A funeral director," Ciel explains. "He arranges the funerals and cremation of the deceased. He's also in charge of dressing, embalming, casketing and cossetting the corpse before their funeral."

"Oh." Mey-Rin nods, finally understanding. With her luck, she might find more dead bodies.

Sebastian knocks on the door. They wait for a few seconds. No one answers. Instead of knocking again, Sebastian opens the door to the funeral parlour and they all enter uninvited which Mey-Rin finds rude. She stays outside for a few more seconds, taking a deep breath.

"Are you all right?" Grell asks, his voice full of concern.

Mey-Rin purses her lips and nods. "I'm fine. I just...need a minute." She pads down on her coat and breathes a little while longer. "All right. I think I'm ready."

"Do you want me to go in first?" he asks.

"No, I'm fine. Thank you, Grell," she says before entering the parlour and Grell follows behind, shutting the door.

The light is dim inside the funeral parlour. It's a lot eerier inside than it is outside. There are cobwebs everywhere on the beamed ceiling. Half-finished coffins are laid on the floor, some of them almost finished; there's a chair next to one of them. A skeleton stands in a corner as well as a taxidermy
body used like a statue. A few small white-clothed tables with bundles of candles on top. Shelves full of jars, beakers, test tubes and other scientific instruments stand against the walls, as if the place were a science lab rather than a funeral parlour. Mey-Rin even sees a jar full of kidneys in one of the jars. What sort of funeral parlour is this? Kidneys? Test tubes? A taxidermy body? Is this even a funeral parlour?

"If we're looking for answers, this is the place," Ciel says. "Where is he though?"

Mey-Rin suddenly hears a creaking sound and it's coming from one of the coffins nearby. She slowly walks towards it to get a closer look. The coffin is made of black wood with golden edges. It's quite lovely. Whoever this Undertaker is, he has quite the skill to make all these coffins.

The coffin bursts open and Mey-Rin lets out a startle cry.

Chapter End Notes

I think I may be torturing Mey-Rin a bit too much.

Anyways, I'll be updating as soon as the hurricane has passed and I hope it doesn't cause too much damage.

Leave a comment after reading and let me know what you thought of this chapter and the previous one. See ya!
The Ripper (Part 2)

I survived Hurricane Irma. Thank God! Unfortunately, there are people in Miami, Florida that suffered floods and destruction to their homes. I'm putting them in my prayer in hopes for them to recover from the deadly storm.

Anyways, I'm back to writing the next chapter of Black Butler: The Lotus Flower and I will now introduce Undertaker, the guy who knows how to make an entrance.

There will be a few changes to this with Elizabeth not playing much of a part in this, only an appearance in Viscount Druitt's party. And I'll be delving more into Ciel's psychological mind and there will be a particular scene at the end that shows that Ciel is not at all okay. In reality, you can never recover from something so traumatizing in just three years.

The coffin bursts open and Mey-Rin lets out a startle cry. A man sits up from the coffin, cackling and laughing at her reaction as she immediately hides behind Madam Red and Lau. The man is lean with long grey hair, a single braid on his right side and bangs covering his eyes. Taking a good look at the man, Mey-Rin sees he has long black fingernails and a scar across his face, neck, and left pinky finger. His robe is black and has a grey scarf strapped across his chest and knotted by the hips. He wears an emerald ring on his left index finger, a band of prayer beads around his neck, and a chain with six mourning lockets around his hip. Is this the Undertaker Ciel talked about? This scary-looking man that burst out of the coffin and scared the daylights out of Mey-Rin? Not to mention he also scared Grell who is now sitting on the floor with his hand to his chest as if he suffered a heart attack. Luckily, he's still alive.

The Undertaker stops laughing and picks out a dusty top hat from within the coffin and places it on his head. "Sorry for scaring you, deary. An old habit." He looks over at Ciel and grins from ear to ear. "Hello, my lord, I thought I'd be seeing you before long. It's so lovely to see you again." With that, he jumps out of the coffin and pads down his black robe. "Do I finally have the pleasure of fitting you for one of me coffins today?"

Ciel sighs. "No, that isn't why I'm here. I wanted to -." Undertaker puts his index finger over the young lord's lips, quickly silence him.

"No need to say," he chuckles, "I'm already aware. Very well aware. One of my recent costumers was a bit unusual, shall we say? I helped though. I made her look beautiful again. Would you like to see?"

Ciel instantly shakes his head in refusal. "Absolutely not."

Undertaker then looks over to Madam Red, Lau and Mey-Rin but mostly at Mey-Rin. "What of you, deary? Would you like to take a look?"

"She's already seen one of the bodies at Mitre Square," Ciel tells him, "There's no need to frighten her even more."

"Suit yourself," Undertaker shrugs and chuckles once more. "I will ask for you to introduce me to your companions though."

Sebastian decides to answer the question for Ciel. "Angelina Dalles, also known as Madam Red, is my lord's aunt. Lau is his associate. The young girl is my master's maid Mey-Rin Lijuan and the poor
chap sitting on the floor who clearly needs a doctor is Madam Red's butler Grell Sutcliff."

Mey-Rin immediately comes out of hiding to help pull Grell from the floor and sits him down on a chair so he can catch his breath. He is still shaken up from the fright he was given, his face white as a ghost. One of the things Mey-Rin notices when sitting Grell down are the potted plants on the shelves next to the jars filled with different types of organs. The leaves on the plants are dry and grey and covered in cobwebs but none of them look like they're about to collapse. They're all dead. Not only does the Undertaker enjoy working with dead bodies, he also seems to enjoy collecting and preserving dead plants. However, among the dead plants and inside a small bowl of murky water lies a pink lotus flower. It's not dead like the other plants. Fresh. Pretty. Pink. And one of the only few things that's actually alive.

She reaches out to grab the bowl, only to have her hand smacked away by the Undertaker.

"I rather if you don't touch anything while you're here, deary," Undertaker tells her while giggling in a manner that sends chills up her spine.

"But most of them are dead," she says in confusion.

"And I like to keep it that way so back off," he says and Mey-Rin quickly steps away from the shelves.

"He's right, Mey-Rin," Ciel says, "Don't touch anything." He turns his attention to Undertaker. "That would like the details, please."

"Oh, I see," Lau speaks out, "The funeral parlour is only your cover business. Your real job is to give information on the murder victims. How much is for information?"

Undertaker shouts into Lau's face. "I have no interest in the Queen's coins, there's only one thing that I want from you!" He grins at Ciel and pulls him closer by the cape. "Please, m'lord, give it to me and I'll tell you anything!"

Mey-Rin simply stares in confusion. *Give him what?*

"Give me the extraordinary gift of true laughter! Just one joke and all me information is yours!" he begs with that grin of his while swaying around, wheezing in excitement.

Mey-Rin walks over to Ciel to whisper in his ear. "Is he always this way?"

"You have no idea. The lunatic," he grumbles in irritation.

"So instead of money, he requires a joke as payment?" she says.

He huffs. *Welcome to my world.*

*Your world is strange, Ciel Phantomhive*, she thinks.

"Allow me, my lord," Lau steps in as a volunteer. He will tell the Undertaker a joke. "Here's my joke. It's a classic one, really. On which side the tiger has the most stripes? On the outside!"

The entire parlour falls into silence. The joke Lau told everyone didn't make them laugh, it made them confused. It was the worst joke anyone has ever heard. Not even the Undertaker could crack a smile, his mouth remained a thin line. Also, isn't that joke supposed to be answered by the receiver, not the one who tells it.
"I don't get it," Mey-Rin says.

Lau glares at her. "Your sense of humour disgusts me."

"Okay, my turn," Madam Red is the next one to volunteer and she seems confident about this, even Grell is smiling. Who knows. Perhaps the joke with be better than Lau's. "I live for gossip. So this story will make you laugh so hard just for you to curl up and die." However, things take a turn for the worst when she starts telling her gossip and Sebastian immediately covers Ciel's ears and Mey-Rin's eyes grow wide in surprise. "So Alice's beau gave her the most extraordinary d*** for her birthday, it was *** and white and with thick veins or any of that s*** -."

"All right, I'll have to stop you right there, love," Undertaker instantly interrupts her as he heard quite enough, "I can tell this is going nowhere."

With a disappointed huff, Madam Red steps aside and sits in a corner with Lau like a punished child. She should have known better than to tell such filthy stories to the mortician, especially in front of her own nephew.

"Now, what about you, deary?" he suddenly asks Mey-Rin, much to her surprise, "Do you have a joke for me?"

"I, um, don't know any jokes," she says, "Sorry."

"Are you sure about that?"

Ciel growls in annoyance. "Just say whatever you like, Mey-Rin. He won't stop until you tell him a joke and we don't have all day."

"Um, all right. Why are the frogs so happy?"

"Why?"

"Because they eat whatever bugs them," she answers.

The mortician cracks a small smile but doesn't even chuckle. "You were close, deary, but no," he says, "It did not make me laugh one bit."

She shrugs. "I tried to tell you."

"Well, m'lord, it looks like you're the only one left," he says to Ciel, "I gave you a special discount last time but I'm not going to do it again."

Ciel growls, gritting his teeth. He looks like he's about to punch the mortician in the face. However, Sebastian steps in as the next volunteer.

"Allow me, m'lord. It can't be helped," he says calmly, pulling his black glove tight around his hand. "I might have a joke that will sure make him laugh. However, I suggest for everyone to wait outside. No matter what happens, do not attempt to listen to this."

Everyone steps out of the funeral parlour, leaving Sebastian alone with the Undertaker. They stand outside and wait and wait...and wait. While waiting, Mey-Rin decides to ask Ciel about the strange mortician.

"Young master, I hope you don't mind me asking but, how do you know this man?" she asks.

"Undertaker was an old friend of my father's as well as Klaus and Diederich. He was also a member
of the Aristocrats of Evil," he informs her, "He's our informant."

"If he was a friend of your father, why didn't he ever make an appearance at Phantomhive Manor along with Diederich and Klaus?"

"It's complicated to explain," he sighs.

Before Mey-Rin can ask anything else, a burst of laughter can be heard from inside the funeral parlour, startling most of them. However, Ciel doesn't seem surprise. He probably faced this kind of reaction before. As soon as the laughter dies out, Sebastian opens the door. Inside the parlour, Undertaker is leaned over one of his coffins, breathing heavily and with a grin on his face.

"You may come in now," Sebastian smiles triumphantly, "I believe he'll tell us everything we want to know."

"What kind of joke did you tell him, Sebastian?" Ciel asks.

"Not something a child your age should know about," he says as he steps aside and lets everyone back inside the parlour.

Undertaker offers them some tea. However, he doesn't have teacups or any chinaware like Ciel has back at Phantomhive Manor. Instead, he uses beakers as teacups which is more than strange. Did he even wash them before serving the tea? Were they used? That's something Mey-Rin wonders as she looks down at her own beaker full of tea and a plate with two or three bone-shaped biscuits that smell like cinnamon. Ciel doesn't seem to mind much. He's probably used to after being here a thousand times before. Of course, he does look a bit annoyed with Undertaker. Ciel told her that his father Vincent and Undertaker were friends once, why would he be annoyed? Ciel said it was complicated. How complicated?

"A very interesting pattern I've been seeing these days," Undertaker begins to tell them of their Jack the Ripper victims as he washes his hands with a bowl of water in front of a mirror. "I often get costumers who are incomplete."

"Incomplete? You mean, without it's parts?" Mey-Rin says and remembers what she saw in Mitre Square after Sebastian pushed her, "Catherine Eddowes was missing a nose when we found her and had her entrails around her shoulders. Is that what you mean by incomplete?"

Undertaker nods in agreement. "Indeed. However, the lot of you should know that those are not the only parts that go missing from the body. The uterus is missing which is quite odd. Everyone looks at each other in complete shock. The uterus? "A killer makes a big mess of things but that specific part is always precisely exiled."

"He did on a row that was public," Sebastian says, "They're not high traffic. Wouldn't an amateur have a difficult time doing such a complicated procedure quickly enough?"

Undertaker chuckles in amusement. "Hehehe, you're a clever one, butler. That's exactly what I was thinking. " He stands behind Ciel and puts a finger to his neck. However, Ciel pushes his hand away in annoyance. "You see, first he slits her throat open with a sharp and rips inside below the bellybutton. And he takes her precious womanly parts." That last statement makes Mey-Rin shudder with unease.

"It could be a doctor then," she says, "I mean, forgive me if I offend Madam Red, but doctors have the medical skills to perform such a complicated produce such as removing the uterus, wouldn't that make them the prime suspects?" Everyone stares at Mey-Rin in surprise which takes her aback for a
second. She prays Madam Red doesn't get angry about her comment.

"Hehehe!" Undertaker bursts into laughter. "I like this one very much! Not good with humour but sure knows how to use the brain. Hmm, it could be a doctor, a surgeon or a physician."

"But what would the killer want with a uterus?" Madam Red asks, "Out of all the body parts he could have chosen, why would he choose that specific part?"

"That's up for the young lord to find out, don't you think? There will be more slaying like this, I'm certain. Sadistic killers like this won't stop until someone makes them." He grins at Ciel once more. "Will you stop him? Can you sniff him out, like a good little guard?"

"I am bound by the honour of my family," Ciel says coldly, "I eliminate any threat the queen asks me to, by any means I find necessary."

The moment they leave the funeral parlour, Mey-Rin suddenly becomes a bit uneasy. A small throb in her head giving her a minor migraine. She assumes that it's because how uneasy the Undertaker made her feel. The funeral parlour didn't seem to bother her much since she's used to those kinds of things in horror novels but something about that specific parlour did not feel right. It felt strange. And almost familiar.

"This information narrows down our suspects," Ciel says.

"First we must look for those with the necessary skill set," Sebastian says, "Crossing out an alibi on the nights which the murders occurred. The removal of the organs would suggest some sort of gruesome ritual. We should concentrate on people involved with secret societies."

"As if that narrows the field?" Madam Red scoffs, "Even I have the medical skills necessary for this. Besides, the season is ending soon. Any doctors who followed the nobles to this city will be returning to the country and -.

"We'll have to conclude the investigation quickly then," he says with a cunning smile.

"That's impossible," Lau says, "It would take days to gather all the suspects."

"I should be able to do this much, at least. Otherwise, what kind of butler would I be?" Sebastian assures them. Madam Red simply stares at him with wide eyes. "I'll make up a list of viable suspects and begin questioning them all for the young master immediately. Now if you will excuse me."

He kicks the door open and jumps out of the carriage while it's still moving, much to Madam Red and Lau's terror as they look out the window, only to see that he is not splattered on the cobblestone streets. He's gone.

"Sebastian will take care of it for now," Ciel says, his expression full of boredom as he rests his head on his fist. "Mey-Rin will prepare a cup of tea while we wait. I hope she didn't upset you, Aunt Ann."

"No, of course. However, I am concerned about your decision of bringing her to London, dear."

"She'll be just fine," Ciel says.

The carriage finally stops at the townhouse Ciel is residing. Everyone gets out of the carriage and Grell helps Mey-Rin slide off the box-seat, grabbing her by the waist, lifting her up and setting her down on the gravel ground. Ciel sees this and bites his lower lip before continuing his way back into
the house. The moment they enter the house, Sebastian is already standing there waiting for them, much to everyone's surprise - except for Ciel and Mey-Rin.

"Welcome back, everyone," he says with a bow, "I have waited for your return. Your afternoon tea is waiting for you in the drawing room." He takes the young master's top hat as he walks past him without a care in the world. Ciel takes off his cape and gives it to Mey-Rin.

"Hold on a second, how are you here!?" Madam Red exclaims in surprise.

"I finished that little errand so I made my way home to inform you," he says.

"You made the suspect list already?" Madam Red says, frowning at him suspiciously. She looks at Grell who seems stunned as well. The bumbling butler simply shrugs as a response. Sebastian nods. "Yes. I made a list of names based on what we discussed earlier and contacted them all. Then I asked them the relevant questions." He now has a few scrolls of paper in his hands, probably the name list. This takes everyone aback (minus Ciel).

Madam Red chuckles as if he were joking. "Come now, Sebastian. Finishing a task like that in less than a day impossible, even for you."

"I honestly doubt that," Mey-Rin mumbles between her teeth. Apparently, nothing is impossible for Sebastian Michaelis.

Sebastian unrolls one of the scrolls and begins to read the list of names. It's a very long paper. He informs them all to Ciel, Madam Red and the others while they simply stare in disbelief and Ciel smirked. Grell is simply awestruck. None of the names like Richard Oswald and other names Mey-Rin couldn't remember because Sebastian is talking too fast. Too much information is hurting her brain.

"From this information," Sebastian continues explaining, "I have narrowed down our list to one possible suspect."

"Are you sure you're just a butler, not a secret military intelligence officer?" Madam Red asks.

"No, my lady," he says. Here it comes, Mey-Rin knows this, wait for it. "I am simply one hell of a butler." There it is. Sebastian never ceases an opportunity to say that phrase. Ever.

"Who is our possible suspect?" Lau asks.

"Aleister Chamber," Sebastian says, "Also known as the Viscount Druitt. He graduated from medical school but has never gone into practice. Lately, he has thrown several parties at his estate this season. But many of these parties are rumoured to be secret gatherings."

"I'm familiar with the name Viscount Druitt. I've been invited to several of his parties before. I hear he's into black magic and those occult sort of things," Madam Red says.

"So your suspicious that Druitt is holding these parties to perform ritualistic sacrifices using local prostitutes?" Lau asks.

"And the removal of the uterus could be part of those rituals. A Satanic cult, maybe. Though I could be wrong," Mey-Rin says.

"There are a lot of possibilities but you would be correct, Mey-Rin," Sebastian says.
"Tonight is the last party of the season," Ciel says, "We should have to act quickly if we want to catch Viscount red-handed before another prostitute gets hurt, or anyone else for that matter. Which means this is our last chance."

"How are we supposed to do that?" Lau asks.

By any means Ciel finds necessary.

Madam Red helps Mey-Rin into one of the red dresses she has, a very dark burgundy dress made of silk with the edges of the corset shaped in leaves. The dress reveals a bit of her bosom and has no sleeve. Madam Red gives her detached leg-of-mutton sleeves that fit with the dress itself. She has never worn a dress so revealing. She does not feel comfortable in this dress, at all. The mask Madam Red has given to her is white like bone and shaped like a crescent moon, covering the upper half of her face.

"Are you sure you can go through this, dear?" Madam Red asks. She's wearing a lovely Marie Antoinette gown of black laces and bright red silk, looking more conserved than Mey-Rin does. How come she gets to be more covered and I have to wear this?

"You look physically well but there is no telling when you might get sick again. You're taking a big risk assisting my nephew."

A risk she's willing to take.

"I'd do anything for the young master," Mey-Rin says, even keep secrets from his own family whether she likes it or not.

"I've already witnessed it the moment Sebastian brought you to the hospital and told me how you took a bullet for Ciel," Madam Red says, "I know you would give your own life to protect my nephew. It's strange though. The bullet went straight through your neck. It should have killed."

It should have. But it didn't. The bullet that went through her neck hit a vein and caused Mey-Rin to bleed profusely, not even Ciel could stop it. He acts cold towards Mey-Rin as if nothing happened. But Mey-Rin still remembers his hands on her neck, trying to keep the blood from pouring, and him screaming at Sebastian to help her but did nothing except take her to the hospital where Madam Red and other doctors nearly lost her twice. She remained in a coma for at least two weeks before waking up alive. What surprised her the most is how Ciel remained in the hospital during those two weeks, waiting for her to awake. He acts like he doesn't give a bloody damn about Mey-Rin but she can see the concern in his eye. He simply pretends to not care. Mey-Rin is simply playing along.

Mey-Rin suddenly hears Ciel crying out and screaming. She's sure Madam Red heard it too as they both dash to his bedroom. The moment they barge into the room, Ciel has his hands pressed against the wall with Sebastian standing behind him, pulling the strings of a corset the young boy is surprisingly wearing around his torso. Sebastian is fastening the corset a bit too tight.

"That's it! You're going to kill me!" Ciel cries out in pain.

"I hardly know anyone being killed by a corset before," Sebastian says.

"Maybe it's because you've never been a doctor before, or a woman!" Madam Red shouts in outrage before looking at Mey-Rin in panic. "Do something!"

Mey-Rin nods and quickly helps Ciel loosen the corset so he can breathe properly. He finally gasps for air after untangling the last string.

"Ciel, what on earth were you thinking!?" Madam Red snaps but her menacing glare is directed to
"We want the Viscount Druitt's attention, don't we?" Ciel pants, "What better way to catch his attention than with a lady."

"But darling, you already have two pretty ladies here willing to lure Viscount Druitt," Madam Red says. The comment makes Mey-Rin's cheeks turn pink.

"I prefer to do this myself. If Viscount Druitt is Jack the Ripper, I rather not risk you. Mey-Rin?" He's giving her the 'That's an order' look. It seems that she's the one suitable to prep him. Sebastian has not been helpful, at all. He nearly crushed the life out the young master with that bloody corset.

Mey-Rin puts him in a dress tailored by Miss Nina which is quite odd. Does she know of Ciel's dangerous mission? Isn't anyone going to stop him from doing this? She could but then Ciel will dismiss her and send her home.

The dress he wears is quite lovely. It's pink silk moiré and white bobbin lace with a black bow in the back. A small matching hat compliments the dress with three large pink roses. The last thing Ciel has to wear is a wig. He can't go walking around exposing his eyepatch. The moment people see the eyepatch, they will immediately recognize him as the Phantomhive earl. Not only will it tarnish his reputation, it will also ruin their plans of catching the Viscount red-handed. Mey-Rin uses part of the wig to cover the eyepatch before placing the hat on his head. Just like Grell, Ciel looks like a lady. Mey-Rin notices a few small bruises on Ciel's upper arms but dares not to ask for she knows he will never answer.

"What on earth are you wearing?" he asks after looking at her dress through the full-length mirror.

"Look who's talking," Mey-Rin says, "You're the one who decided this. Besides, this dress was your aunt's idea. I didn't really have much choice in it. I think this is revenge for my comment back at the funeral parlour."

"You were doing your job and she knows that," Ciel corrects her, "She's not really angry. The dress looks lovely on you despite being inappropriate for a masquerade ball."

"Good thing I'll be wearing a mask," she says. Ciel chuckles in amusement. "I'm worried for you though. This plan of yours is quite dangerous."

"If you want out, Mey-Rin -.

"That's not what I'm saying. I just want to make sure that you'll be safe."

"With Sebastian by my side, I doubt that will be a problem," he says, "You just keep your eyes open for Viscount Druitt and inform me everything he does at the ball. If he's talking to one of the women, if he lures her away from the party or if he disappears completely. That way, Sebastian and I will follow him. As for you, you will remain at the party with Madam Red, Lau and Grell. Whatever happens, you will not engage."

"Are you sure?" she asks worriedly.

"Trust me, Mey-Rin, if I need your pistols, I'll let you know," he says, "Until then, keep them hidden in your boots, follow instructions and do not make any unnecessary movements. Do you understand?"

Mey-Rin sighs but nods obediently. "Yes, my lord."
In the last minute before leaving for the party, Mey-Rin decides to let go of her hair from her bun to allow the curls of her hair to cover a bit of her exposed chest and shoulder. Despite being beautiful, the dress is sure to cause a scandal even if not as bad as the scandal that almost broke out of Phantomhive Manor the week before. She's only doing this for him.

The thought of those women being killed and having their organs removed from some gruesome ritual makes Mey-Rin want to vomit; she keeps brushing her hair over her shoulder nervously, her fingers combing through auburn curls as she tries not to think about it. Lastly, Ciel tells everyone, mostly Mey-Rin and Madam Red to be on their guard, to be careful and to not wander off on their own. Mey-Rin will keep that last part in mind as she does intend to wander off, even unconsciously.

Finally, they arrive at the Viscount Druitt's mansion which is secured behind a black spiked gate. The mansion looks quite large, not as large as Phantomhive Manor, and looks like something out of Ancient Greece with walls marble white and pillars holding up the home in different corners. Its actually amazing. The carriage stops in front of the mansion. When the door opens, Ciel, Sebastian, Mey-Rin, Madam Red and Lau step out. Grell drives away to park the carriage out back. It's a pity Grell can't dress like a lady again.

Entering the mansion, the group are met with a stunning ballroom with a polished orange-brown floor, bone white walls and crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. Men and women are dressed in very beautiful clothing of silks, tuxedos, laces, velvets and ruffles while wearing masks of different types and colours, some feathered and some covered in glitter and some simply plain eye-masks. There are many of the guests dancing, chatting, drinking and laughing while violin music played in the background.

So far, no signs of Viscount Druitt.

"All right, everyone," Ciel instructs, "We all know what to do."

"Ciel will be my niece Alice visiting from the country," Madam Red says, "Mey-Rin shall be her sister and Sebastian will be their tutor."

Mey-Rin raises her hand as if she were a student asking a teacher. "I'm sorry, my lady, but I don't see how anyone will believe that the master and I are siblings when we look nothing alike."

"No one will know the difference while wearing your masks," Sebastian says, "I'd keep it on if I were you."

"And how come I have to be your niece!!?" Ciel snaps irritably at Madam Red, his face turning crimson red.

"Because, dear, I always wanted a girl," she says with a teasing smiles as Ciel's face turns redder.

"You're kidding me!"

"You don't want them to know you're a Phantomhive, do you? Besides, I hear that Lord Druitt has an eye for any pretty thing in a skirt and we do want to catch his eye, don't we? Also, this was your idea. I don't see why you're complaining."

"By any means necessary," Sebastian smirks mischievously, "You remember saying that yourself, don't you, my lord?"

Ciel sighs. Sebastian and Madam Red are right though. This was his idea so he has to play along pretending to be his aunt's niece whether he likes it or not. However, Madam Red is wrong about
one thing. No one is going to believe that he and Mey-Rin are siblings. That part is absolutely ridiculous. As long as she doesn't take off the mask, it won't be a problem for them. It's not like anyone is going to recognize her anyways. Ciel should be more grateful towards Madam Red since she was the one with the connections that got them invitations to the party in the first place.

"It's a pity the maid has to be the earl's sister," Lau says. "She would have done an excellent job playing as my concubine."

Mey-Rin and Ciel stare at Lau in horror. "Absolutely not!" they both exclaim.

"First thing's first, we need to locate this murderous Viscount," Sebastian says.

"And then what?" Mey-Rin asks.

"We bait him," Ciel says.

Mey-Rin sighs. It's a risky move but she tries not to question the young master's decision. It's his decision and his alone. She will try not to get in the way of his plan, unless his life is being threatened. But that job is left for Sebastian to do, not her. What can she do to help?

The group spreads out in pairs of two. Madam Red with Lau. Mey-Rin with Grell, mostly to keep the bumbling butler from hurting himself for the millionth time. And Ciel with Sebastian. Many bachelors approach Madam Red offering her drinks and flowers, calling her the most beautiful woman in the world and other compliments. She is rather beautiful. One can say that she is the most beautiful woman in the world. It makes Mey-Rin wonder why she doesn't have a new husband. Ciel has told Mey-Rin, Baldroy and Finnian about Madam Red being a widow before they even met her. It was in order to avoid unnecessary questions that would make things uncomfortable.

"At least Elizabeth isn't here," Ciel sighs, "I wouldn't want her to see me like this."

"I believe you might be a little too late for that, my lord," Sebastian says as he points at the far side of the ballroom.

Ciel's eye widen as he sees Elizabeth with her mother Francis and brother Edward talking to the other guests. Elizabeth is admiring the female guest's gowns, how beautiful they look. Ciel really hopes she doesn't see him. The question that still vexes him is what on earth is she doing in Viscount Druitt's party? Why is she here?

"We should move quickly," Sebastian suggests and Ciel nods in agreement. They both walk away silently from the Midfords' sight.

"This is not good," Ciel says.

"To be honest, I didn't expect her here either," Sebastian says.

"If someone sees the head of my family dressed like this -.

"The Phantomhive name will be ruined for generations," Sebastian says and abhorrent look crosses the young earl's face. That did not help one bit.

"We should join the others and inform them of Elizabeth's presence," Ciel suggests, "She probably won't mind Madam Red being here but if she sees Mey-Rin, she'll be asking a lot of questions."

"Indeed."
It took awhile for the two to find the others but eventually finds Mey-Rin dancing with Grell. Again, they were trying to dance. Mey-Rin's ankle bends to the side and nearly falls to the floor if Grell hadn't been holding her upright.

"Are you all right?" he asks.

Mey-Rin nods though her foot is throbbing in pain. It hurts but she's able to endure the pain like most days. "I'm fine. It happens a lot."

Ciel and Sebastian immediately walks over to her and Grell. "Elizabeth is here."

Mey-Rin's eyes widen behind her mask. "What?"

"Whatever you do, don't let her see you. All right?" he instructs and turns his attention to Grell, "Where's Madam Red?"

"She's over there," he says.

Madam Red is sitting at a green armchair with men surrounded her, drinking wine and laughing. Ciel growls in annoyance. She looks like she's having a grand time. Does she need to be reminded that they're here to catch a killer, not flirt with men, bachelors or not.

Elizabeth suddenly comes into view again, this time her eyes are now on Ciel. "Oh my God. Look at that beautiful dress."

"Remember, she can't see you," Ciel says before making a run for it with Sebastian.

Mey-Rin quickly turns her head to the side to hide herself from Elizabeth's sight as the young blonde lady walks past her and Grell, already stalking Ciel. Never underestimate Elizabeth and her admiration for pretty dresses. She sees a dress and goes mad over it. Perhaps they shouldn't have given Ciel such a dress.

Meanwhile, Sebastian drags Ciel far away from Elizabeth. He quickly thinks of a way to distract her and approaches one of the waiters offering glasses of lemonade to the guest. "Excuse me, sir, but the young lady back there requires lemonade," he says.

"Yes, sir," the waiter nods and steps in front of Elizabeth, stopping her from pursuing the two, much to the young girl's confusion. "Lemonade, my lady?"

Sebastian and Ciel quickly head out to the balcony, completely out of Elizabeth's sight. Ciel smacks his hand to his forehead and groans in frustration. "This is a disaster. Why do these things always happen to me? At this rate, we will never find the viscount."

"Lord Druitt looks as beautiful as ever tonight! His hair is bright like the sun!" Ciel hears one of the women shout with glee. He and Sebastian peek back into the ballroom, just in case Elizabeth is still there, and there he is. The man they've been looking for. Aleister Chamber. The Viscount of Druitt, also their Jack the Ripper.
The Ripper (Part 3)

Mey-Rin spots the Viscount Druitt just a few feet away talking to a few of the ladies who seem to admire him greatly. He's a very handsome man indeed. Light blonde hair and lavender eyes, something you don't see every day. His completely dressed in white with an ascot tie, a white eye-mask and a ruby red brooch. However, he is not Mey-Rin's type of man. She doesn't find sadistic killers at all attractive. In fact, she finds them sickening.

Her heart skips a beat when she sees the viscount walking towards her and Grell. She'll just have to grin and bare it for the moment. She was told not to engage. She's only meant to spot him and inform the young master, but not engage. She and Madam Red are obligated to stay away from the viscount.

Viscount Druitt smiles in a welcoming matter at the two, mostly at Mey-Rin. "I hope you find this party to your liking," he says kindly, bowing to them. Mey-Rin does a curtsy and Grell imitates the same bow.

Mey-Rin smiles falsely. "Yes, thank you, Lord Druitt," she says, "It's a pleasure to finally meet you. I am Laura and this is my fiancé Samuel." Grell was about to say something but she immediately elbows him in the ribs to shut him up. Just play along, you idiot.

Lord Druitt smiles at Grell. "You are a lucky man then. She is quite the beauty, isn't she? To be honest, if I had known a girl as pretty as her existed, I would have been engaged a long time ago."

"Indeed. She's a wonderful woman," he says with an awkward smile.

"Do you mind if I ask your lady to dance with me?" Lord Druitt asks.

Mey-Rin grips Grell's hand tighter, signaling her panic to him. He immediately shakes his head in refusal and puts his arm around her waist. "Sorry. But our wedding is tomorrow afternoon and we want to make this night special for the two of us. Isn't that right, love?"

She nods in a agreement. "Indeed. However, I believe my sister Alice would like a dance with you. She's been eager to meet you, my lord."

Viscount Druitt raises an eyebrow. "Oh really? And where is your sister, if I may ask?"

"I believe she went for a bit of fresh air in the balcony. You'll find her wearing a pink dress with a black bow," she tells him, making it easier for the young master to get closer to the viscount.

The viscount smiles grateful. "Well then, thank you. And I really do hope for your wedding to be good one. Enjoy the party," he says before walking away.

Mey-Rin sighs in relief and pats Grell on the shoulder. "Thank you so much."

"Are you sure that was wise?" Grell asks as the two continue dancing, "You just led a serial killer to the young master."

"Ciel told me not to engage. I'm only doing as told," she tells him, "Besides, using himself as bait was his idea. Trust me, I would have stopped him from doing this if I could. In fact, I might as well lunge at the viscount right now. But that would just make the young master angry."

"You really seem to care for him, do you?"
She nods. "He's been good to me. The last thing I want is to see him get hurt," she says. She feels pairs of eyes watching her. She knows that it's the darn dress Madam Red made her wear. They're scorning her, she knows it. "I'm not feeling comfortable. Everyone is staring at the dress I'm wearing."

Grell simply shrugs smiles at her kindly. "Why should it matter? Also, you were the one who taught me not to be ashamed of myself. Why should you?"

Mey-Rin scoffs and lightly punches his shoulder. "Don't use my own words against me, Grell Sutcliff." She laughs, however. "But perhaps you're right."

"We found the Viscount Druitt, but he's far away," Ciel says, "How do we get close to him?"

There are too many people. He can't simply squeeze past them to get to Viscount Druitt. Not to mention that he's risking the chance of reencountering Elizabeth.

"I don't see that much of a problem, master," Sebastian says as he and the young earl see the blond viscount approaching them.

Viscount Druitt stops in front of Ciel and smiles warmly at him. "You must be the young Lady Alice," he says, "Your sister Laura has told me you wanted to meet me. I do hope you're enjoying the party."

Ciel frowns. Laura? He must mean Mey-Rin. She probably told the viscount that her name was Laura so she wouldn't be discovered and told him where he and Sebastian would be. She's been obedient so far in not engaging. That's good.

Ciel smiles, curtsies and tries to speak in a girly voice. "Good evening, my lord Druitt. I am indeed enjoying the party. It's not every day I get to come to parties like this. I've been quite eager, my lord. I've heard you were the most handsome man in London. I wanted to see it for myself. I must be honest that I didn't think the rumours would be true."

Viscount Druitt shows off a white pearly grin and chuckles in amusement. "Would the young lady like to dance? I already asked your sister to dance but she's already dancing with her fiancé."

Fiancé? He's probably talking about Grell. Ciel could laugh at the thought of Grell being Mey-Rin fiancé (which is the most ridiculous thing he has ever heard) if it weren't for the fact that he has a job to do and doesn't want to ruin his cover by laughing in the viscount's face. When he hears the word dance, Ciel's body instantly freezes in panic. He doesn't want to dance. He doesn't know how. He only took one dance lesson and didn't learn shit. Not even Mey-Rin could help.

"Are you sure, my lord?" he asks, his cheeks turning red, "I am quite shy and never felt comfortable dancing in public."

Sebastian places a hand on Ciel's shoulder. "My lady, remember what I told you about socializing. As long as you continue to shy away, you shall never be comfortable around parties. Why not forget your worries for once and join this nice young man into dancing?" he says while smiling. Ciel would snap at him if the viscount wasn't standing in front of him right now. He gets the message though. Dancing with the viscount is the only way to get closer to him. He suddenly sees Elizabeth somewhere around the corner and acts fast.

"Of course," he says, "It would be rude of me to refuse a dance, especially with a man as beautiful as you. Tom, dear, would you get me something to drink while I dance with Lord Druitt."
Viscount Druitt smiles and offers his hand. Ciel immediately takes his hand and is led to the middle of the ballroom. Sebastian immediately walks away to the table full of refreshments to get a drink though he is simply pretending. In reality, he is keeping an eye on Ciel from a safe distance as he watches the young earl dance with the murderous viscount.

Ciel tries not to step on the viscount as they dance the waltz. Ciel prays that he doesn't on him. There's no telling if stepping on him would make him change moods, from friendly to a monster, kind of like what happened at the party with Alois Trancy. Viscount Druitt can turn from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde.

"Your dancing is quite exquisite like a lovely little robin, my sweet lady," he compliments.

"Thank you, my lord Druitt," Ciel says, trying to keep up the girly voice without making it squeak. He can't let the viscount know that he is a boy. Otherwise, things will turn sour for the both of them. "But I am growing quite tired of dancing."

Druitt smiles at her in amusement. "Oh? Is that so?"

"Yes."

"Are you looking for something more entertaining?" Viscount Druitt asks as he puts hand around Ciel's waist and his fingers crawl down the corset to the skirt, making Ciel shudder in disgust. As much as he wanted to push him off, Ciel has no choice but to endure it, especially after those horrible dance lessons and now being suffocated by a bloody corset he forced himself to put on. He'll try to tolerate it until it's all over.

"Do you know of other amusements, my lord?" he asks, acting innocent and naïve. "I'd be most interested."

The viscount holds the young earl's chin in a gentle way. "Of course. I'd be happy to show them to you, my dear robin."

Ciel is now screaming inside. This is making him feel uncomfortable and disgusting. *When this is over, I'm going to kill this creep.* He would kick him in the ass if he could. "Oh really? Like what?" he asks with a mischievous and daring smirk. He knows he has to find out the truth before the dance is over. Otherwise it will be too late.

He suddenly sees Elizabeth again a few feet away from him the viscount. She's coming their way. If she recognizes him in the dress, it will be all over. Everything will be over.

The viscount continues teasing Ciel. "Do you really want to know?"

Ciel nods, desperate to leave the ballroom as quickly as possibly to avoid being caught by Elizabeth. She's already getting closer. "Oh yes, indeed. I'm certainly dying to know."

"You might be a bit young yet," Viscount Druitt says.

"Now don't tease me my lord, I'm a lady. Not a little girl," Ciel says.

The violin music suddenly playing and everyone claps. The dance is over and Elizabeth is already close to Ciel and Viscount Druitt.

Suddenly, Sebastian appears in front of the guests carrying a large wooden cabinet over his shoulder and hand full of swords, blocking Elizabeth's way. "Ladies and gentlemen! If you please gather around, I shall begin this evening's magic show!" Sebastian says. He then turns his attention to Lau
who is fanning air to Madam Red. "Pardon me, sir. Would you kindly assist me?"


Viscount Druitt frowns strangely. "Hmm, I don't recall hiring any magicians this evening."

This is Ciel's last chance. It's now or never. "My lord," he says to the viscount, "I've seen more than enough. Can we go? Please?"

Druitt smiles wickedly at the young earl. "As you wish, my lady." Ciel takes deep breaths to calm himself down before following Viscount Druitt out of the ballroom and up a dark green staircase that leads to a dark purple curtain.

Viscount Druitt pulls the purple curtain aside to reveal a dark entrance ahead. "This way, my lady."

Ciel's heart begins to pound terribly against his chest but he ignores it and walks through the dark entrance. The viscount follows behind her and lets the curtain fall. The corridors are dark and almost hard for Ciel to see. His heart continues racing. He knows that he's walking into a trap.

Viscount Druitt leads Ciel to a black door at the end of the corridor. He takes out a key and inserts it in the keyhole, turning it and unlocking the door. He pushes the door open and gestures Ciel to enter the room first. Ciel calms his rapid heart and clenches his fist tightly before entering the room and the viscount follows behind her like a predator stalking its food.

"We're going somewhere I'm sure you'll find very amusing," he says, "I know I will."

The viscount shuts the door. In an instant, Ciel smells something odd. A sickly sweet yet suffocating smell. His head starts become fuzzy and his vision blurs. Oh no. He knew this would happen though but he wonders if he'll be able to wake up in time to call Sebastian as he falls to the floor and is engulfed by darkness.

While he's gone, Sebastian starts to perform his magic trick in front of everyone present at the masquerade. Mey-Rin is the only one who seems to notice Ciel leave with the Viscount Druitt and covers her mouth to avoid crying. She has to remain calm. The young master knows what he's doing. But what if he needs help later on? Is Sebastian really going to just stand there and perform magic tricks while Ciel is being taken by the viscount? What on earth is he even doing?

Grell leans close to whisper in her ear. "Mey-Rin, I need to go to the washroom for a moment."

She looks at him in surprise. Is she really the only one who actually saw the young master being lured away by the murderous viscount that could be Jack the Ripper. "What? Now?"

"I don't think my bladder can hold on much longer," he says, "I'll be right back, I promise." He then disappears through the crowd before Mey-Rin can even call him back.

She could go after the young master herself but there's no telling if she'll just make things worse or not. She obligates herself to stay put and wait for Sebastian to finish whatever magic trick he's performing.

"A normal cabinet!" Sebastian announces, "Once I climb inside, I shall be shut tightly and bound with these chains. Simply run it through with these swords. I shall reappear completely unharmed." After giving Lau the swords, he steps into the cabinet and shuts the doors. Lau wraps the chains around the cabinet to seal it tightly to keep Sebastian from escaping.
Lau looks at the sword in his hand nervously. Does he even know what he's doing? Judging by the
confused look on his face, he doesn't. "Well, here goes nothing." He jumps on top of the cabinet and
runs the sword right through, much to everyone's horror. Mey-Rin cringes and looks away for a
moment. She sees Elizabeth and Francis standing right behind her and quickly return her attention
to the magic show in order to keep the ladies from seeing her. Lau continues stabbing swords through
the cabinet in different sides and angles, possibly impaling Sebastian multiple times.

Once he finishes stabbing the last sword through the cabinet, the chains break apart and the swords
slip out. The doors open and Sebastian steps out of the cabinet completely unharmed, without a
single scratch on him. And everyone claps and cheers in amazement.

"That was most incredible, Sebastian," she says.

"Thank goodness," Lau says with a sigh of relief, "For a moment, I thought I killed you."

"It actually hurt more than expected," Sebastian says while wiping the sweat from his brow and
glares at the Chinese merchant, "I didn't think you would aim straight for my head."

"You stabbed him that many times without knowing!?" Madam Red snaps at Lau in outrage. She's
always snapping at him though this time it's justifiable.

Sebastian simply smiles. "As you all witnessed, there were no tricks or illusions. Simply magic."

Madam Red looks around the ballroom strangely and walks over to the young maid. "Mey-Rin,
where is Grell?" she asks.

"He said he was going to the washroom," Mey-Rin tells her.

"Oh. He must have drank too much lemonade. I'm going to get another drink. Would you like
some?"

The young maid shakes her head in refusal. "No thank you, Dr. Dalles."

"You and I really have to talk about you calling me Dr. Dalles instead of Madam Red." With that,
the red lady heads over to the table of refreshment and snacks. Lau joins in as well.

This gives Mey-Rin the opportunity to quickly warn Sebastian about Ciel being lured away by the

Sebastian sighs and pulls the white gloves tighter around his hands. "I anticipated this."

"We need to go get him then -.

"We will do nothing," he tells her sternly, "You will remain here with Madam Red and Lau. When
the master calls, I shall go get him."

"What if he might not be able to call you? What if he's gagged? What will you do then?" she asks
him. He presses his lips together and rolls his eyes. She knows how much she's annoying the butler
but she's terrified beyond belief for Ciel. "Please, Sebastian."

He sighs in irritation. Despite Mey-Rin being a nuisance, she has a point. If the young master is
gagged, it would make it difficult for his name to be called. "Fine," he growls and grabs her by the
arm, dragging her away from the ballroom. "Let's go."
The nightmares happen almost nightly. They start and end the same. The previous Phantomhive Manor being engulfed in red and golden flames. Ciel standing in the middle of the hallway, sobbing as he watches his parents' dead bodies being licked and devoured by the torrid flames, their skin turning black and red like burning coal. Ciel wanted to reach out for them but he couldn't. Otherwise, he would be devoured by the flames as well. He had to run. He had to get Tanaka and get out of the house before it could collapse. He couldn't die. Not like this.

Ciel ran down the halls until he finally found Tanaka lying unconscious on the floor, blood coming out from his neck he had been stabbed. The flames were coating the walls and reaching the ceiling. The roof would collapse on top of them if Ciel didn't move. He grabbed Tanaka by the armpits and used his very small strength to successfully drag him out of the mansion before it would collapse which it did moments later, burying Ciel's parents' bodies and anyone else who was unfortunate enough to be devoured by the hungry fire.

Tanaka still wouldn't wake up no matter how many times Ciel patted his face and shook him. He remembers what he saw last before things turned dark. The people that took him. The people in dark cloaks and masks. The monsters that tortured and humiliated him. One of them, wearing a black cloak and a white doctor's mask, approached Ciel in a fast pace and the young earl screamed.

Ciel opens his eyes, no longer finding himself in front of his burning home. Tanaka is not here and neither are the monsters. Those monsters are dead and Tanaka is at home with Baldroy and Finnian. Where is Ciel then? He can't see anything. It's pitch black. It's like someone has covered his eyes to keep him from seeing. When he tries to move his arms, he finds them tied together with a rope.

Now he remembers. He was alone with the Viscount Druitt when he passed out. He was knocked out, to be exact. Druitt must have taken him. Probably to kill him like the rest of his victims. But where exactly is he being held?

He suddenly hears the Viscount Druitt's voice talking out loud. Not to Ciel, but to someone else. "Now, the moment you've all been waiting for! Tonight's crowned jewel!" The young earl hears the rustling sound of a sheet being removed and the air immediately feels a lot lighter than before. He hears people gasping and whispering to one another. What is happening?

"Isn't she a pretty little robin?" Druitt continues saying, "I'm sure she'd make a lovely decoration. Or a sweet little pet. You can keep her whole and healthy or sell her for parts if you like to. Her eyes are two different colours but that is what makes her more unique."

Ciel's eyes widen. This is a black market action. So that's what he's been doing? He kills the prostitutes and illegally sells their organs at his parties. It sounds a bit far-fetched but it's a very plausible explanation.

"The bidding shall begin momentarily!" Druitt says.

Damn it.

His blindfold is removed from his eyes. He completely ignores the fact that Viscount Druitt and his buyers can see his eyes. What sets his heart racing out of control is seeing himself in a cage yet again and he's in a large room lit with candles and draped in blood red curtains. A cage similar to the one he was in the night he was taken after his parents's death. The cage is set on a stage and Viscount Druitt is standing right next to it, wearing a black eye-mask. The people below the stage are wearing masks as well and they are all watching Ciel with hungry and intrigued eyes. His heart goes fast and his breath gets caught in his throat again.
As the bidding starts, Ciel immediately panics and starts calling out for his butler. "Sebastian! Come get me! Now!" he shouts.

The candles in the room have their flames die out in seconds and everything becomes dark, much to everyone's confusion. Ciel then hears everyone in the room screaming, shouting as their being beaten down ruthlessly. He knows that it's Sebastian. He's here. When the flames in the candles return, there Sebastian stands in the middle of the room, surrounded by unconscious bodies. However, Viscount Druitt is still standing, looking completely confused and horrified at what just happened.

"Really, sir? When will you ever stop getting yourself captured?" Sebastian sighs in annoyance while adjusting the fake spectacles.

Ciel glares at his butler. *Bastard. *"You missed one."

Viscount Druitt turns to make a run for it through the backstage, only to get punched hard in the face and knocked unconscious by Mey-Rin who was standing there the entire time. Sebastian raises his eyebrows at her in surprise.

"That was quite the punch," he says.

"Sorry," she apologizes to both Ciel and Sebastian for her disobedience. She clenches her hand as the punch she gave to Viscount Druitt hurt her knuckles.

"You stopped him from getting away. That's the most important thing," he says bluntly. He no longer cares for her disobedience. He simply wishes to get out of the cage as soon as possible. "Now get me out of this cage."

Mey-Rin nods and digs through Viscount Druitt's coat for the keys. Once she has them out, she gives them to Sebastian. However, he tosses the keys away and rips off the cage's door. Ciel steps and takes deep breaths in order to calm his beating heart. He is no longer in the cage. He's out.

"Are you all right, my lord?" Mey-Rin asks when she notices his face as white as a sheet.

Ciel shrugs at the question. "Well, I'm not dead. That's something." He looks down at Viscount Druitt's unconscious form with an expressionless face. He wishes to kick the viscount's handsome face but holds himself back. "I'm guessing this solves the Jack the Ripper case."

"Are they dead?" she asks.

"They're unconscious," Sebastian answers, "Enough time for us to leave and report Scotland Yard. I would kill them. However, the master is the one who gives the orders. If he doesn't want me to kill the Viscount, I am obligated to do nothing."

"It's preferable to have the Viscount and his occult members confront justice. Killing him would be too easy," Ciel walks over to Mey-Rin and takes her by the elbow. "Come. We're leaving."

She nods in agreement and they all leave this dreadful place.

Minutes later, they return to the party, looking as if nothing happened. Madam Red, Grell (who finally emptied his bladder in the washroom) and Lau are still here, oblivious to the previous event that occurred earlier. They didn't notice Ciel's absence, much to the young earl's annoyance.

Ciel, Mey-Rin and Sebastian quickly head over to where Madam Red, Lau and Grell are. Ciel pokes Madam Red on the shoulder to get her attention since she's laughing and drinking wine while chatting with the bachelors standing before her looking like love-sick puppies. She stops laughing.
and looks at her nephew.

"What is it, Alice?"

"Stop this nonsense and let's go," Ciel says harshly. Madam Red stops laughing and stares at him in confusion.

"What? Already?"

"Yes, we're done," he says harshly, "Let's go. Get Lau and Grell."

They all leave Viscount Druitt's estate in great haste before Scotland Yard could arrive. Grell drives the carriage down the nightly streets of London, returning to the vacation home. Ciel allowed Mey-Rin to ride inside the carriage because it's cold outside and the dress she's wearing isn't going to keep her warm much. However, she does something that catches Ciel off guard. She falls asleep and her head rests against his shoulder. She doesn't even notice she fell asleep on him. Sebastian simply chuckles in amusement before taking off his coat and draping it over her body.

"She must be very tired," he says.

Ciel yawns and pinches the bridge of his nose. "We're all tired. It's been a long day. Prepare a hot bath when we arrive. I need to scrub off Viscount Druitt's disgusting scent."

"Yes, my lord."

After returning to the house in the city, Sebastian draws a hot bath for the young master just as he was told to do. Ciel was going to allow his butler to scrub his back, only to flinch away the moment the sponge makes contact with his skin. Sebastian looks at Ciel in confusion and asks if everything is all right. Ciel nods though Sebastian can tell that he's lying through his teeth. He knows that he's lying but decides to leave it be. He lets Ciel alone to scrub himself for a bit. Perhaps a few minutes alone would do him good.

He heads over to the room at the other side of the hallway where Mey-Rin is residing. He knocks on the door.

"Just a moment," she says. There's a thudding sound coming from inside the bedroom along with grunting. Clearly Mey-Rin fell...again.

The door opens half-way and she peeks through. Mey-Rin is out of the dress Madam Red made her wear and is now in her nightgown and has her glasses over her eyes once more.

"Is there something you need, Sebastian?" she asks.

"The dishes need washing before breakfast tomorrow," he says, "Can you do that without breaking them?"

Mey-Rin nods despite her doubts about it. "I hope so. How is the young master? Is he all right?" she asks suddenly. Sebastian knew she would ask that question. She was quite worried about him back at the masquerade party. Honestly, he can never understand. Out of all the human emotions, Mey-Rin's emotions are always active and noticeable. She's not ashamed of hiding her feelings. Everyone would notice when she's happy, sad, angry, afraid or worried. It irritates at the same time amuses Sebastian.

"He's doing quite well," he assures her, "There's nothing to worry about."
"I was honestly scared for him," she says in complete honesty, her voice trembling. "For a moment I thought -.

"He's no longer in danger," he says, placing a comforting hand on her shoulder. "I prefer for you stop worrying about the young master and worry about yourself."

He points at Mey-Rin's left foot that's bandaged with white gauzes. The young maid gasps and hides her foot behind the door. "I nearly twisted my foot while dancing with Grell but it's nothing really."

Sebastian is aware of Mey-Rin's crooked feet because of foot binding. He bought the boots Ciel asked him to buy for the young maid. It explained why she was always tripping, not just because of the glasses. However, the matter is concerning. She has already twisted her foot. She could have broken it. And one day she will.

"I'd recommend you have Madam Red take a look at it," Sebastian says. "Make sure it's not broken or sprained."

Mey-Rin nods in agreement. "Yes, sir."

"Listen, you did well tonight. The young master is safe and he's pleased that we were able to stop the viscount from killing anymore women," he says in a way of encouraging her.

"Honestly, I hope he rots in prison," she says sternly.

Sebastian chuckles in amusement. Intelligent yet naïve. Mey-Rin really has no idea how the world works. There's a great possibility that Viscount Druitt will free himself from imprisonment since he is one of the richest men in England. He'll buy his way to freedom. It's preferable not to tell her though. He doesn't want to hear any more lip coming from her after this. Sebastian is practically praying for the young master to send her home.

"Have a good night, Mey-Rin," he says and turns to leave.

"Um, Sebastian." He stops in his tracks and stares at her. "I'm sorry if I've been a pest to you these days," she apologizes while pushing her glasses back, "Also, I don't want you pushing me into dead bodies ever again, if you don't mind."

Sebastian chuckles and nods before heading back to the young master's bedroom.

However, when he enters the bathroom, he finds Ciel scrubbing his arms, shoulders and chest roughly, his skin already red and raw. Sebastian quickly runs to the bathroom and snatches the sponge from Ciel's hands. "Young master, no! Stop that!"

Ciel does stop but is now left shaken. He brings his knees up to his chin and hugs his legs.

"As long as the contract remains in play, you will follow me everywhere whether you wish it or not, won't you?" the young earl mutters.

Sebastian doesn't understand why he's saying this now but nods either way. "The contract is sealed by a mark a demon places on his prey. The more noticeably placed the mark is the tighter the bond is between demon and prey. The demon serves..."

"And in exchange, the prey can never escape," Ciel says darkly.

"I will be with you always until the end. I shall be by your side no matter what even if I perish in this world. I'll still be there."
Ciel scoffs at this. Sebastian will probably never die. He's a demon after all. This saying is a bunch of nonsense.

"Do not make up such lies, Sebastian," he says.

"I would never lie to you, young master."

"Hope so. You will never lie to me no matter what. Do you understand?" Ciel says while glaring at the demon, the contract in his right eye glowing brightly. Sebastian smiles and bows his head.

"Yes, my young lord."

Ciel blinks a couple of times. Sebastian can tell that he is a bit unsure. As usual, he needs to prove himself to the young master that he will always be loyal to him no matter the decisions he makes and no matter how bad things get. The more trust he gains from the young lord, the easier it will be for Sebastian to devour his soul.

The next morning, Mey-Rin gets out of bed. She's the first one to be awake since there's no one else wandering the hallways. Ciel must be still asleep. Madam Red decided to stay for the night at the house. She's in one of the other guest rooms as well as Grell. She heads downstairs to the kitchen to make her breakfast before the day starts. She finds Sebastian already in the kitchen making breakfast.

"Morning, Sebastian," she says awkwardly.

"Morning, Mey-Rin," he says without looking over his shoulder as he is focused on his task. He's making pancakes. "You're up early."

"Did the master sleep well last night?" she asks. She's always asking about the master's well-being. She even wonders if it's annoying Sebastian for the constant questions. Perhaps a little. He just doesn't show it, unlike the day of the party where he was a hostile with her but all was forgiven. She held no grudge against him for being protective of the young master's secret. She just wishes he and Ciel trusted her more. She'll have to earn that trust.

"You would have to ask him yourself," Sebastian says, "However, I do believe he slept rather soundly even after the little incident with Viscount Druitt. Perhaps he's content that Jack the Ripper is finally caught."

It's the most positive thing Sebastian has said about Ciel as he too sounds pleased. Everyone seems to be happy that Jack the Ripper has been captured. In all honesty, Mey-Rin is the one who is more than happy that Viscount Druitt was stopped. Thanks to Ciel and Sebastian, there will no longer be any prostitutes slaughtered in the streets.

"I'm going to get the newspaper for the young master," she says, "Then I'll do the dishes."

"Bring it to me and I'll take it to the young master," he says. Mey-Rin frowns at him strangely. Wouldn't it be easier for her to take it upstairs herself and let Sebastian cook in peace? Why must he force himself to double duty. "I'm letting him sleep for a few more minutes. You don't want to interrupt his sleep, now do you?"

Mey-Rin sighs. "I supposed not."

She goes outside to pick up the newspaper from the doorstep. When she picks up the newspapers and reads the headline, her eyes widen in horror.
Ciel is walking down the stairs when he sees Mey-Rin completely frozen at the doorstep staring down at the newspaper in her hands. He clutches the blue robe around himself and shivers.

"Close that door. You're going to get us all sick if you let the wind get in," he says, frowning distastefully. However, Mey-Rin still remains frozen on the spot. His frown softens and walks over to her. "What's wrong?"

The newspaper slips from her hands and Mey-Rin passes out. Ciel had to catch her in his arms to keep her from crashing to the floor, though he falls on his ass on the floor himself since he's not strong enough to carry someone bigger than him. Well, Mey-Rin is only a few inches taller than him but still...He pats her on the cheek in order to wake her up. She remains unconscious. Ciel wonders what caused Mey-Rin to pass out like this. However, he receives his answers when he reads the headlines on the newspaper that's scattered on the floor. JACK THE RIPPER STRIKES AGAIN!

This chapter had to be divided for it was too long. Sorry.

Let me know what you think.
Another storm is coming so I'm doing this quickly before the power goes out...again

I think what made me want to write this story is mainly the many questions I had in my head while watching the anime. Who is Mey-Rin? What was Grell like before he became a Grim Reaper? What exactly is the connection with Undertaker and the Phantomhives? And what exactly is going on Ciel Phantomhive’s head.

I feel like the Phantomhive servants, especially Mey-Rin, were never explored properly in the anime and manga. Their past have always been obscured, except Finnian. I already read his past and found it heart-breaking. And I plan to write his past in his own perspective very soon. But for now this fanfiction is mainly of Mey-Rin and her discovery of the supernatural.

I think the first question that popped into my head was what would happen if one of the Phantomhive servants found out about Ciel’s secret and is forced to keep that secret from others at the same gets involved into all this crazy shit Ciel and Sebastian get involved in. Mey-Rin has always been my favourite character and I wanted to see her written more often. And she’s such a sweet girl despite being an assassin so I really wanted to see what would happen when she finds out that Sebastian is a demon and Ciel made a contract with that demon. She gets sucked into this world full of supernatural creatures, gruesome deaths and all kinds of things that make her question humanity itself. At the same time she’s going to start building a relationship with Ciel Phantomhive and a few other of the characters like Grell and Undertaker. She’s gonna go through the same shit Ciel does, even in different ways and slowly begins to understand Ciel’s behaviour towards her and others. She always thought things like demons, ghosts and death gods only existed in stories but she when she finds out about Sebastian, she starts realizing that the horror stories she loves so much are not what she thought they were. They’re worse.

In this story I’m writing, I’m going to be exploring more of Ciel’s mind. Write what he really feels and thinks, and how he’s still shown to be traumatized by the events that occurred when he was ten years old. Nightmares, withdrawal, sleep disorders, panic attacks and all types of things despite his attempts to hide it. He hides his emotions very well but they will still be noticeable through this story. In this story, he is more open to his relationship with his aunt Madam Red, Tanaka and the Undertaker - which is quite strained but is still subtle. Throughout the story, he starts to open up more despite trying to keep everything balled up inside. I find it really heartbreaking to see someone so young go through such horrible events and end up a completely different person.

The main characters in this story will be obviously Mey-Rin, Ciel, Sebastian, Undertaker, Grell, Finnian, Baldroy, William and Doll/Freckles….No, I’m serious, Doll will have her own story-arc and will make her appearance soon.

Sebastian is going to be the same character from the original story but he slowly starts to show his true colours when Mey-Rin finds out about the secret. He grows slightly hostile towards her and doesn’t really trust her. He will also become more possessive of Ciel than he already is. It’s like a “Touch my food and I kill you” sort of thing and will find it distasteful how Ciel expresses positive human emotions that have nothing to do with hatred or anger. And he becomes even more hostile...
when Undertaker gets involved. The only person he actually has a soft spot for, at the moment, is Finnian even if he doesn’t show it much. He finds Finnian annoying like the rest of the servants but knows Finnian has good intentions and has a big heart.

Undertaker has a past with the Phantomhives and no one really knows what it is. I’ve read people theorizing that he was Vincent’s lover. Others say that he’s Ciel grandfather but until we find out the truth, I’m going to continue writing how is right now. His crazy eccentric self but with a few alterations. He is fond of Ciel. Despite trying to keep it hidden, he will show that he does care for Ciel and worries for his well-being, and will eventually confront Sebastian even before Book of the Atlantic. A lot of things about Undertaker’s past with the Phantomhives will be explored more and I’m really excited to start writing it.

As for Grell. Oh boy. Grell is going to be so much fun to write about. She’s such an awesome character. Very eccentric and flamboyant but she also has her dark pasts. I want to explore Grell’s past when she was a human, what her life like as a human was and how she ended becoming a Shinigami and why. I want to explore how becoming a Shinigami made her insensitive yet still holds the painful memories of her past in her mind. I also want to explore her relationship with William and Madam Red and also the friendship she’s having with Mey-Rin in the previous chapters. I feel like writing Grell’s past is going to be the saddest part of the story and I’m going to need lots of water and tissues for this. William’s past will also be explored and he shows that he actually cares for Grell despite being cold and hostile towards her and will even show hints of jealousy whenever Grell is around Sebastian or even mentions him.

Baldroy acts like an older brother to Mey-Rin and Finnian. The three love each other. And Baldroy becomes very suspicious of Mey-Rin when he finds out she’s keeping secrets from him and Finnian and sees how badly the secrets are affecting all of them. And even becomes very snarky when confronting Sebastian which we can agree is a bad idea since Sebastian is a demon and can kick Baldroy’s ass. But it’s understandable since Mey-Rin, Tanaka and Finnian are his family and he wants to protect his family at any costs. He already lost everything during the war, he doesn’t want to lose it again.

Finnian’s past has already been explored during the Emerald Witch arc but I mainly want to write his relationship with Mey-Rin, Baldroy, Tanaka, Sebastian and Ciel. He sees Mey-Rin as an older sister, he sees Baldroy as an older brother, Tanaka as a grandfather, Ciel as a little brother and Sebastian as a father. He will show how much he loves the people he was raised with. And I say raised because Finnian never had a family or a name before being brought to Phantomhive Manor. Being brought into Phantomhive Manor is like being reborn and that’s why I gave him his last name. Bornemann. Finnian Bornemann. Born. He becomes very open with his affection towards Sebastian which the demon finds uncomfortable since he’s mainly used to negative emotions and not positive emotions. Finnian will also show to be very protective of Ciel since Ciel was the one who found Finnian and gave him a home. It doesn’t matter what the earl does, Finny will always be there to give him a hand.

Tanaka…is technically a grandfather for Ciel. He took care of Ciel when he was sick and adores him very much. When the tragedy at Phantomhive Manor happened, he was injured but survived and was relieved when he found out Ciel survived. But now, Tanaka can’t protect him like before. Tanaka is more vulnerable and not as strong as he used to be. In the manga and anime, Tanaka is always shown to be a chibi man that switches back to his normal self from time to time. In my story, I try to go to a more realistic route. Tanaka, in my story, is bound to a wheelchair and can only walk and talk when he finds it necessary but most of the times he’s exhausted and can’t really do much. He is aware of the things that go on around the mansion, however. He knows that Ciel and Sebastian are keeping secrets and are doing dangerous things but knows he can’t do anything to stop it. The only thing he can do is be there for Ciel as much as he can. I think writing Tanaka’s relationship with Ciel is the one I will find most intriguing. Ciel has always kept a distance from Tanaka most of the
time and I want to write a reason why Ciel now keeps his distance from Tanaka after the events of
the fire. I think facing Tanaka is Ciel’s way of facing his past and he’s afraid of dealing with that
because Tanaka seems to be a reminder of what Ciel failed to do and that is saving his family from
being killed.

Doll will make an appearance in future chapters, probably after the Jack Ripper arc. Doll/Freckles
have always been one of my favourite characters in the Circus Arc. I saw her as optimistic, outgoing,
warm and caring but with a lot of vulnerabilities. When I saw her involved in the children’s
kidnappings, I saw a lot of doubt in her eyes and I can’t tell that she doesn’t really wants this. And
it’s sad how things turned up at the end. In this fanfiction, her story will be delved further and we’ll
see how she perceives the kidnapping of the children. She thought she and her friends were doing
something good despite it being wrong but soon, she’s going to have a painful wake up call. A brutal
realization that what she’s doing is wrong. Also, I’ll be giving her a name since I don’t think they
ever mentioned her real name (as far as I know). So I’m giving her the name Annabelle Swann.

Alois Trancy and Claude Faustus have already made an appearance in the previous chapter but they
will come back and this time, it’s not going to be pretty. Hannah will also make an appearance and
she secretly warns the Phantomhive household about Alois’s intentions and to be careful around
Claude because he is just as dangerous as Alois if not worse. Despite them not being characters
originating from the manga, I actually want to add these characters to the story even if they may or
may not be the antagonists to the story. Soma and Agni will make an appearance as well. I just love
those two, especially Agni. He’s so adorable. I don’t know if I want to add Angela/Ash though. It’s
not because she was never a character in the manga, it’s because I do not like her. But I can assure
that Pluto will definitely make an appearance even if not the same way as he appeared in the anime.
I mean, come on, who doesn’t love that demon hound? Vincent, Rachel and Claudia Phantomhive
will make their appearances in flashbacks and dreams. Claudia is going to be very important since
she’s a link that connects Undertaker with the Phantomhives.

I’m writing this story in a more realistic note, kind of like what Christopher Nolan did in The Dark
Knight trilogy. I’m taking a few elements of Penny Dreadful and American Horror Story for this
since I’ve always enjoyed the tone and the dark atmosphere of those shows. There will be few
alterations to this story and characters but I don’t want to make drastic changes that will risk getting
my tits cut off. There’s going to be gruesome deaths, emotional turmoil for each character, a lot of
darkness and a bit of hope, and I’m really excited to see how everything turns out at the end. And for
the love of God, what is Ciel’s real fucking name!? And will the killer finally make an appearance
already so he can get his ass kicked already? Come the fuck on.

Actually did my own fancasting for this story. This is just my personal opinion but if you guys like it,
let me own. Unfortunately, I don’t have one for Undertaker yet since he’s the most difficult character
to cast:

Lin Yun as Mey-Rin Lijuan

Noah Schnapp as Ciel Phantomhive

Ben Barnes as Sebastian Michaelis

Eddie Redmayne as Grell Sutcliff

William Moseley as Baldroy Gibbons

Tom Holland as Finnian Bournemann
Togo Igawa as Tanaka Shino

Jessica Chastain as Angelina Dalles/Madam Red

Henry Cavill as William T. Spears

Jack Gleeson as Alois Trancy

Evan Peters as Ronald Knox

Wang Kai as Lau

Li Bingbing as Ran-Mao

Jack Gleeson as Alois Trancy

Richard Madden (I might change it since I don't know if he's the right one) as Claude Faustus

Lesley Ann-Brandt as Hannah Annafellows

Jamie Campbell Bower as Aleistor Chamber/Viscount Druitt

Elle Fanning as Elizabeth Midford/Lizze

Karan Brar as Soma Asman Kadar

Sidharth Malhotra as Agni

Lena Headey as Francis Midford

Georgie Henley as Annabelle Swann/Doll/Freckles

Melanie Liburd (Don't know if I made the right choice. I just loved he in Dark Matter) as Amelia Kindred/Mally/Beast

Jerome Flynn as Klaus

August Diehl as Diederich

Kate Winslet as Nina Hopkins

Cameron Monaghan as Pitt

Pierfrancesco Favino as Lord Damian

Tom Hiddleston as Vincent Phantomhive

Keira Knightley as Rachel Phantomhive

???? as Undertaker

Hugh Dancy as Frederick Abberline

Timothy Dalton as Arthur Randall
“Hello,” Mey-Rin calls out as she enters the funeral parlour, the place looking eerie and dark in the afternoon. The sun is setting which makes it difficult for her to see clearly. It’s the damn glasses again. So she removes them from her face. “Mr. Undertaker? Are you here?”

So far, there’s no sign of the crazy mortician. Perhaps he’s in one of the coffins he resides in. The first time he came out of one nearly gave her and Grell a heart attack. She always thought things like that only existed in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Edgar Allan Poe’s *Ligeia*.

She decides to open one of the coffins to see if he’s asleep in one of them. It would be rude to wake him up but this is an urgent matter. She opens the coffin, only to find it completely empty. When she opens the second coffin, it is also revealed to be empty. However, when she opens the third coffin that’s placed on the bier, she gasps and takes a step back, letting the lid slam shut. It wasn’t the face of the Undertaker. She reopens the coffin, finding herself face to face with Alice McKenzie. Jack the Ripper’s latest victim. She was brought here after Scotland Yard picked her off from the street. A blonde with a white ceraceous face. Her wounds are covered with make-up that almost matches her pale skin. The dress she wears is white silk and has a deep red choker necklace around her neck, covering the slash on her throat. Her body is surrounded by daises. *The poor thing*. What have you done to deserve such atrocious death?

“Like it?”

Startled, Mey-Rin immediately turns around to find the Undertaker standing right there in front of her, smiling as always. Her glasses nearly fall from her hands but catches them and pushes them back upon her face.

“Y-yes, Mr. Undertaker…sir,” she stutters nervously.

“You’re that sharp little maid that was with Lord Phantomhive yesterday, aren’t you?” he asks, pointing one of his long black nails at her.

She nods. “It’s Mey-Rin, yes.” She takes out the paper Ciel gave her from the pocket of her coat and offers it to the mortician. “The young master is asking for the victim’s death files. I would like to borrow them, if that’s all right.”

Undertaker snatches the piece of paper from her hands and reads it. Though Mey-Rin can’t tell if he’s actually reading because she can’t see his eyes. He then starts giggling. “So the earl is making you do his dirty work, isn’t he? I’m surprised that he sent you instead of the butler. Well, dearie, you already know the price for the files, don’t you?”
The nightmares have become regular these days. She never told anyone (not even Ciel) about them but is afraid that the nightmares will eventually drive her mad.

She dreams the same thing nightly since the day she returned from the dead. A bathtub. Mey-Rin can't tell what kind of bathtub because she's always submerged underwater and can't get out. She tries to sit up to get a breath of air but feels like invisible hands are pushing her back down. There are always flashing lights blinding her from above, like lightning. She kicks and thrashes as she struggles to get out. She screams for help but those screams are always muffled by the bubbles that come out of her mouth.

The nightmares always end that way and she wakes up gasping as if it weren't a dream at all.

Mey-Rin slowly sits up on the bed, her head slightly throbbing. It was just another nightmare. She flinches when she suddenly feels a hand on her shoulder. She turns her head to see Madam Red sitting next to the bed with a stethoscope around her neck. The red woman smile.

"You've been unconscious since this morning," she says, "I was afraid we'd have to take you to the hospital again."

The memory of the nightmares slowly fades and is replaced by another. She remembers passing out after reading today's headlines. JACK THE RIPPER STRIKES AGAIN! He's still out there. He killed another prostitute. Alice McKenzie. Alice. The very name that was used for Ciel on the night of the party.

"It wasn't Viscount Druitt," she whispers to herself, "McKenzie was murdered at the same hour the viscount was with us. Someone else is doing this."

"Don't you worry about it." Madam Red says while patting the back of her hand. She uses the stethoscope to listen to her heart rate. "Your heart is going quite fast. You need to be very careful."

"How is Ciel — I mean, how is the young master?"

Madam Red sighs at the question. "Furious."

"I'm already imagining having to clean up a broken teaset."

"You would be correct, but Sebastian thought you should rest first. He also said something about you hurting your foot."

"Oh, it's nothing. I simply twisted it while dancing with Grell."

"As a doctor, I would prefer to take a look at it myself."

Mey-Rin sighs in defeat. She knows that she'll have to show her feet eventually. She can't hide them forever. She takes out her injured foot from under the covers for Madam Red to see. The red woman's eyes widen upon seeing Mey-Rin's deformed foot. Blasted foot binding.
"I'm more concerned about the deformation of your foot than the injury itself," she says, "Is the other one exactly the same?"

Mey-Rin nods. "Many people in China believe that binding a girl's feet symbolizes beauty."

"Well, I don't see what's so beautiful about deforming a young girl's foot. This can get infected, you know. And your toes...Did you rip off the nails from your toes?"

"Yes. They've been growing inwards and have been causing me pain so I had to rip them away from their roots. I stopped having them bound when I turned nine."

"It's a good thing you did. You would have been completely immobile, not to mention you would have suffered more infections." Madam Red twists the foot around in circles and Mey-Rin lets out a hiss. "Apart from that, there doesn't seem to be anything wrong with your foot. No broken bones or sprain. Just a bit of swelling around the ankles, probably a torn muscle."

"That's good, isn't it?" Mey-Rin says, "Does that mean I can get out of bed?"

"Not a chance. You're staying in bed for the rest of the day."

Mey-Rin pouts at this. She wants to get out of bed as soon as possible. It angers her that Jack the Ripper is still loose in London, slaughtering those poor women as if they were nothing but animals. It's disgusting. She hopes that when she finds Jack, she gets the opportunity to punch the bastard in the face like she did to Viscount Druitt.

First, she wants to clean up the mess Ciel made with the tea set. She doubts any of those two things will happen.

"It seems that Viscount Druitt wasn't our killer after all," Lau says.

Ciel sits in his armchair with his brow furrowed and his head propped on his elbow as he contemplates the situation at hand. He is still very angry. Aleister Chamber wasn't Jack the Ripper. Ciel was convinced that he was. That man was selling young girls at black market auctions. But turns out they've been blind-sighted. Aleister Chamber may remain in prison for illegal black marketing but Jack the Ripper is still out there, killing more prostitutes and possibly mocking them. Today, the latest victim was a woman named Alice McKenzie. Like all the other victims, she is also missing her uterus. Alice. Did the Queen of Hearts finally offed your head skinned you like the White Rabbit, dear Alice?

"We would have to consider other possibilities if not black market or cults," Ciel says. The shattered tea set still lays on the carpeted floor. Sebastian had just asked Grell to get a broom, a bucket of water, dustpan and cloth to clean the mess the young earl has made. "Jack the Ripper probably knows we're after him so Alice isn't just an unfortunate victim, it's Jack's way of mocking us. He could have chosen a different time to gut Alice like a pig but instead chose to kill her around the time we were hunting down Viscount Druitt."

"The killer knew the time and place so he took the opportunity to kill the young lady while we were distracted," Sebastian says.

"The killer was quite intelligent then," Lau says.

Ciel shakes his head. "No, not intelligent. Clever." Before he can say anything else, he sees Madam Red descending down the stairs to the drawing room where the bitter morning tea is taking place. "How is she?"
"Stubborn," she says and Ciel sees Mey-Rin coming downstairs as well, already dressed in her grey tweed coat and blue hat.

He sighs in annoyance. He's not in the mood to argue with the maid. "I don't expect anything less from her. Help Grell clean this up."

Mey-Rin nods and scurries out of the drawing room to help Grell. Madam Red immediately scolds her nephew for it.

"Ciel, you're taking a big risk with her," she says, "She's in no means ready to be out of bed."

"If she can still walk, that means she's allowed to get out of bed whenever she wants," he says, "I give the orders around here, Aunt Ann."

Madam Red huffs in irritation. "I can see where her stubbornness is coming from. You're becoming a bad influence on her."

Ciel lets out the smallest of smiles. *I'm a bad influence upon everyone, it seems.*

"We'll be leaving for the crime scene shortly. Hopefully, we might find something that could lead us to the killer."

Unfortunately, when they arrive at the crime scene, it's already being cleansed with buckets of grey water. Grey water is full of piss and excrement. The body had been removed earlier and the blood has been washed away. Ciel glowers at the scene being washed away. Everything that could lead them to Jack the Ripper was destroyed. The body was probably taken to the Undertaker to be prepared for the funeral.

"Well, this isn't good," Sebastian says.

"No, it's not," Ciel growls and pinches the bridge of his nose. "This makes things even more complicated."

Mey-Rin wanders off from the group, despite being strictly told not to move from their side. She can't help herself though. It's like trying to control a child. She always wanders off no matter how much she tries to stay put. You'll have to put a leash on her to keep her from disappearing. She looks at the docks and the ocean beyond it. She thinks of Alice McKenzie. *Poor Alice. Why? Why her? Why them?*

Looking down at the cobblestone ground, she sees something shiny and wedged between the cracks. With the tips of her fingers, she picks up a piece of glass. A rectangular shaped glass, thick and smooth around the edges. It's cracked on the middle and has a small bloodstain on it. Taking a closer look at the glass, she immediately recognizes it and seeing it near the crime scene and covered in blood can only mean one thing.

"My lord! Look!" she shouts. Ciel turns to look at her wide-eyed before walking over to her along with Sebastian to see what she has in her hands. His eye squints upon the piece of glass. "The glass, same one used for glasses and spectacles. And what a coincidence that it's found near the crime scene stained in blood."

Ciel smiles, finally satisfied with something. "You know what this mean, right?"

"Our killer wears glasses," Mey-Rin says.
Sebastian smirks. "We might have a lead, after all."

"We finally know one thing about the killer now," Ciel says as he shows the piece of glass to Madam Red and Lau, "He wears glasses."

Madam Red frowns at this newly found clue. "How does that help us find Jack the Ripper? Grell wears glasses. Mey-Rin wears glasses. Even half of London wears glasses."

"You don't understand, do you, Madam Red?" Ciel says sternly, "It's not the fact that he wears glasses. It's the fact that he's missing a piece. It's cracked and covered in bloodstains, a clear sign that they broke when it fell from the killer's face. Either they fell on their own or our victim knocked them off his face during the struggle when she was being murdered."

"What should we do now?" Lau asks.

"The young master believes it's better to keep a low profile," Sebastian says, "If the killer finds out that we have a clue, he'll try to cover his tracks. Probably by purchasing a new pair of glasses before attacking his next victim."

"That means we cannot let him know we're onto him," Ciel says.

Ciel suddenly hears the low rumbling sound of thunder and looks up to see the sky turning dark grey. It will start to rain soon. He and the others head for the carriage and return to the townhouse before they get drenched by the downpour that will come very soon.

"Is this really the time for a game of chess?" Ciel asks as he and his aunt are playing an obligatory game of chess. Obligatory, meaning that he was not in the mood for chess but his aunt made (nearly threatened) him to play chess with her, to take a break from the investigation. At least she's more merciful than Aunt Francis. That woman would pull Ciel by the ear. Probably yank it off his skull.

"Obsessing about it won't help you solve the case," Madam Red says while she moves her next piece, "Besides, you need rest. You can leave the rest to Sebastian."

Ciel shakes his head in refusal. "I can't."

"Why not?"

"Because Sebastian is simply my chess piece," he says, "I'm the one who moves him by giving orders. He's not ordinary piece, however." Madam Red gives Ciel a strange look as he continues talking. "He can move as many squares as he needs to. Like this." Without working, he knocks over Madam Red's king piece from the chessboard, much to her dismay.

"That was against the rules, you know!" she gasps in disbelief.

Ciel smirks in amusement. "Indeed. It would be if this was a game but rules such as that do not apply in the real world. There are always knights that break the rules and pawns who betray." His smirk fades and he stares sadly at the chessboard. "If you let your guard down, it's checkmate." He sets his horse piece at the other side of the board, winning the game of chess. He always wins in this kind of game. He used to beat his brother at chess, one of the only few things he was ever good at.

"I remember how much you used to love playing chess with your brother," she says with half a smile. "You used to get quite frustrated whenever he beat you at it."
"It seems now that he is dead, I have become a better player than him," he says bitterly. It's cruel to say such things about him but it's the truth. Ciel was never a good player. His brother always bested him at that.

Sebastian serves the two some mint tea but does not engage in the conversation. Instead, he leaves the parlour to attend other things around the townhouse.

"I'm guessing you must have had other options in life besides police in England's Underworld," she says, "I'm sure my sister...Your mother, wanted something else for you."

Ciel sighs and takes the cup of tea in his hand. "I'm sure she did."

"And yet after their deaths, you returned to be the queen's guard dog," she says, "Is it because you're trying to avenge your parents' murders?"

He doesn't say anything at first. He simply stares at his aunt with a blank expression before sipping the tea. He really despises this type of conversation. The type of conversation he always tries to avoid.

"Ciel, you must talk to me," she insists, leaning forward to take her nephew's free hand.

After minutes of silence, Ciel finally responds. "The need for revenge is a funny thing. It won't bring back the dead nor will it bring one happiness but then, to answer your question, I did not return to the Phantomhive home for my parents," he says while looking down at the blue diamond ring around his finger. The ring of the earls. His father's ring. "I did it for myself."

Madam Red's eyes begin to shine as she stares sadly at her nephew and she releases his hand.

"I want to find the people responsible for my parents' death and that of my brother's," Ciel says darkly, "And I want them to suffer the same pain and humiliation my brother and I suffered."

She smiles woefully. "Your brother was always such a frail thing. Always got sick. Always hurt himself. We all knew he would die before he could reach your age. However, no one thought his death would be so dreadful."

Ciel closes his eye at this. She doesn't half of the horrors he and his brother faced after their parents' death. He can still feel the filthy hands of those people on him, holding him down while doing unspeakable acts to him. He watched those disgusting beasts doing the same thing to his brother.

"I still remember when the two of you were born. It seemed like so long ago. You had many chances of living. Your brother didn't. Your mother used to call him the blue baby because his skin was sickly blue and his breathing was so weak, one would have thought he was dead in his cradle."

Madam Red gets up from the armchair, making around the table and stops to kneel in front of Ciel. "I thought that no matter what, I have to protect you and your brother. You know I was never able to have children. Your brother noticed it quite well and the two of you said that you would be my sons. The two of you were already like my own children." Ciel simply stares at her. She reaches up her hand and places it against his cheek. "I may have failed in protecting your brother but I can protect you, which is why I'm asking you to put a stop to this nonsense."

Ciel quickly takes her hand from his cheek, "This is a path a freely chose, Aunt Ann. It's still my choice to make and no one else is. I am the queen's watchdog and I don't regret my decision."

"Fuck the queen." Ciel's eye widens in surprise when she says this. "I don't care if you're the queen's watchdog or whatever kind of bloody dog you are. You're still my nephew and I won't allow you to risk your own life to catch a deranged murderer. I've already lost your mother and your uncle, I'm not
going to lose you too, Ciel." She says with an agitated tone in her voice. "Let's leave London. Leave all the pain and misery behind and start anew somewhere else."

Ciel put the words into consideration. Leave London. Leave England all together and never return. Start anew somewhere else. No pain. No nightmares. No fire. No dreadful memories of filthy hands on him. No Sebastian. Just him and his aunt. He glimpses at Sebastian who's standing in the corner, hidden in the shadows and listening to the conversation. His dark eyes are now glowing blood red which sends chills up Ciel's spine. What would happen if Ciel does decide to quit his revenge and leave England with Madam Red? Easy answer: a violation of the contract and a very gruesome death via Sebastian's hands.

"I'm sorry, Aunt Ann," he apologizes to her, "I can't."

She nods briefly without looking at her nephew and wipes a few tears from her eyes, and stands straight. "I understand."

"I need to get ready for bed. I have lots of work to do tomorrow. And I'm sure you'll be busy as well. We both need rest." He leans forward and briefly kisses his aunt on the cheek before getting up from his seat. "Goodnight, Aunt Ann."

He then heads upstairs to his bedroom.

Mey-Rin is cleaning the wooden table in the kitchen after helping Sebastian and Grell cook dinner. Beef galantine with tabbouli salad, Kibbeh beef croquettes, stuffed tomatoes and baklava for dessert. Tabbouli and Kibbeh are Lebanese food while baklava is known to be an Arabic pastry. Tabbouli has parleys, mint, tomato, lemon juice and olive oil. Kibbeh has ground minced beef, cracked wheat, pine nuts, onions, vegetable oil, all spice, cinnamon, salt and pepper and thyme. Baklava is a flaky pastry of pistachio and honey. Mey-Rin tried it in the kitchen while Sebastian wasn't looking and it tastes quite good. She even passed one to Grell from under the kitchen table.

While Mey-Rin cleans the table, Grell helps clean the dishes. She noticed that he was very silent today, barely uttered a single word since yesterday. She worries she might have done something wrong. Or perhaps, he might be thinking of something else.

"Grell, I hope you don't mind me asking but…what was your sister like?" she suddenly asks, immediately shutting her mouth. She actually thought Grell might be thinking of that but never did it occur to her that she expresses her thoughts quite loudly.

"Hmm?" Grell doesn't look up from the sink. It looks like he didn't hear.

"Your sister," she repeats. She was curious about it since the party at the Phantomhive Manor. He said he had a sister but didn't mention anything else of her afterwards, "What was she like?"

Grell stops cleaning the plate. It looks like he froze. He doesn't respond at first. Mey-Rin fears she might have offended him by asking about his sister.

"Grell?"

Grell finally turns around slowly to face her and walks over to the table to set the dishes down. "She had brown hair, brown eyes and freckles. She was the only one in my family with brown hair. She was a little fat. She wasn't pretty enough for marriage. At least, that's my father always said. He thought of her as an ugly little thing. But she was never ugly for me. I loved her." He smiles warmly at Mey-Rin. "She was sweet, intelligent, headstrong and fun to be with. She was a wonderful girl."
Mey-Rin smiles back. "Sounds like it."

"Trust me, you would have loved her. In fact, you two would have been great friends."

She then dares to ask questions she shouldn't be asking as it is rude to pry in someone else's personal life. "Did...something happen? What kept you from seeing your sister again?"

"I prefer not to speak of this, honestly," Grell says.

"I'm so sorry," Mey-Rin immediately apologizes. She never meant to pry. She curses herself for her curiosity. Sometimes curiosity can kill the cat. It can also kill a person.

"Don't worry about it," Grell says, "It was a long time ago."

"If you wish to talk about this one day, I'm here."

"You're such a sweet girl, just like my sister. You're actually one of the few people I can consider as a friend." His smile then falls and his expression turns into a look of concern. "Will you promise me something?"

"What is it?" she asks.

"Promise me you'll be careful out there," he tells her, "We both know that Jack the Ripper is a force to be reckon with. He'll chop you into little pieces. I'd hate to see you get hurt."

She finds it strange that he's brushing his hand over her hair and that he's talking to her as if he was a mother but she does not complain or flinch back. She understands what he means.

"I promised to protect the master at all costs."

He frowns. "But isn't that Sebastian's job?"

Mey-Rin nods in agreement. "Yes, indeed it is. But someone has to look after him when Sebastian is not around. I would shield the young master and let Jack the Ripper pierce a knife through my heart...if it ever came to that, that is."

"Aren't you a brave soul!" he chuckles almost in amusement.

"Actually, no," she says, "I'm terrified beyond belief. But fear does not equal weakness."

Madam Red walks into the kitchen all of the sudden, interrupting their conversation. "We're leaving, Grell," she says in a soft but also stern tone.

"Already?" Mey-Rin says. She really wishes for Grell to stay. It's good to have a proper conversation with someone who doesn't scold her for accidentally breaking the dishes. She will never say that to Sebastian's face though. He would kill her. "Are you sure you can't stay a little while longer?"

"Don't worry. I'm sure we'll see each other again very soon." He gives Mey-Rin a kiss on the cheek, being a gentleman that he is despite his clumsiness which has proven to be far worse than Mey-Rin's clumsiness. "Be safe."

Mey-Rin nods and watches Grell leave the kitchen with Madam Red. She sighs and puts away the dishes (which Grell forgot to put away) in the cupboard before continuing to clean the table. *I have fallen into a world of madness.*
Sebastian gives Madam Red her coat but she puts it on herself as she does not need any help putting it on.

"I have it, thank you," she says without looking at the butler in the eyes.

Sebastian bows his head. He can tell she is not happy due to the conversation that took place in the parlour earlier. "My lady."

Grell struggles to open the umbrella to no avail. Sebastian helps him release the latch that's keeping the umbrella locked shut and it opens wide. "Thank you, Sebastian," he says, batting his eyelashes behind his glasses. Sebastian notices something different about his glasses. They look brand new. And it's golden-framed. Weren't they silver the last time Sebastian saw him wear them?

"Make sure the lady arrives home safely," Sebastian says and Grell nods in agreement. Butlers are meant to obey and protect their masters. Hopefully, Grell should at least do so without messing it up.

Madam Red suddenly taps him on the shoulder to get his attention. "Promise me you'll never leave his side." It's more of a plead than a demand. "This is a dangerous world for a boy his age. Make sure he doesn't lose his way."

He bows to her once more with his hand to chest. "Fear not, my lady. I shall stay by his side till the very end."

Sebastian opens the door. It's pouring rain outside with lightning flashing and rumbling thunder following afterwards. Luckily the carriage is waiting in front of the townhouse.

He sometimes pities Madam Red. He knows that she wants what's best for the young lord. He really does believe that taking the master away from England would go him well. However, what's best for the young master is inconvenience for him. Abandoning revenge against the murderers to live a new life is one of the things are Sebastian finds to be against the contract. The master knows it. He made the contract with Sebastian, now he must abide to it whether he likes it or not.

Sebastian is glad that the young master refused to leave England with his aunt despite considering it. Sebastian does not want his prey to escape.

Ciel takes a hot bath first before turning in for the night. He removes his eye-patch and sets it down on the edge of the bathtub Sebastian scrubs his back gently with a cloth. The butler removed everything in the bathroom that would harm the young master after seeing him scrub his arms raw with a sponge.

"This isn't necessary."

"Yes it is, my young lord," Sebastian says while lifting up the boy's thin arm and washing his armpit. "We wouldn't want you hurting yourself again."

In the corner of the eye, he can see the pile of papers stacked on a stool near the bathroom door. "How is the suspect list coming along?"

Sebastian sighs in disappointment. "No matter how I look at it, the result is still the same."

Ciel immediately snatches his arm back when the cloth reaches his rib-cage. He doesn't like being touched there. "Yesterday's murder, the Viscount didn't do it."

Sebastian nods his head. "Exactly. None of the guests or staff in his mansion could have done it
"Indeed," Ciel agrees, "No person could move that quickly."

In reality, Ciel blames himself for Alice McKenzie's death. He was so focused on capturing Viscount Druitt, so convinced that it was him that he lost sight of what was really important and now another girl is dead because of him. Because he was determined to expose Viscount Druitt as Jack the Ripper when it really wasn't him.

"Anyway, tomorrow we'll start…” He pauses for a moment before looking over to his butler with wide eyes. "Sebastian, you did it."

Sebastian smiles at him in amusement. "Of course, I didn't, my lord. I told you, I never lie."

"Unless it's convenient for you."

The butler smirks and his eyes turn red again. "What about you, young master? You seem to have been quite the liar tonight. You even fooled your own aunt. How cruel of you, my lord."

Growling in anger, Ciel grabs the bar of soap near him and throws it at Sebastian's head. However, the demon butler ducks his head and the soap smashes into the grey wall, breaking in half and falling onto the tiled floor. Sebastian smiles in amusement.

"You know more about this than you're letting on, don't you?" Ciel snaps at him, unable to control his temper with the smug demon.

"But I'm simply one hell of a butler," Sebastian says, "As you well know, I only carry out those orders my master directly gives me."

Ciel continues to glare at the butler angrily. *That blasted creature.* Jack the Ripper is still out there and Sebastian is playing games. Ciel knows that Sebastian does not give a fuck about the prostitutes being murdered. However, Ciel does not care much about the prostitutes either but he knows that if he fails, he'll have to answer to the queen and the last thing he wants is to ruin his reputation and lose his title as the Earl.

"Change of plans," he says, "I'm not going to bed tonight."

Sebastian frowns at him in confusion. "But my lord, you need rest."

"I don't care. Provide me with the suspect list, photographs of the victims' bodies and newspapers dating back to the first Jack the Ripper murder," Ciel orders sternly. He's had enough of this nonsense. "And I want them now."

In the middle of the night, Mey-Rin wakes up from her sleep after feeling a cold draft in her room. The windows are closed though, as well as the balcony door. It doesn't look anyone entered the room but for some reason, she has that eerie feeling someone was here just a few moments ago while she slept. It was probably Sebastian checking if everything is all right. However, the door to her bedroom is locked from the inside.

After making hot milk and honey, she heads for the drawing room to warm herself in front of the fireplace. Nothing but warm milk and honey and a lit fire to lighten the mood.

When she heads for the drawing room, she finds Ciel sitting on the floor in front of the couch next to the fire, dressed in his blue robe and looking through newspaper clippings.
"You should be in bed, young master," she says.

"You should be in bed," he says grumpily. "I'm working here, Mey-Rin."

She can see that quite clearly. Newspaper clippings, crumpled papers, pictures of the victims' butchered bodies, the suspect list and an envelope with the queen's red seal on it. All of these items surrounding Ciel and not giving him enough space to stretch out his legs. He must be very tired and uncomfortable at this point but it doesn't look like he's going to bed anytime soon.

"Would you like some warm milk and honey, my lord?" she asks.

Ciel gives her a surprised look but she can't tell why he's surprised. "Yes."

Mey-Rin returns to the kitchen to serve another mug before returning to the parlour to give the mug to Ciel. She sits on the couch behind him and watches him sip the warm milk.

"I must admit, your way of making milk with honey is a lot better than Sebastian's," he says.

Mey-Rin smiles softly. "Mostly made them for me whenever I was sad or ill."

"However, Tanaka always said that too much sweets can rot your teeth."

This makes Mey-Rin giggle. She's heard Tanaka say it a lot. He's kept her and the boys from eating sweets by slapping their wrists and telling them to bugger off.

She then sees Ciel rubbing his eyes and pinching the bridge of his nose. He's tired.

"You should really get some rest, master," she suggests.

"I'm not resting until Jack the Ripper is caught."

"And you expect to catch him with drained energy?"

"Why do you think I have Sebastian for?"

"That's...what worries me," she says. Ciel looks over his shoulder to stare at her. "I'm afraid that he will do more harm than protect. I see the way he looks at you. How his eyes turn like blood. I never saw him like that before. Now that know he's not really human, I realize that I never really knew him."

"Sometimes the less you know, the better," Ciel says. "You already know Sebastian is not human and you saw what he did to Lord Damiano and Azzurro Vanel. Trust me, he is not to be crossed with. I'm saying this for your own good, Mey-Rin, not just to scare you."

"I'm not scared of Sebastian," she confesses, "I'm scared what he might do to you."

"You don't need to worry about that. We have a contract. As long as our contract is not violated, no harm will come to you or me."

He seems so confident about it. It's rather unnerving. Mey-Rin looks at the gruesome photographs of the dead prostitutes, one of them being the recent victim Alice McKenzie. She then looks back at the young master pitifully. She is aware the obsession of catching the killer is getting to his head. She just wishes she can help.

Talking to him about it has proven to be pointless as he always gives pessimistic replies but it doesn't stop Mey-Rin from trying. "My lord, I just want you to know that Alice's death was not your fault."
We both thought Viscount Druitt was Jack the Ripper."

"Oh but it is, Mey-Rin. As the watchdog to Queen Victoria, I have a responsibility of protecting London and eliminating the threats the queen believes to be a menace to the English society. I failed the queen last night by letting the killer make a fool out of me. I will not fail her this time."

She wishes she could protest and tell him how dangerous this is. How this could end up killing him. How his life is too valuable to risk. But she is merely a servant. She can only do what the master commands. However, if things do get out of hand and Sebastian gets him into trouble, she'll force herself to step in even if she'll end up dying...again.

She puts an assuring hand on the young master's shoulder. "We'll catch that bastard." Ciel quickly shrugs it off though. She noticed how much he detests being touched. She has seen it many times, at the funeral parlour, at Viscount Druitt's party and when Madam Red tried to cuddle him. It's like he'll burst into flames if you touch him. Like he's being touched by something unpleasant. And it frightens her to see him like that.

"Of course we will," he says, "As the queen's watchdog, it's my duty to eliminate any threat she asks me to, by any means I find necessary...Including the use of risky methods."

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**Next Day in the Afternoon...**

"Mey-Rin."

"Yes, sir?"

"I need you to do me a favour," Ciel gives her a sheet of paper. Mey-Rin takes off her glasses in order to see what's written in it. They are thee names of the Jack the Ripper victims. "I need you to go to the Undertaker's and ask for the files on the dead girls. Afterwards, you'll head for the Royal Hospital and ask for the medical files. Only you, Sebastian and I know of your whereabouts so don't tell anyone else. Do you think you can handle it?"

"Yes, my lord," Mey-Rin slips her glasses back on and quickly puts on her tweed coat and blue hat. She knows that it will feel terribly uncomfortable going to visit the Undertaker by herself. The deranged mortician will probably force her to make him laugh, otherwise he won't tell her shit. She's only following the master's orders.

"Be careful out there, Mey-Rin," Ciel warns her, "Jack the Ripper probably knows we're hunting him down. There's no need to bury another body. Am I clear?"

She nods obediently. "Yes, my lord." With this, she heads out.

"Sir, are you sure it was a good idea to send Mey-Rin to do such a dangerous task on her own?" Sebastian asks the moment she leaves.

"No, it wasn't," Ciel says while looking at his reflection through the tea in his teacup, "It's not a good idea at all. It's the only idea. For that reason, I asked her to be careful. Jack the Ripper will do anything to cover his tracks. He has proven to be unpredictable. We would have to play his game in order to capture him."

Sebastian raises his eyebrow curiously. "Play his game? Forgive me if I'm wrong, young master, but I'm assuming that you sent Mey-Rin out there to be bait for our killer."

Ciel remains silent for a few seconds before responding. "Regrettably."
"Hello," Mey-Rin calls out as she enters the funeral parlour, the place looking eerie and dark in the afternoon. The sun is setting which makes it difficult for her to see clearly. It's the damn glasses again. So she removes them from her face. "Mr. Undertaker? Are you here?"

So far, there's no sign of the crazy mortician. Perhaps he's in one of the coffins he resides in. The first time he came out of one nearly gave her and Grell a heart attack. She always thought things like that only existed in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Edgar Allan Poe's *Ligeia*.

She decides to open one of the coffins to see if he's asleep in one of them. It would be rude to wake him up but this is an urgent matter. She opens the coffin, only to find it completely empty. When she opens the second coffin, it is also revealed to be empty. However, when she opens the third coffin that's placed on the bier, she gasps and takes a step back, letting the lid slam shut. It wasn't the face of the Undertaker. She reopens the coffin, finding herself face to face with Alice McKenzie. Jack the Ripper's latest victim. She was brought here after Scotland Yard picked her off from the street. A blonde with a white ceraceous face. Her wounds are covered with make-up that almost matches her pale skin. The dress she wears is white silk and has a deep red choker necklace around her neck, covering the slash on her throat. Her body is surrounded by daises. *The poor thing*. What have you done to deserve such atrocious death?

"Like it?"

Startled, Mey-Rin immediately turns around to find the Undertaker standing right there in front of her, smiling as always. Her glasses nearly fall from her hands but catches them and pushes them back upon her face.

"Y-yes, Mr. Undertaker…sir," she stutters nervously.

"You're that sharp little maid that was with Lord Phantomhive yesterday, aren't you?" he asks, pointing one of his long black nails at her.

She nods. "It's Mey-Rin, yes." She takes out the paper Ciel gave her from the pocket of her coat and offers it to the mortician. "The young master is asking for the victim's death files. I would like to borrow them, if that's all right."

Undertaker snatches the piece of paper from her hands and reads it. Though Mey-Rin can't tell if he's actually reading because she can't see his eyes. He then starts giggling. "So the earl is making you do his dirty work, isn't he? I'm surprised that he sent you instead of the butler. Well, dearie, you already know the price for the files, don't you?"

She knows. The extraordinary gift of true laughter. Mey-Rin doesn't know any jokes though and her first attempt didn't even make him chuckle.

"I um, don't really know what sort of jokes you like, sir," she says awkwardly.

"I'll tell you what," he smiles, "Since this is our first time meeting, I'll give you the files for free. Let me see if I can find them. This will only take a moment."

Undertaker lights up a few candles to illuminate the parlour now that it's dark as it is outside, and he disappears into the back of the shop. Mey-Rin takes her time to look around a little longer. She wanted to look at the lotus flower Undertaker has among the dead plants but worries she'll have her
hand smacked once more. It still confuses her. He has dead plants so why keep that specific flower alive?

A few minutes later, Undertaker returns carrying a brown leather binder and gives it to her. Upon opening the binder and looking through, she finds what she's looking for. The names of the victims. The dates and time of their deaths. And cause of death. Most of them had their throats slit, just like Catherine Eddowes, Mary Ann Nichols and now Alice McKenzie. And as usual, they had their organs removed, including the uterus.

"This doesn't make sense," she says before looking at the creepy mortician, "What would Jack the Ripper want with a uterus?"

"What does make the uterus so special? I wonder, what sort of treasure does the uterus hold that prompts a sadistic killer to steal?" Undertaker says while cradling his arms together sideways as if he was holding a baby.

"A child." Mey-Rin's mother had once told her she was her greatest treasure. "Have any of the victims even been pregnant before?"

The mortician chuckles in amusement. "That is up for the earl to find out, isn't it? I only have access to their death files after all."

Mey-Rin nods. The death files are the only thing he's able to give her. To get more information out of him, that would require payment. She'll have to find the rest at the Royal Hospital where Madam Red works. She can't let Dr. Dalles know about her incoming visit. Ciel made it perfectly clear not to tell anyone where she's going. No even to Undertaker. But there's a good chance he already knows, just by the grin on his face. She turns to leave but is stopped by a hand on her shoulder.

"Not even a thank you? That's not very nice at all," he says.

"I'm sorry," she apologizes, "Thank you, Mr. Undertaker."

"I'd be careful out there if I were you, dearie," he warns, "There's no telling who could be Jack the Ripper."

That's right. Anyone can be Jack the Ripper. Everyone is capable of murder. Including her, Ciel, Sebastian and possibly Undertaker. Could he be Jack the Ripper?

"It could be you," she says, looking at him over her shoulders.

Undertaker chuckles and taps his chin with his long nail. "Oh really? Me? Now what reason would I have to kill those young ladies?"

"You're obsessed with death," she says, "You probably fantasize about it. You decorate the bodies as if they were dolls, dressing them and doing their hair. They can never protest or say no. You'd probably do it to anyone if they were all dead but you can't wait for them to die so you start killing people. You start with prostitutes because they are the less concerning and unwanted in the society. Therefore, no one would miss them. It helps you get away with murder easier."

"And what would I want with the uterus?"

"You have a collection jar full of organs so I'm guessing the uterus would be part of your collection and since the uterus carries a valuable treasure such as a child, I would guess it's your favourite."

"And let's just say I am Jack the Ripper, what will you do now?" he asks with a titter. He is clearly
enjoying this little games. Only, it's not a game. Mey-Rin truly believes the Undertaker could be Jack
the Ripper and if he is, the matter can be dangerous.

"I would have to inform the authorities but that would mean for me to leave and if you are Jack the
Ripper, you'll try to kill me to cover your tracks and I'll have to reach for my gun to shoot you in
order to escape."

"But by time you reach for your gun, I've already snapped that pretty little neck of yours," he says.

Her heart starts pounding fast against her chest as he said this. *Is he really fast enough to snap my
neck?*

"Then the young master will know," she says. His smile lessens into a thin line.

Mey-Rin now knows that she's a dead woman. *He's going to kill me. I just know it. He's Jack the
Ripper and he's going to kill me.* She jumps back with a startled cry when he snaps his teeth at her.

"AHAAHAHA!" He burst out laughing like a madman. "Oh, I'm afraid if I laugh any harder, I may
urinate my trousers! And your reaction was hilarious!"

As Undertaker continues laughing, Mey-Rin puts a hand to her chest to feel her beating heart. *That
was a cruel thing to do.*

The mortician finally stops laughing and takes a deep breath. "I suppose what you say is true. My
obsession with death is sort of unhealthy and I do have a collection of organs in jars. Unfortunately
for you and the young earl, I was working at Scotland Yard at the same hour Eddowes and
McKenzie were murdered so I'm afraid you have the wrong man."

So Undertaker is not Jack the Ripper after all. Her assumption was wrong. For some reason, she
feels glad this mortician is not the killer. Still, what he did just now was not at all funny.

"Your sense of humour is wicked," she says.

"Why thank you. I appreciate the compliment," he says with a teasing smile.

Mey-Rin takes another look at the shop. The skulls set between the lit candles that cast eerie shadows
on the walls. The cobwebs in every corner. Shelves full of organs in jar. And empty caskets minus
one. How does the man sleep at night with a dead body in his shop?

"How do you do all this?" she asks, "I mean, how do you prepare a dead body without feeling pity
or physically ill?"

"I treat them as guests that come and go every day," he says, "However, they only come and go
once. It's just how it is."

"What of children? Do they receive the same treatment?"

"Truth be told, I find children more difficult to work with. They're almost as breakable as ceramic.
Small and fragile with skin as veil. They need special care, unlike adults," he says this very grimly.

This makes Mey-Rin think of Ciel and how Undertaker would prepare his dead body if he ever died.
Would he have the same special treatment or will he be treated like an adult for being the
Phantomhive earl? This sort of thinking makes her heart sink.

"Have you ever cried for any of them?" she asks.
He cackles as if she told another joke. "What funny things you say, Dearie. Crying over something insignificant as a body!"

"That's quite insensitive, considering if the person belonged to a loved one," she says with a frown.

"Ah, but that's where you're wrong, dearie," he says while maintaining his grin. "People seem to forget that a body is simply a sack of blood, meat and bones when the most important thing is the soul. Bodies are deceptive. People have a different perception upon another's physical appearance. They solely rely on their eyes and ears, despite knowing that they could be easily tricked on what they entrust the most."

Mey-Rin tries to get her head around Undertaker's words. She's immediately confused. "I don't understand."

He points a long fingernail at the coffin where Alice McKenzie lies. "What do you see in her?"

Mey-Rin takes a long look at Alice. "I see a woman who suffered an unfortunate death. One she didn't see coming."

"Hmm. Others might say that she was nothing but a whore who had no business being outside after dark when there's a sadistic killer running amongst the streets of London."

Mey-Rin clings the files to her chest and slowly takes a step back as the Undertaker approaches her. "You have a sharp mind but a soft heart as well. It's vulnerable to emotions," he says, "I'd take care of oneself if I were you. You only get one soul. God won't give you another."

"These are very strange words he's saying, Mey-Rin thinks. Why would he be saying these things to her?"

"Um, have a good evening, Mr. Undertaker," she says before turning to leave.

"Likewise. I do hope you come back soon, either on your feet or in a casket. I fancy your company more than the earl's butler."

"That's not disturbing or creepy at all!" Mey-Rin thinks as she heads her way to the Royal Hospital as Ciel instructed her to go.

As Mey-Rin makes her way to the Royal Hospital, she accidentally bumps into one of the nightly women wandering the streets instead of staying at home away from Jack the Ripper wearing bosom-revealing corsets and raised skirts. They growl profanities as Mey-Rin immediately apologizes and swiftly walks away.

"Oy! If ye wanted yer tongue on me insides, all ye needed to do was ask!" One of them cackles but Mey-Rin ignores her.

She decides to make a quick stop at the open market to buy something to eat as her stomach growls desperately for food. She can't investigate a murder on an empty stomach. The stall she's at sells Japanese pastries with the one selling them being an elderly woman with white hair tied in a ponytail, wrinkles and brown spots over her face. Her eyes are so thin that they look shut but can see Mey-Rin quite clearly. She says something to Mey-Rin in Japanese while pointing at a basket full of fresh anpan bread. Anpan is a sweet bun that is commonly eaten in Japan. She has seen Tanaka eat one a few times but never actually tried it before. Yet it always smells delicious. Baldroy wanted to try one but Tanaka smacked his hand away. Get your own bred, he said. This made her and Finnian laugh. However, Mey-Rin is Chinese, not Japanese. She didn't understand a single word the old woman
"I'm Chinese, ma'am," she explains.

"Oh, I'm sorry," the old woman apologizes. It's understandable her confusion. People from China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam have similar eyes which causes the confusion. It happens to a lot people. Some guests at Phantomhive Manor thought Tanaka was Mey-Rin's grandfather because of his eyes. Ciel grew tired of explaining that Tanaka is Japanese and Mey-Rin is Chinese. "I meant to say, do you want it with red bean paste, sesame or chestnut?"

"Can I try the one with chestnuts?" The last time she ate beans, she remained trapped in the bathroom for a few hours with stomach aches and diarrhea.

The old woman gives her one of the anpan buns. After taking a bite, Mey-Rin hum as the flavour of chestnut paste bursts in her mouth. It's very good and sweet. She buys at least six anpan buns and continues her way to the hospital. She has already eaten two of the sweet buns she's carrying in a brown canvas sack.

"Are they good?"

Mey-Rin quickly turns around after hearing the question. She only walked ten feet away from the stall where she bought the sweet buns.

A young woman stands a foot away from Mey-Rin, staring at the sack full of buns while biting her lip, the sign of hunger. The woman is quite pretty with dark blonde hair waving down her shoulders, brown eyes and willowy complexion. But her face is an unhealthy opaque colour and the light blue dress she's wearing is quite drab and dirty with a few front buttons unfastened. Another prostitute, surely.

"Yes," Mey-Rin says. She tries to decide whether to warn this woman about Jack the Ripper. If she doesn't, this one could be the next victim. Is she does, will this woman listen or scold her?

"May I try one?" she asks.

Mey-Rin hesitates for a moment before taking out one of the anpan buns and gives it to the woman. She watches the woman smile after biting into the anpan bun.

"I've been wanting to eat one of these all month but her husband detests me and doesn't want me near the stall," she says with her mouth full.

"...You keep the rest then," Mey-Rin says while offering the sack of remaining buns. It's already getting late. Night is almost upon them. Once the sky turns black as an abyss, the monster will come out to hunt for its prey.

"Really?" The woman looks at her with a shocked expression. "Oh, I could never ."

"I insist."

The woman hesitates for a moment before taking the sack from her hands. "Thank you very much, miss. You're too kind." Mey-Rin takes notice of the white knitted shawl the woman is wearing with blue birds embroidered on it. Too fine of a shawl to be worn by a prostitute. A man must have bought it for her or perhaps she stole. Mey-Rin might never know. "I'm Mary Kelly, by the way."

The woman named Mary Kelly turns to leave. Mey-Rin remembers that she should warn Mary first about Jack the Ripper before letting her go like that. For all she knows, Mary could be the next
"Miss Kelly!" She catches up to Mary as fast as she can before she can disappear into the night. Luckily, the woman stops and gives Mey-Rin a confused look. Mary is quite tall, making Mey-Rin feel like Ciel's age rather than nineteen. "Jack the Ripper is still loose in London. You should stay clear of the streets and keep your distance from strangers until he's caught. There's too many dead bodies already."

Mary's face grows pale at the mention of the murderer. "Who was the victim today?"

"Alice. Alice McKenzie."

"…Ann Nichols and Catherine were my friends," Mary says sadly, "We used to work together. And Alice…She was just a young lass who barely started and made bad decisions."

Bad decisions. Could she mean…? "Mary, I hate to be invasive but…have Alice, Ann Nichols and Catherine ever gotten pregnant?"

Mary bites her lip, hesitant in answering the question. "They were. But then they had their babies removed at the hospital a few blocks away."

That's the hospital Mey-Rin is going and her eyes grow wide. So they were pregnant. Are these the kind of women Jack likes to kill? Women who had their children eliminated from existence? Why? And how could Jack know which prostitute aborted her own child?

"That means that the killer is someone working at the hospital," she mutters to herself before looking back at Mary, "Thank you, Miss Kelly, you've been a big help."

"Listen, if you do happen to find that bastard, kill him," Mary says and Mey-Rin nods before walking away.

Mey-Rin has to be fast about it this time. What will happen if the women that are not prostitutes and aborted their babies? She has to help find the name of the killer before it's too late.

Mary Kelly decides to take Mey-Rin's advice and head home, walking quickly down the pavement with her shawl clung around her shoulders and her eyes looking around for any signs of someone following her. So far, there's no one out in the streets that could be following her. She walks past a high-class couple who are drunk and laughing together like childhood sweethearts, making Mary think of Frederick Abberline. She wishes Abberline would return her the same affection but he's married to a lovely wife and they're going to have a baby together. She wanted to give him children but with the circumstance she's living, she could never raise a child. Not back then. Not ever.

Mary suddenly sees a dark figure standing a few feet away from her, the flame on the lamppost making it look like a silhouette. The silhouette of a man dressed in a dark coat and a top hat. Mary stops in her tracks upon seeing the man standing there, clearly staring at her. She takes a few steps. The man doesn't take a step forward. It continues standing there like a statue.

Not wanting to risk it, Mary turns and leaves as fast as she can. She would look over her shoulder every now and then to see the man still standing there.

However, when she looks over a fifth time, the man is completely gone. She stops in her tracks, staring in confusion. The man was right there just a few seconds ago. How could he have disappeared that fast? Or perhaps it was just her imagination?
Her question is answered with a gloved hand grabbing her by the roots of her dark blonde hair and pulls her into the dark. Mary screams in horror. The sack she had in her hands fall to the cobblestone ground and the sweet buns roll out of their confinements, and the blue bird shawl Abberline gave her falls into a puddle.

The last thing Mary Jane Kelly saw was a pair of bright green eyes and a grin of razor sharp teeth.

Mey-Rin finally makes it to the Royal Hospital but does not have the slightest idea of where to start. Doctors are too busy with their patients to attend her right now and she knows they probably won't give her the medical files the young master requested even if she tells them she's investigating the Jack the Ripper case. They obviously won't believe her and she doesn't have evidence to prove that Lord Phantomhive sent her here. Despite him specifically instructing her not to tell anyone, she has no other choice but to ask the one person who can give her access to the medical files. Angelina Dalles. Madam Red.

She asks a nurse where Dr. Dalles' office is and the nurse points at the end of the hallway.

Mey-Rin first knocks on the door as she sees Madam Red talking to a woman seated at the opposite side of the desk. A poorly dressed woman who looks like she has not slept in four days. Madam Red stops talking to the woman to look up at Mey-Rin in surprise. Mey-Rin knows she's being rude interrupting a doctor while working. This is urgent, however.

"Mey-Rin, what a surprise," Madam Red says, "I did not expect to see you here at this hour."

"Dr. Dalles, may I speak with you for a moment?" Here, Madam Red needs to be called Dr. Dalles as to not confuse the patients. Outside, Angelina Dalles prefers to be addressed as Madam Red or Aunt Ann.

"Certainly. Excuse me for a moment," she says to her patient before getting up from her seat and following Mey-Rin out of the office. "Is there something you need?"

"I'm sorry to bother you while you're working ." 

"Oh, no, it's fine."

"I know I'm not supposed to mention this to anyone but I could really use your help right now," Mey-Rin continues, "I need the medical files on the victims. Most of the victims had their own children removed before getting murdered and having their organs removed. The killer may be the same doctor that assisted on the removal of children. I-I know I'm asking too much but I'm simply following orders. This could save other women from being slaughtered ."

"Darling," Madam Red puts her hands on Mey-Rin's shoulders to keep her from talking. "You're babbling."

"I'm just nervous, that's all," Mey-Rin confesses. "Will you help me?"

Madam Red nods. "Of course. Come with me."

Madam Red takes Mey-Rin upstairs to the top floor where there are no patients or doctors. This part of the hospital looks like a private library. Madam Red tells her that this area is restricted for doctors and nurses only but is willing to make an exception for her and Ciel despite not liking the fact that he's risking his own life to catch a killer.

"You'll find the medical files on those shelves," she says while pointing at cardboard boxes filling the shelves of what looks like tall bookcases. The boxes are labelled with different letters, one for each
The names are organized in alphabetic order. We file them through their last names, by the way.

Mey-Rin already knew that. She'll have to start reading before bringing any of these to the young master. She'll start with Catherine Eddowes. Letter E. Alice McKenzie. Letter M. Mary Ann Nichols. Letter N.

"Do you mind if I stay here for a while?" she asks Madam Red.

"Don't take too long. Otherwise, my boss will have my head."

"Thank you, Madam Red," she says with the bow.

The red woman smiles kindly and sets the keys down on one of the wooden tables. "I'll be downstairs at the office if you need me. Once you're done, bring back the keys."

Mey-Rin nods and Madam Red leaves the room. Once she's gone, Mey-Rin immediately gets to work, starting with File E. If the victims are women who aborted their children, the doctor who performed the abortion must be the killer. She just needs a name. The real name of the killer.

Clouds are starting to cover up the moon, signs that it will rain soon.

Ciel continues looking out the window while Sebastian fastens the buckles on his brown overalls. He wonders if Mey-Rin made it to the hospital safely. However, with Jack the Ripper loose in London, there's no such thing as safe. They're taking a very dangerous step this time. Drastic measures that can prove to be fatal if done wrong. "If we're not careful, there will be more dead bodies tomorrow," he told her the other night and he saw the fearful look in her eyes, almost like the look Madam Red gave her and it doesn't help that the two have the same hair colour. Mey-Rin is obviously terrified.

"Not of Jack the Ripper but for Ciel's safety. She's afraid that the killer might hurt him, just like Madam Red is…"

"Fuck the queen. I don't care if you're the queen's watchdog or whatever kind of bloody dog you are. You're still my nephew and I won't allow you to risk your own life to catch a deranged murderer. I've already lost your mother and your uncle, I'm not going to lose you too, Ciel. Let's leave London. Leave all the pain and misery behind and start anew somewhere else."

Leave London. Leave England. He keeps thinking of this over and over again. He can't leave and Madam Red shouldn't worry about Ciel's life… because Ciel is dead. The Ciel she knew and loved died three years ago along with his parents, his beloved dog and the house they lived in. The only thing left is his shadow. An unwanted reflection. A constant reminder of what she lost. Her sister. Her husband. Her Ciel. And he knows that he can never bring Ciel back no matter what.

"Master," Sebastian's voice brings him out of his thoughts. He looks into the demon butler's dark eyes. "Is everything all right?"

Ciel looks out the windows once more, still thinking of Mey-Rin and the big risk they took sending her out there and contemplating whether the decision they made was wise or not. It wasn't a wise choice. It's the only choice. It's not something he wants. It's something that needs to be done. By any means he finds necessary.

"No, I'm not," he says, "The sun is gone. The predator is already out for his prey and will catch her soon. If we wish to stop him, we need to move."

"The hunter will soon become the hunted," Sebastian says with a smile, his eyes glowing bright red.
Ciel sees it as sinister. Sebastian will always be the hunter while everything else is the hunted. Jack the Ripper. Mey-Rin. Him. Ciel is hunting down Jack the Ripper while Sebastian hunts for Ciel's soul.

*The hunter becomes the hunted indeed.*

Mey-Rin looks through the medical files of the victims and comparing them with the death files. Their different illnesses and conditions. The names of the medications and everything. However, she's having a difficult time finding any documents that indicate any of them having an abortion. Could it be all a lie or did the killer remove the documents himself to cover his tracks? It will make things much more complicated.

She searches through every file, trying to find something that could help find the name of the killer but no luck so far. That is until she starts searching through File K and finds a folder with the name M. Kelly. It was a matter of *what if*. She didn't want to come to conclusions. *But what if...?* She frowns before opening the folder and her eyes widen when she reads the name *Mary Jane Kelly*, the woman Mey-Rin met at the market before coming here. This is her medical file.

Mey-Rin finds a document for an abortion that took place almost a year ago. "Mary Jane Kelly," she reads to herself out loud, "Age 27. Abortion of three-week-old fetus took place in 1887. The reasons for the abortion is unknown as the patient refuses to give information on her personal life. The father of the child is unknown. The patient remains healthy after the abortion to this day and takes painkillers to ease the aches..."

She's completely flabbergasted by this. Mary Kelly was pregnant just a year earlier and didn't tell Mey-Rin. She only mentioned Mary Ann Nichols, Catherine and Alice but didn't say shit about her being pregnant. Judging by the previous file, the killer eliminates the files after the poor dears are dead.

What horrifies Mey-Rin the most is who wrote the abortion document and the name signed on the bottom.

"Oh my god," she gasps.

She quickly gets out of the chair and makes her way for the door, only to find herself face to face with Jack the Ripper himself. Mey-Rin lets out a piercing scream.
Ciel - dressed like a common folk - and Sebastian walk into the hospital as if it were their own house despite Dr. Sheridan, the one in charge of the hospital, telling them to leave.

He enters Madam Red's office and finds her sitting behind her desk wearing her white doctor's coat. She's looking down at a few papers with a pair of gold-framed glasses pushed up to her eyes. Ciel's eyes squint at the glasses. The lenses are still intact. Not a crack or a spot of blood on it. They look brand new. It's cruel to suspect his own aunt of murder but all doctors in London are counted as suspects.

"Aunt Ann," he says.

Madam Red looks up from her work. She stares at her nephew a little while longer before letting out a deep sigh and removes her glasses, putting them down on the desk in front of her. "Mey-Rin is already upstairs checking through the medical files. I'm guessing it's the girls again."

Ciel frowns at the statement. "She told you, didn't she?"

"It's still obvious, isn't it? Why else would she come here for? Even if she didn't tell me, I'd still know," she says plainly, her tone containing very little emotion. Her eyes. Ciel can see that her eyes are completely different. Not in colour or shade. But in light. The light in her eyes is gone, reminding him of his own eyes and how they lost their shimmer when his parents and brother died, when he was defiled by the cultists and when his brother was killed before him, slaughtered as a sacrificial lamb. Every time he looks in a mirror, there's only emptiness in his eyes. Now he can see the same emptiness in his aunt's eyes as well. "You should really be more careful, dear nephew. Sending that poor girl here was a very dangerous move."

Before Ciel can say anything else, a nurse enters the office, looking pale and panicked. Probably another patient needing of medical attention. "Dr. Dalles, there's been gunshots coming from upstairs in the archives room. I tried to get in but the door was locked from the inside. I heard someone scream in there."

Madam Red's eyes go wide, that shimmer returning. Despite looking concerned, the shimmer in her eyes shows gleefulness. She then looks back at Ciel. He can see the shimmer and doesn't like it at all. "I left Mey-Rin with the keys to the room."

"What about the spare keys -?"

"We don't have time for this!" Ciel snaps at the nurse before he and Sebastian run out of the office. They run down the hospital corridors and climb up the stairs as quickly as possible until they make it to the floor where the archives would be. Ciel nearly falls on his knees as he runs out of breath from
exhaustion but continues to push forward even if he might pass out at the end. If Mey-Rin is in there and the gun was fired, that can only mean one thing. Jack the Ripper found her. That or a spider scared the shit out of her.

"Mey-Rin!" he calls out while standing in front of the door to the archives room. She doesn't respond. He quickly looks at Sebastian. "Open the door. Now!"

Sebastian nods, his face looking determined. "Certainly, master." With that, he kicks the door down from its hinges with ease and they immediately step inside.

The room is completely vacant of any living being. There's no one here. Nothing but shelves full of thick books, empty tables with lamps on top as well as cardboard boxes full of files and papers. Aside from a few papers scattered here and there, the archives look completely normal. Except for one thing. Mey-Rin. She's not here. She's supposed to be here just like Madam Red said she would be. And her glasses are on the desk.

"Where is she?" Ciel asks himself.

Sebastian looks around the room for any signs of Mey-Rin or at least her body. He can smell her but can't see her anywhere. Her scent is weak. Human scents grow weaker to nothing when they're dead. He's almost certain Mey-Rin is killed by Jack the Ripper. He then looks down at the wooden floor and sees three pebble-like objects shining in the moonlight that comes through the windows in thick blue beams.

"My lord, look," he points his gloved at the three shining objects.

Ciel looks down at them, just a few feet from where he's standing. He almost mistakes them for rusted gold but they turn out to be bullets covered in blood. There's blood all around where the bullets lay. The bullets were obviously fired by Mey-Rin's gun. When he bends down to take a closer look, he spots Mey-Rin's gun lying under a table at the side of the archives room with a chair knocked down to the floor. Ciel quickly walks over to the other side of the room and grabs the gun from under the table. He hisses as the hot weapon touches his fingers and immediately drops it. The gun was used recently as it's still warm.

Something happened here. Jack the Ripper found her. She tried to defend herself by shooting him but judging by the bloody bullets on the floor, she couldn't kill or disable him. Looking at the abandoned gun and knocked over chair, Mey-Rin could have tripped over it and dropped the gun in the process before getting attacked. Ciel then sees blood staining the edge of another table standing behind him. The blood looks fresh.

"Sebastian."

The butler nods and walks over to the table to smell the blood. It's fresh and warm yet terribly weak, like the Italian tea Ciel detested so much. Usually, one would have to be dead for the blood to be weak but there are still signs that Mey-Rin could still be alive. Why does she smell so weak then?

"It's her blood," he confirms to the young master.

Ciel takes a deep breath. "Is she alive?"

"It's hard to say. The scent in her blood is quite feeble."

Among the scattered papers on the table and floor, there's a sheet of paper that if Ciel hadn't looked behind Sebastian's foot, he would have missed it. He picks up the sheet of paper and reads it. It's a medical file, belonging to a woman named Mary Jane Kelly. She had an abortion a year before and
Mey-Rin can hear the faint sound of French opera music and sobbing as she regains consciousness. Her head throbs painfully with the side of her temple feeling sticky. She feels like she's about to vomit. She tries to move but realizes that her wrists are tied together behind her back. Her vision is blurry as she opens her eyes but as she lifts her head up, she sees a blurry figure in front of her letting out muffled cries and desperate sobs. Mey-Rin shakes her head and blinks a couple of times to clear away the blur from her eyes. When her vision clears, she realizes she's tied to a chair and sitting in front of her is none other than Mary Jane Kelly who is also tied to a chair. Oh no! Mey-Rin tries to speak to her but finds out that the two of them are gagged with cloths tied over their mouths to keep them from screaming or calling for help. That's just perfect.

Mey-Rin recalls the earlier events. She was heading out of the archives with Mary Kelly's medical files when she came face to face with Jack the Ripper. He was standing in the way of the only escape she had access to. She screamed and took out her pistol. She shot him three times in the chest which should have killed him but he simply dug the bullets out of his flesh one by one and dropped them on the floor as if they were nothing but specs of dust. He grinned a terrifying smile full of razor sharp teeth. "Shite," was the only word she said before getting backhanded in the face, making her head hit against the edge of the table, knocking her out.

Now, she's been captured by the killer and is now trapped with Mary Kelly completely at his mercy. Mey-Rin can only pray that Ciel and Sebastian find them before it's too late. But where has Jack the Ripper gone to now? He is not here with her and Mary. Has he gone out to find another victim? Mey-Rin spots a record player singing the French opera music she has been listening to while regaining consciousness as well as lit oil lamp bathing the room in a dark golden hue and a brown leather strap lying flat and open on the window sill full of sharp medical utensils. She could use them to untie herself and Mary, if they weren't so far from reach and the ropes are too tight to squeeze her hand through. If she doesn't do something, Jack will return soon and will kill them both.

Speaking of the devil himself, the door bursts open and in comes Jack the Ripper, wearing the top hat and a black cape with the flaps raised. He carries a bag in his gloved hand, containing God-knows-what. It's raining outside. Mey-Rin can tell from how drenched the cape and hat look. He kicks the door shut and sets the bag down on a table nearby, opening it and digging through. Mary continues crying and sobbing through the gag. Mey-Rin really wishes to tell her to shut up, if none of them were gagged that is. She understands that Mary is horrified and so is she but after reading a lot of detective novels, she knows that crying and sobbing will eventually annoy and anger the killer. It will make their time run out faster. In order to live just a little longer (at least until Sebastian and Ciel arrive), they would have to remain quiet. Meaning that Mary has to shut the fuck up.

Mey-Rin watches Jack take out a hairbrush? Her eyes go wide in confusion when Jack takes out a hairbrush from a bag as well as lip colour, eyeshadow, liners and facial powder. I was right then. Jack walks over to Mary without uttering a single word. Tears threaten to escape Mey-Rin's eyes but takes deep breaths. Jack removes the cloth from Mary's mouth. She screams.

"Let us go, you bas-!"

Jack hits her harshly with the back of the hairbrush, causing her bottom lip to split open and for blood to gush out. Mey-Rin flinches at the sudden action. She expected him to hit her but not with the brush. Perhaps she's underestimating him. Jack then turns his attention to Mey-Rin. She remains staring worriedly as he walks closer to her. She nearly flinches when he brushes his gloved fingers...
over the cut of her temple. It hurts but he doesn't seem to care. All she can do is sit still and not give him the pleasure of hearing her cry which he would use as an excuse to strike her like he did to Mary. She frowns when he licks his thumb and wipes off the blood from her head. He then unties her hair from the bun, letting them fall over her shoulders. He runs his fingers through her auburn curls, grinning. The grin that is completely inhuman.

"You're a sick fucker," Mary snarls viciously with blood spilling out of her busted mouth, trying to act brave when her voice is still shaking.

Mey-Rin closes her eyes, expecting Jack to hit Mary again for talking. Instead, he ignores her and proceeds to brush Mey-Rin's hair with the bloodied hairbrush. The maid tries not to tremble. She feels him twisting and tugging the strands of her hair together. He's braiding her hair like a mother would do for a child. Does Jack plan to make her and Mary look pretty before killing them.

Once Jack finishes braiding her hair, he removes the cloth from her mouth. He stands in front of her and grabs her lower jaw roughly, examining her face. Jack hums the opera music to himself while doing so. After examining her face, he lets go of her jaw and pats her cheek lightly. He then heads over to Mary and starts to apply powder on her face. Mey-Rin remains staring at the man applying make-up to the young prostitute. He didn't put make-up on Mey-Rin because he already finds her pretty. Because Mary is a prostitute, he finds her ugly. He must really hate them.

When Jack tries to apply lip colour to Mary's bloodied lips, she starts struggling and yelling. "Get off me!"

"No!" Mey-Rin snaps and Jack stops with his hand still raised. "Don't hit her! Please."

After a moment, Jack sets his hand down, his fist clenching. Mey-Rin watches him continue working on Mary's face. Mey-Rin would tell Mary to stop talking if she doesn't want to get hit in the face again (or worse) but she clearly got the message as she remains quiet.

Minutes later, Mey-Rin picks up the courage to speak, despite knowing that she might get hit in return. "I'm not a prostitute, but I guess you already know that." When Jack doesn't respond, she continues talking. "You only captured me because I know everything. I know who you are. And I know that you're not working alone." Jack continues applying the lip colour to Mary's lips. "You know that Lord Phantomhive is on your trail and you'll do anything to cover your tracks, even kill a friend. Isn't that right, Grell Sutcliffe?"

Jack stops applying the lip colour, freezing on the spot. Mary looks at the two in confusion, not knowing what Mey-Rin is talking about. The killer walks over to the table and sets the lip colour down before removing his top hat and turns to face her, revealing the face of Grell Sutcliffe. It all makes sense now. Madam Red was at the party when the killer attacked Alice McKenzie but Grell was not. He went to the washroom or at least, that's what Mey-Rin thought.

Grell lets out a deep sigh. "I was hoping you wouldn't find out. But you're such a clever girl."

"At the Viscount's party, you lied when you said you were heading for the washroom but you didn't," she says. She notices how his voice changed when he spoke the last sentence, a lot less timid and more outgoing. "You took advantage of Sebastian's distraction and snuck out of the mansion to claim your next victim. Alice. The name Madam Red gave to Ciel at the party. It was Alice McKenzie."

Grell's eyes are now glowing a bright green colour and he shows his sharp teeth his wide smile. He's
inhuman, just like Sebastian. "I'll be honest with you," he says, "I did have to go to the washroom. My bladder couldn't hold any longer. But now I know that this will be the last time I drink so much lemonade while on the job." Mey-Rin frowns at him. "Any who, I would have killed Alice faster if she had stopped struggling. I didn't expect her to be such a problem. I even had to buy a new pair of glasses because of her."

The glasses he's wearing are nearly identical to the old ones. Alice broke them during the struggle. I should have seen it, Mey-Rin thought. It never occurred to her that small detail. Just like Undertaker said, anyone can be Jack the Ripper. Anyone. It never occurred to her because Grell is (or was) her friend and respects other people's privacy. It doesn't matter anymore, does it? Mey-Rin figured it out and Grell plans to bury his secrets along with her and Mary. Their secrets, as Grell is not working alone.

"Grell, you're a good man. Why are you doing this?"

"Oh Mey-Rin, you're such a sweet girl," he says as he walks behind her and places his hands on her shoulders. "This is why I like you so much, not just because of that luscious red hair or yours. I really did appreciate what you did for me at Phantomhive Manor. I really do. It makes me regret wanting to kill you even more. You're the first real friend I've ever had."

Tears fill Mey-Rin's eyes from both fear and painful betrayal. "Friends don't kill friends, Grell."

Mary's eyes widen when he says this. "You know this bastard!?"

"Shut it or I'll cut you," Grell threatens and she immediately becomes silent. He then returns to being kind with Mey-Rin. "Anyways, it's nothing personal against you, dear. I'm simply doing it out of love for a certain woman."

"â€œDo I need to ask?"

Before Grell can respond, he pauses. Mey-Rin stares at him strangely. Why did he stop? "If you'll excuse me for a just a moment. There's someone here who wants to see you. I shall return. Do behave yourselves while I'm gone, especially you." He says this while giving Mary Kelly a venomous glare. He then exits the room, leaving the two ladies alone.

Mey-Rin closes her eyes and sighs. Oh no.

She twists her wrists around, trying to find a way to free herself from the bindings but they're too tight, almost digging into her flesh. It stings like hell. She looks around the room for anything she can use as a knife, probably reach it with her foot. Unfortunately, anything sharp is out of reach. She pray for Sebastian and the young master to arrive and save them soon. If Grell brought who she think it is, things will become quite nasty.

"You know that man? You knew he was Jack the Ripper?" Mary asks in a terrified but also angry tone.

Mey-Rin sighs. She knew she'd be confronted this way now that Mary knows that she and Grell know each other. "He's a friend or at least, that's what I thought. And no, I did not know he was Jack the Ripper. Not at first. I wish it wasn't him but I was wrong."

"And now we're going to die," Mary says.

Mey-Rin bites her lower lip. She's not sure how all this is going to end. Will there be blood? Yes, there will be. Is someone going to die? Yes, someone will die tonight but she's not certain who it will be. However, she shouldn't lose faith in the young master and neither should Mary.
Mey-Rin immediately shakes her head. "Do not think such things. The queen's watchdog will come for us."

"Do not be so confident," she says, "We both know that I'll be the first one to die. That man hates me but he seems to be very fond of you."

Being fond of Mey-Rin won't do her much good.

"Mary, you never told me you were with child," she suddenly tells her.

She gives Mey-Rin a surprised look. She explains to Mary how she searched through the medical files and found a file where she had a surgery, involving the removal of a fetus. Jack the Ripper kidnapped Mary because she aborted her child. But the question still bothers Mey-Rin.

"Mary, why did you remove your child from your womb?" she asks.

"It's a joke, isn't it?" Mary says eerily. "You know what I am. All London knows what I am. Can you imagine me bringing a child to this wretched world and watch it be discriminated and mistreated because of who the child's mother is and where it came from? I wasn't going to bring a child to the world to watch it suffer. So, I did what was necessary. I did what needed to be done. If there is such thing as heaven, my child is much happier there than it ever will be here."

Mey-Rin thinks of her mother and how she thought it might be better if she hadn't been born. Better for Mey-Rin, not for her. She told Mey-Rin once, that she wanted to smother her to death the moment she came out of her vagina. She said that Mey-Rin be better off dead than alive. If her superiors ever found out about Mey-Rin's existence, they would have killed her mother and force her into prostitution as she the daughter of a prostitute. She thought she would be sparing Mey-Rin from the pain. But she never brought herself to kill her. She loved Mey-Rin and kept her in hiding for her sake.

Mey-Rin tells Mary all of this and she begins to tear up sorrowfully. What would have happened if Mary hadn't made the choice of removing her child? Would the child have the same experiences Mey-Rin had or would it have suffered a worse fate?

"It was Abberline's," Mary suddenly says.

Mey-Rin looks at her, confused for a moment, but then her eyes widen in realization. "Frederick Abberline? He was the father?"

She nods. "He's married to a very nice and beautiful woman. Her class is much higher than mine. I knew that with my profession, we could never make each other happy. I was afraid that he would reject me if I had his child. Many men reject their own children if those children belong to someone of low class, or someone like me. That's how cruel the world is. I didn't want my child to subject to such cruelty."

"Mary, we will get out of here. My master is coming for us. Everything will be fi -.

Before Mey-Rin can finish talking, the door opens and Grell walks back in but he's not alone. She watches him walk in with his accomplice. The lady in red herself Angelina Dalles. Madam Red. Her red coat is drenched as well as her hat. Mey-Rin assumes that it's raining profusely outside. She removes her hat and places it down on the table where the cosmetics lay, and ties her slightly damp hair back in a bun.

She takes one look at Mey-Rin and frowns before turning to Grell.
"I thought you took care of her, Grell," she hisses angrily him. Grell flinches as if he were frightened of her.

"I thought I'd make her look pretty before killing her," Grell says. "I wouldn't want her to die ugly like those wretched whores."

"I don't care if they look pretty or not. I want this over with, Grell," she says, "We're leaving London tonight and I'm not going to wait around for you to pretty them up like dolls just so you can kill them."

Grell rolls his eyes distastefully. "Oh, Madam, why must you always ruin the fun."

Madam Red rolls her eyes as well before turning her attention to me. She smirks deviously. She walks over to where I'm tied to and sits in front of me. "So, Mey-Rin, you found out my little secret. I congratulate you."

Tears fill her eyes as she stares at Madam Red in fear and despair. "You tricked us all," she says this as she looks at both her and Grell. He gives her a sulking look. "The both of you. How could you do this? To your own nephew."

"It's nothing personal against him. I love my nephew. However, I don't like him nosing about my business. Now because of him, you and that whore will suffer a terrible death tonight," Madam Red says, "It's a pity though, I really did take a liking to you just as Grell. You seem so dedicated to my nephew, so loyal and obedient to him that it almost looks you loved him. Tell me, Mey-Rin, do you love my nephew?"

"Pardon me?" Mey-Rin says, looking rather confused at what Madam Red is asking.

"Let me be frank on her behalf," Grell says, "She's wondering if you're fucking the boy?"

Mey-Rin returns her attention to Madam Red with an astonished expression on her face. "Do you honestly thinkâ€¦? No, Madam Red, I swear there's nothing between us. Why would I â€”?"

"Because just like prostitutes, maids would bed with their masters for money," Madam Red says, her tone turning darker, "However, you would do anything for him. Even give your life for him. That's why I'm asking, do you love him? Answer careful, Mey-Rin."

"Iâ€¦I don'tâ€¦I."

"Iâ€¦I don'tâ€¦I."

"Iâ€¦I don'tâ€¦I."

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"Iâ€¦I don'tâ€¦I."

"Iâ€¦I don'tâ€¦I."

"Iâ€¦I don'tâ€‚" Mey-Rin tries to tell Madam Red that she doesn't really love her nephew but she feels like she'll be lying to her. Mey-Rin loves the boy but she's not sure if she loves him the way Madam Red thinks she loves him. He's the boy that gave Mey-Rin a new life and she loves him for that.

"You don't?" Madam says, "Darling, I can tell when someone is lying to me."

Mey-Rin wonders if Ciel would say the same thing. "I'm guessing we're all good at lying."

The smile on the red woman's face slowly fades as Mey-Rin says these words. She languidly stands on her feet. She raises her black gloved hand and smacks Mey-Rin harshly across the face, turning her head to the side. Grell jumps but does not move from his spot. Mey-Rin doesn't cry out nor does she wince in pain. It hurts like hell though. Madam Red got the answer she wanted. Who knew she wouldn't take it well?

Madam Red grabs her by the jaw, pulling her face closer to hers. "My nephew will never touch you again if your body is scattered all over the floor," she hisses.
"Leave her alone, you mad bitch," Mary says all of the sudden after long minutes of silence. "Some doctor you are. She's not a whore, you know. She's just a young girl being loyal to her master. That's what a maid does. You're here to kill a prostitute, not a maid."

Madam Red remains silence for a moment, staring at Mey-Rin with a deadly look in her eyes, before that smile returns, her red lips stretching outward. "Since you put it that way. You'll be the first person to die. And you, Mey-Rin, will have the honour to watch."

"Madam Red, please, don't kill her. She didn't want her child to be taken from her womb."

She scoffs at Mey-Rin's words. "I know that." she says calmly as she walks around and stands behind Mary Kelly. "She was my patient, remember? I remember her walking into my office for the first time. She was in tears. She told I wouldn't be doing this if it wasn't necessary and that I can't bring a child into a cruel world like this one. An act of mercy. You remember that, don't you, Mary? And then I told you that no matter what happens, I will be there at every step of the way. Of course, you didn't expect for this to be the next step, did you?" she smirks at Mey-Rin as she brushes Mary's dark blonde hair back from her shoulder. "But you know what? That's what my sister thought of Ciel's little brother when he was born. The blue little boy. She gave birth to two wonderful boys and thought that one of them shouldn't be in this world. She had everything I couldn't have and she almost threw it all away because of that stupid mind of hers. Just like Alice McKenzie, Catherine Eddowes, Mary Ann Nichols and your friend Mary Kelly, they've been blessed with what I can never have and threw it away like waste. So why should I let them live?" She looks over at Grell and nods. "Finish this."

Grell nods and takes out something that looks like a large broad blade with rows of sharp teeth. Mey-Rin's eyes widen when Grell pulls a string and the blade starts rotating with a loud roaring noise. What on earth is that? When she sees Grell walking closer towards Mary with the rotating blade, she panics.

"Grell, no!"

He runs the rotating blade through Mary from behind, now sticking out of her chest with blood and flesh scattering all over the floor and some splattering over Mey-Rin. She screams.

He then starts approaching her with the now bloodied blade.

"I really am sorry about this. If only you had let it be, I wouldn't have to kill you right now."

"What about your sister? Would she have wanted this?" she asks and Grell stops. The blade continues to rotate loudly but he does not move. This clearly makes Madam Red quite angry.

"Don't let her get into your head, you idiot. That's exactly what she wants," she growls but Grell still does not move. "Finish her already. Kill her or I'll do it myself -.

The door to the room is kicked down to the ground. Standing in the middle of the doorway is Sebastian and the young master. Thank God. She's glad that they finally arrived but unfortunately, they're too late. Mary Kelly is dead. It's only a matter of time before Grell and Madam Red kill her too.

Both Sebastian and Ciel look around. When Ciel takes notice of Mary Kelly's mangled corpse, he bends forward and vomits. Sebastian is not impressed, however. For a second, he almost thought it was Mey-Rin's body but the dark blonde hair confirmed that it wasn't her. Sebastian believes it would be convenient if she were dead. She's becoming a distraction for the young lord these days.
However, it is also inconvenient. The young lord already blames himself for the deaths of the other prostitute Alice McKenzie and now probably Mary Kelly, it would be preferable if Mey-Rin is still alive so he wouldn't be pestered by the boy's grief.

Sebastian immediately covers Ciel's eyes and jumps back as he sees someone coming out of the room. He knows that Jack the Ripper is in there and he's not alone. He immediately recognizes the brown ponytail and the gold-framed glasses.

"You've made quite a mess of things there, Mr. Sutcliff," Sebastian says.

Grell steps into full view, his face and suit completely drenched with Mary Kelly's blood. Sebastian notices something different in Grell's eyes. They're glowing a bright green colour. Sebastian has seen that colour before in another creature. "No, you're wrong," Grell says in his usual meek and bubbly tone, "This is all a misunderstanding. I heard the screams and rushed here to help. I only managed to save Mey-Rin but the other poor girlâ€¦The killer ran away -.

"You can drop the innocent act, Grell," Sebastian says, "It's over. You know, this is the first time I've met someone like you in the human world. You played the role of helpless butler well. Your act had almost everyone completely fooled, including poor Mey-Rin."

"Youâ€¦You really think so?" He then grins widely, exposing his razor sharp teeth. "How wonderful!" Grell releases his ponytail, his brown hair now turning red like the blood covering him and the meek bubbly tone leaving him, replaced by a louder and more flamboyant tone. "That's great to hear. After all, I am an actress and quite a good one at that. Of course, you're not really Sebastian either, are you?"

"Sebastian is the name my master gave me so that is who I am, for now."

"Oh, you're playing the faithful dog. Well, you're handsome enough to get away with it," Grell removes the golden-framed glasses and replaced them with red-framed glasses that has two tiny skulls hanging at the corners. Sebastian now sees his true form, a hideous man with long red hair, bright green eyes and a Cheshire cat-like grin. "Anyway, here we are, Sebastian. I think I'll call you Bassy. Let me introduce myself, the Bannett butler Grell Sutcliff. What do you say? Let's get along." He blows a kiss at Sebastian and the demon shudders in disgust. "Ah, it's so nice to talk to you in my true voice. The other one was quite dull. I must admit, I was surprised when I first met you. I've never seen a demon playing a butler before."

"But I could say the same thing about you," Sebastian says, "I never thought of finding one of your kind playing a butler either. You're supposed to be in the area between man and God."

"Sebastian, what are you going on about?" Ciel asks.

The demon butler smirks. "You still haven't figured it out, haven't you, my lord? He's a Shinigami."

"A Shinigami?"

"It's what they call a Grim Reaper in Japan, my lord. I'm sure Tanaka has told you all about them in stories. Why would a divine being like you pretend to be a servant?" he asks Grell.

Grell chuckles in amusement. "Why indeed. Let's just say I did it out of love for a certain woman."

Sebastian frowns in suspicion. "And that woman might be...?"

"You don't really need to ask, do you?" a woman's voice says, one that Sebastian found familiar.
Ciel pries Sebastian's gloved hand from his eyes and they both watch Madam Red step out of the shadows, pulling Mey-Rin by the scalp and holding a knife to her throat. Sebastian places his hand to his chin as he contemplates Mey-Rin's current state, her coat stained in blood (clearly not hers) and her eyes teary. *Oh dear.*

"Aunt Ann," Ciel says. He then looks at Mey-Rin. "Are you all right?" She shakes her head, saying no. Of course she's not all right, Sebastian can tell. She saw the Mary Kelly girl die before her very eyes. A trauma she might never fully recover from. "Let her go, Madam. This is between you and me."

"This is between all of us, nephew," she says, "I hadn't counted on this, you know. I didn't think anyone would be able to tell who Grell really is."

"I suspected you were behind all of this," he says.

"You mean, you actually suspected your own aunt?"

"Naturally, you were on the suspect's list from the very beginning. But all of your alibis were flawless," he says neutrally. Sebastian wonders what the young master's emotions truly are, now that he knows that Jack the Ripper was his aunt and her butler all along. It may not matter to him but inside, he's probably screaming. This is turning out to be interesting after all. "I was looking for a murderer. Blood relations did not matter. None of the humans on the suspect list could have been responsible for the murders but if one of them had an inhuman accomplice, that would change the game completely. It had to be someone who could travel from the Viscount home to the east end instantaneously. In the end, only one of you two can be Jack the Ripper. You Madam Red and Grell Sutcliff."

Ciel reaches into his pocket and takes out Mary Kelly's document. "I began to search in what else the victims had in common besides prostitution." He also holds a list containing the victims' names. "They were all your patients. You performed surgeries on them to remove their fetuses. We made a list of all the patients you attended. Catherine Eddowes. Mary Ann Nichols. Alice McKenzie. Alice was your recent patient. The only one who was still alive was Mary Kelly. Clearly you would have their medical files disposed after killing them, to ensure no one suspected you but you made the mistake of leaving Mary's medical file for Mey-rin to find. We knew if we waited around here, we would come for them eventually. But we were too late." Ciel then turns his attention to the red-headed shinigami. "As for you, Grell, I'm surprised you attempted against Mey-Rin's life. You two were such good friends. What you're doing to her now is complete betrayal and you know that."

"If you knew that Mary Kelly was going to be the next victim, why did you send Mey-Rin?" Madam Red asks.

"I knew you'd come after Mey-Rin," Ciel explains plainly, "The moment you saw her, you knew why she was at the hospital. Even if I told her strictly not to mention her tasks to anyone, just seeing her walk into the hospital made you realize that your secrets will be revealed once she found out that it was you behind the killings. It was the very reason why you sent Grell to dispose of her."

"You used her as bait," she says, "How selfish of you, Ciel."

Ciel nods in agreement. "It was a regrettable decision, yes. But neither of us would have made this decision if it weren't necessary."

Sebastian frowns at the comment and so does Madam Red.

"Us?"
Ciel's lip lift up in a smirk. "You didn't think I made this decision on my own, did you?"

"We'll catch that bastard," she said, putting an assuring hand on his shoulder. Ciel quickly shrugged it off though.

"Of course we will," he said, "As the queen's watchdog, it's my duty to eliminate any threat she asks me to, by any means I find necessary. Including the use of risky methods."

"How about using bait?" Mey-Rin asked.

Ciel looked at her with a frown. "Bait?"

She nodded and slid off the couch to sit right next to him. "Yes. We use bait to draw Jack the Ripper into a trap."

"And where on earth are we going to find bait?" he asked.

Mey-Rin remained silent for a moment before finally responding. "Me."

Ciel's eye went wide when she said this. "You must be bloody joking. I'm not going to use you as bait."

"Think about it for just one second, my lord," Mey-Rin expressed her idea that night, "Jack the Ripper knows that we're on his trail. If he sees one of us getting close into finding out his true identity, he'll come. I'll be bait and I'll wait for you Sebastian to come save me."

"Are you out of your bloody mind? Are you even listening to the words that are coming out of your mouth right now?" Ciel knew that the idea was good but it was also dangerous. She almost died because of him. What Mey-Rin planned was suicidal. "Mey-Rin, I'm not going to send you out there like a worm on a hook. You know how dangerous Jack the Ripper is."

"Which is why we should do this before he kills another prostitute," she said. As much as Ciel hated the idea, she had a very good point. "I know how dangerous it is, my lord. Which is why I'm willing to risk it."

"You know that if you do this, you could die at the end," he warned her, "And Sebastian and I might not be able to save you this time."

"Yes, you will," she assured him.

"And how would you know?" he asked.

"Because I have faith in you, my lord. You saved me before."

"Have it your way then," he said grumpily.

"So this was your maid's idea after all," Madam Red says while glaring at Mey-Rin, "How brave of her. Unfortunately, her plans came with a fault. She thought you could save her and that prostitute from us. But..." She removes the knife from her throat and stabs her in the upper back, the tip of the blade coming out through her chest.

"No!" he shouts. Ciel watches Mey-Rin gasps at the sudden assault and her eyes closes shut. Madam
Red then releases her body and lets it drop to the ground like a sack.

Sebastian lets out a sigh. He knew this would happen. Saving Mey-Rin from dying the first time was a complete waste of time and energy. He also notices the shocked look on Grell face.

"My dear nephew, how unfortunate this turned out to be," Madam Red says while wiping off the blood from her knife. Ciel continues to glare at his aunt. "If you had let it go, we could have played chess again. But nowâ€¦" She curls up her lips back in an angry snarl, her eyes returning to their maddening state. "YOU'VE RUINED EVERYTHING!"

At this moment, Grell attacks Ciel with the weapon he used to kill Mary Kelly but Sebastian quickly steps in the way and holds the rotating blade in his hands, stopping it from hurting the boy, before throwing it back along with Grell. Ciel's eye widens in complete shock.

"What on earth is that!?" he asks.


"Don't you dare call it that!" Grell snaps at Sebastian angrily, "This is more than a death scythe! I worked really hard to customize it! This is a death scythe of my own design. It can hack anyone into tiny pieces. I call it a chainsaw." Like he did to all of his victims. He grins evilly at Sebastian and laughs darkly. "I've been far too well behaved. I'm getting out of shape. I'm going to enjoy exercising my skills. Soâ€¦shall we play?" He then winks and throws another kiss at Sebastian.

Sebastian frowns at Grell, one of his eyebrows twitching. "Perhaps you could be more respectful of my position. I'm on duty after all.

"Oh, what a stoic man you are," Grell says in a flirtatious tone, "That makes you more irresistible." He wipes off a bit of blood from the blade of his chainsaw, as he calls it, with his gloved fingers and looks at it in admiration. "You know, red is my favourite colour. It's perfect for hair, clothes, lipstick. That's why I painted all of those ugly women with pretty red blood. That's why I liked Mey-Rin so much. She had such beautiful red hair."

"If you liked Mey-Rin so much, why did you let the Madam kill her?" Sebastian asks.

Grell's smile falls. "â€¦Shall we play or not?" he asks in a darker tone.

Sebastian smirks in amusement, knowing that he hit a nerve. "Certainly."

"I'm going to make you better looking than you are. I'll tear you up from the inside and trust me, I'll make you like it," Grell activates his chainsaw. A disgusted expression crosses Sebastian's face. "You'll be lovely as scattered rose petals."

"You're a Shinigami" Sebastian reminds him while removing his black coat and draping it over Ciel's shoulders, "You're job is to quietly harvest the souls of the dying and as a butler, you're supposed to follow your master like a shadow. You violated both of these expectations and quite frankly, I find it sickening."

Grell grins once more. "You wound me. I'm more efficient than I seem, you know."

Ciel looks down at Mey-Rin's dead body. She's gone yet again. She had faith in him and he failed her. He couldn't save her or Mary. But looking back at her aunt, the woman who killed that girl who was loyal to the very core, he knows that he will not fail her this time. He knows what needs to be done, blood relation or not. He lifts up his hand to his eyepatch.
"In my name and that of the queen, I order you Sebastian!" He then rips it off, revealing the contract in his eye glowing purple, "Put an end to them."

Sebastian smirks, his eyes glowing blood red. "Yes, my lord."

Grell's grin widens as he quickly charges at Sebastian with the chainsaw. With each lunge, Sebastian continues to jump back, ducking and stepping aside as Grell swings his death scythe around like the madman he is. He continues taunting Sebastian, encouraging him to run away like a coward. He's comparing it to a game of tag.

Grell suddenly appears behind him. Sebastian turns around quickly enough to see the death scythe about to hack him but he immediately grabs it in his hands again and is pushed against the wall, the rotating blade penetrating the wall and sending sparks everywhere.

"Now let's see how fast you are!" he laughs. Sebastians yells as the chainsaw cuts over his shoulder, making Grell laugh even more. "It's fun when it hurts a little bit, isn't it!?"

Now Ciel is left to face his aunt alone. The woman who raised him and his brother. The one whom Ciel thought would always be there. What she did is betrayal to him and yet she wanted him to leave London with her. How could she do this and expect for him to be all right with it? How could she fool her own nephew?

"So, you're still the queen's guard dog which makes me your prey now." Madam Red finishes cleaning the knife from Mey-Rin's blood, the blade now gleaming white under the moonlight. "But it is hunt or be hunted. There's only one thing I can do!" With that she charges at Ciel with the knife.

Ciel gasps and steps aside. He cries out when the knife cuts his upper arm but luckily his aunt missed his heart. Before she can get a chance to attack him again, Ciel takes out the gun he's been hiding in the back of his trousers and aims it at her. Madam Red freezes on the spot, the blade now dripping with his blood. She dared attack her own flesh and blood. This sort of betrayal brings hot tears in his eyes, of both fear and rage.

"You're a doctor! How could you do this!?" Ciel shouts at her.

"You wouldn't understand!" Madam Red snaps back at him, "You're just a child!"

"I'm your nephew! I'm your family! What wouldn't I understand!?!" He knows he said that blood relation do not matter but he can't seem to hide his emotions any longer. "For years, we trusted you. I trusted you and this is what you're doing! I didn't want it to be you! I wanted to be wrong! I wanted it to be Viscount Druitt. But no thanks to you, my theory was proven right." He notices tears in his aunt's eyes but they do not shed. She wants to cry at the same time she doesn't. She doesn't want to show emotion. "How could you do this? To us? I thought you loved me."

"And you think I don't?" she growls, "You think this is all about you, Ciel? It's not."

"You betrayed us, Aunt Ann," he tells her, his heart feeling broken. "You betrayed the Phantomhive family. You betrayed me. You said you loved me. You said you would protect me. Protect us. But this is not the right way of protecting us. This is vile and disgusting. And Mey-Rinâ€šshe did nothing to you. She was innocent."

"I told you -."

"You betrayed me and you betrayed Ciel!" he stops talking as soon as those words came out of his mouth, making his aunt frown in confusion.
"What?" she asks, "What do you mean?" Her eyes then widen in realization. "Oh my God. It makes sense now. You're a liar!"

"I'm guessing I inherited that from you."

"I'm going to kill you," she says while approaching him with the knife again.

Ciel's eyes widen and his thumb pulls back the safety cap. However, he doesn't shoot. His hand is shaking. He doesn't want to. He doesn't want to hurt his own aunt but he can't allow her to become more monstrous than she is now. "No, Aunt Ann!"

Madam Red is suddenly struck in the back of the head with a chair, knocking her down to the ground. Ciel nearly gasps when he sees that it was Mey-Rin who knocked his aunt down with a chair. Her stomach is leaking blood but she's on her feet instead of lying dead on the ground like she was earlier. She's alive. But how?

"Consider this as your sedative, bitch," she growls angrily. He notices something different in her eyes. They look darker, almost black, but they fade back into their original brown colour the moment she looks at Ciel. She tosses the chair aside and walks over to him. "Are you all right, my lord?"

Ciel takes his time to find his words as he's still flabbergasted to see her still standing. "How are you still alive?"

"I don't really know. But it hurt a lot," she says. She takes his hand and guides him away from his aunt who is already waking up. "Come now. I must get you to safety."

He snatches his hand back and shakes his head. "I can't leave."

"I promised to protect you. I'll never forgive myself if something happened to you. Please, my lord," she begs.

Ciel looks at Sebastian who is still struggling to get out of Grell's death scythe then he looks at his aunt who's slowly pushing herself back on her feet. He returns his attention to Mey-Rin whose eyes are begging him to run. Ciel makes a decision and gives her his gun.

"I can't leave her like this," he whispers before giving her a peck on the cheek, much to the maid's surprise. "Be safe."

He returns to his aunt, ready to face her with the truth.

"We both lied to each other," he says, "It hurts to lie. We both crave to tell the truth but we both know that the truth will bring more consequences than lies. That's why we do it. But here I am. You already know the truth. You do what you wish to do with it."

Madam Red stares up at Ciel, blood trickling over her forehead. He can see the anger and pain in her eyes. Growling, she grabs Ciel by the neck and harshly pins him to the wall. Keeping him to the wall, she bends down to pick up the knife from the ground.

"You brat!" she says as she raises the knife to the level of her eyes. "You were supposed to be dead, not him! You shouldn't have been born in the first place!"

"Ciel!" Mey-Rin screams.

"Master!" Sebastian screams.
Madam Red brings the knife down at him. However, it does not stab Ciel in the face. It stabbs him through his hand which he lifted up in order to protect himself from being stabbed in the face. It hurt though and he screams in agony. Madam Red tries to pull the knife away but Ciel wraps his fingers around it, holding it in place. She pulls and pulls but he refuses to let go. Growling like an animal, she starts pushing the knife forward, the tip of the blade nearing Ciel's eye. Ciel cries as he tries to push the knife away from his face. From the corner of his eye, he sees Mey-Rin getting ready to shoot Madam Red with the gun but he quickly shakes his head.

"You couldn't protect my brother but you can still protect me," he says. Madam Red stops pushing the knife forward and stares at her nephew tearfully. "That's what you said. Or was that another lie?"

Minutes later, tears flow down her cheeks as she finally stops and pulls the knife out of Ciel's hand, taking a step back and covering her mouth as she gasps and cries. She lets go of the bloody knife and it falls to the damp ground with a bounce.

Ciel slides down to sit, his hand bloody and searing, cradling it in his other hand. He then sees Sebastian run up behind Madam Red.

"Sebastian, stop! Don't kill her!" Ciel shouts. Sebastian does as told and steps away. That's when Ciel notices the bloody and tattered sleeve of his suit but where is his arm. "Your arm." He heard a ripping sound when his aunt stabbed him through the hand but he didn't know where it came from. He assumed it was his own hand being ripped. Now he knows.

Grell manages to detach his chainsaw from the wall, coated in Sebastian's blood. "Oh how sweet you are, Bassy. Really, what a prince." He picks up the demon's severed arm from the ground. "Sacrificing your own limb to save that boy." He then throws a glare at Madam Red. "As for you, Madam Red, you're becoming a massive disappointment. Come now, hurry up and kill the brat already. It's what you want, isn't it?"

"I can't," she says tearfully, "I can't do this. I loved my sister. I loved her husband. And I loved their children. I promised to love and protect them both but I failed them. One died and the other now sees me as a monster. I can't kill the only nephew I have left."

"Now you're getting a soft heart all of the sudden?" Grell says, "After everything we've done together. Weren't you the one who kept ordering me to kill Mey-Rin. If you don't kill him, he'll kill you."

"Aunt Ann." Ciel says while watching her turn from a psychopathic killer to a woman in despair.

"No. He's my nephew," Madam Red turns to face Grell. "He's my chi â„›!"

Grell runs the chainsaw through her chest before she can finish the sentence. Mey-Rin screams in horror. "Too late for that! How disappointing you turned out to be! What use do I have for you if you're just another woman!" he yells angrily.

Blood splutters out Madam Red's mouth and her eyes roll back before dropping dead to the ground.

"NOOOO!" Ciel screams.

End of The Ripper (Part5)
"The London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down," Madam Red sings while circling around and around with both Ciel and his little brother, "The London Bridge is falling down, my fair lady."

The three fall to the bright green grass full of daisies in fits of giggle. However, the fits of giggle is interrupted by a cough. Madam Red looks to her left to see Ciel's little brother, whom she and John call Little Blue Boy, coughing profusely and wheezing. She puts a hand on his shoulder, worried that she'll have to take him to the hospital again. Moments later, he finally stops coughing and looks at both Ciel and Madam Red.

"I'm fine," he assures them, "It wasn't as bad as last time."

"Are you sure?" Madam Red asks and he nods.

Ciel punches his brother on the shoulder. "Don't scare me like that."

"Sorry," he apologizes while rubbing his shoulder. "I bruise easily, you know."

Madam Red smiles as the two important boys in her life embrace each other and laugh.

"Did the London Bridge really fall, Aunt Ann?" the little one asks.

"Oh yes, it fell and crumbled to the ground," she says jokingly.

"Were there people on the bridge?" the little one asks, "Did they die there?"

Madam Red doesn't know how to answer that. Who knew an innocent song would end up with a grim question. However, she is saved from answering by a tall man in black roves and top hat.

"Oh look, Undertaker is here," she points.

The little one looks into the direction she's pointing at and smiles before getting up from the grass and running across the garden where the mortician is waiting.

"I don't like him very much," Ciel says, "He frightens me."

Madam Red smiles at Ciel. "He frightens me too. But did save your brother. Otherwise, he wouldn't be here playing with you." She watches the little one jump into the mortician's arms, embracing him.

"Hello there, Lord Phantomhive," he says joyfully, "Has your aunt been taking good care of you?"

"Yes, she is a good aunt," the little one says.

"NOO!" Ciel screams.
Sebastian watches Madam Red's body fall to the ground with a thud and Ciel immediately rushes to her side. He sees her coughing up more blood. "Aunt Ann," he whispers.

"...Let's...go," she choked up.

Let's leave London. Leave it all behind. Ciel nods in agreement. "Yes. We'll go. Let's leave London together. Let's leave it all behind. We'll go wherever you want."

"...Paris."

"Paris is beautiful," he says, "We'll go to Paris together. Just the two of us."

"...Three." Those are the last words Madam Red says before finally drying.

Mey-Rin sobs as she watches Madam Red die on her nephew's lap. Oh how fast things went to hell. First Mary Kelly dies and now Madam Red. Sebastian can see that she blames herself for this. She should be the blame for this. She underestimated Grell's insanity. She promised Mary that Ciel would save them both but she was the first one to die. She failed her and the young master.

Sebastian sees strips of film reeling out of Madam Red's chest. All of them having images of the red woman.

"Is that her…?"

"A part of the reaper's job is to play and examine the memories of those who are on the TO DIE list," Grell explains. "From that, we determine what kind of person they were. We see from their own perspective what kind of life they lived and we decide whether they should live or die."

"Their lives flash before their eyes," Sebastian clarifies.

"That's such a pedestrian term," Grell smiles, "It is so much more than that. This is the cinematic record."

"I don't see it," Mey-Rin says quietly while looking at Madam Red's bloody chest. Neither she nor Ciel can see it.

"Of course you don't, my dear," Grell tells her, "Only reapers can see them. Humans can also see them but it only happens when they die."

Madam Red's Cinematic Record

Everything happened when I was fifteen years of age.

"Ann! Angelina!" My sister Rachel searched for me in the garden. I spent most of my time there, hiding from the world. Keeping them from seeing my red hair. She found me reading and smiled. "What are you still doing here? Father wants to see you. He's going to introduce a guest to us down at the parlour. It wouldn't be good for any of us if we were late."

Despite being frail, my sister was always happy and outgoing. I, however, was shy. I loved her amber hair she inherited from Mother. Unlike me. "I'm not properly dressed for a guest. My dress is too simple."

"So is mine," she said and grabbed my hand. "Now come on."
We raced down the hall of our childhood home. Rachel almost had an asthma attack on the way to the parlour. I always reminded her not to run too fast for it made her breathless and ignited her asthma.

"Now you mustn't be sick in front of our guest," I told her.

She smiled at me. "Look who's talking. You were the one in the garden reading by yourself."

"I was studying," I told her. "Maybe once I become a doctor, I could find a cure for that bloody asthma of yours."

"Amen to that," she said and we continued our way to the parlour where we met with our father. Seated next to him was a very handsome man with black hair and brown eyes.

"Rachel! Angelina! Come say hello to our guest, Lord Phantomhive."

I hated the red hair I inherited from my father. However, Vincent Phantomhive adored it.

"Your hair is very beautiful, Ann," he once told me when we were in the gardens together. He used to call me Ann, just like Rachel did. "They're like the colour of spider lilies."

"I hate it. People find it scandalous," I told him.

"You shouldn't listen to the opinion of narrow-minded people," he said, "They're ignorant. Red suits you very well. Don't be ashamed of it."

I smiled for the first time that day. I ended up loving it after all. And I ended loving him. He was the one man who made me open my eyes to greater possibilities. I stopped hiding my hair in the bonnet and kept it loose. However, this did not last long. Knowing that my sister was the oldest, she had the right to marry before me.

"Angelina, I have wonderful news," she told me the next day. It broke my heart seeing Vincent sitting next to Rachel, holding her hand, for I knew what was going to happen. "Vincent just proposed to me. We shall be married in a month."

Once again, I hated the colour red.

"Isn't that a little too early?" I asked her, hoping that she would change her mind. I didn't want Rachel to marry the man I fell in love with.

"Dear Ann, are you jealous?" she asked with a giggle.

"...No," I lied. I was jealous of my sister. I could have said yes but I decided to say no for a very important reason. I loved my sister. I never brought myself to hate her.

I watched the two sign the wedding papers but made no attempt to stop them. I wished nothing more than for Rachel to be happy.

Nine months later, Rachel gave birth to two beautiful baby boys. One was healthy and strong. The other was small, frail and feeble. My sister held Ciel while I held the little one. Despite being sickly blue, he was beautiful all the same. Unlike his brother, this one rarely opened his eyes and slept day and night. He only opened his eyes once to meet mine. But it was not enough. I wanted this one to open his eyes every day. And I knew that I had to look after him, make him strong and healthy so he would live to be at his brother's side. Even if I had no husband, I still had a family and considered Ciel and his brother as my own children.
I attended parties I once hated with great frequencies. I attended them dressed in lavish long dresses and make-up. I don't remember when it happened but I was soon called Madam Red. And for some reason, I ended up loving the name. I got annoyed every time Elizabeth and the two boys called me Auntie Ann instead of Madam Red. I always insisted Lizzie and Ciel to call me Madam Red but I could never force the little one to call me by that name for he still had trouble speaking. I needed to care for this one the most.

Eventually, I too met a man in one of those parties and got married. John Bannett. He was not as handsome as Vincent but he was still kind-hearted and I grew to love him. It didn't happen the way I wanted to but still, I was happy. A few months after, I became pregnant. John was so excited. He would place his head on my belly to listen the baby's heartbeat or feel it kick. He wouldn't stop pestering about it being whether a girl or a boy.

"What do you think? A boy or a girl?"

I laughed despite how annoyed I was by the repeated question. "How should I know? Men are so impatient. I'm a doctor, not god."

"You know that I love you, right?" he said.

I smiled at him. "Of course I do. If not, why did we marry?"

Nothing happened the way I wanted to. I thought I found happiness. But then the accident came and it all slipped away. John and I were hit by a carriage. We were taken to a hospital. I survived the accident. Unfortunately, John was not so lucky.

"Your husband died instantly," the doctor said while I was still mourning on the hospital bed, "In order to save your life, we were forced to remove your uterus and your unborn child."

Everything fell apart. I lost the man I loved along with the child I loved so dearly before it was even born. However, I tried to maintain strong for I still had my sister, her husband and her two boys I grew to love as if they were my own. She and her children came to visit me frequently. Ciel always sat on my lap to embrace me despite how much it hurt. The little one held my hand instead for he knew that I was in a lot of pain. He may have been small and frail but he was no fool. Rachel insisted for me to go to the boys' 10th birthday party. It would have also been a celebration of my recovery. I didn't want to go for I was still grieving over the deaths of my husband and unborn child. But how could I say no to my dear nephews?

I arrived at the home but the carriage abruptly stopped. When I stepped out, I saw the most horrific sight. The stain spread. It covered everything. The colour red I hated so much. The fire consumed the entire Phantomhive Manor along with my sister and her beloved husband and children. Rachel was buried with her husband but her two wonderful boys were never found. If only my heart had been buried along with them.

I tried to move on with my life for I was convinced that my nephews were dead. Unfortunately, I could not move on when I was constantly reminded by vermin of my past.

"Honestly, a child would only be in the way." One of my patients was a prostitute. Martha Tabram. Oh how I hated that whore. "I don't know who the father is and my customers wouldn't like a child running around."

I asked Miss Tabram to reconsider but she insisted on the abortion. She thought the child she had was a burden that needed to be removed before it could grow. As I washed the blood from my hands after the surgery, I let my raged seethe. What wrongs have I committed? Why was I the only one
cursed with this unfortunate fate? I lost everything. That woman had what I wanted most. What I would never get a chance to have again. And she threw it away without a second thought. And that shattered me.

I went to visit her a week later. She was standing outside her home, waving goodbye to one of her customers. I wanted to stain her as well.

"Oh hello, you're that doctor," she said and her eyes widened in horror when she saw the knife in my hands. "What are you doing? No wait!"

I sliced her throat open. I decided to stain everything red with my own hands. There were many things I felt that day. Anger. Fear. Shock. But mostly anger.

And then I met Grell, my blood red Shinigami. My Grim Reaper.

"My, my. That was quite the show," he said. I saw him standing on top of the roof with that odd contraption in his hands, grinning down at me with those frightful teeth of his. But even with his terrifying appearance, I felt I could trust him. "What a mess you've done. You've made my job a lot easier." He came down from the roof to meet me. I was simply frozen from shock. "I can understand your feelings, dear. It's only fair for whores like them to die."

He held me in his arms like my mother used to do with me and my sister, to comfort us when we were sad.

"I too want a child," he said, "but I cannot have that wish fulfilled for I am a man. Don't worry, I will help you."

And that he did.

I cut away my hair that was stained with blood.

Several months later, I received that one of the Phantomhive boys was still alive. My nephew Ciel. I rushed to the mansion I thought was in ruins but was surprisingly completely intact as if the fire never happened. As if it were repaired by magic.

I found Ciel in the parlour, seated near the fireplace with a sheet over his shoulders, his feet dirty and bloody, bandages over the right eye he lost and next to him, stood a butler dressed in black.

"Ciel, is that really you?" I asked as I approached him. I took one good look at him and I knew it was him. At least I thought it was him. Tearfully, I held him in my arms. But I knew that something was not right. Something terribly happened to him during those several as grew stiff and began to shake when I embraced him. Something terrible happened to him and his brother. If only I was there to keep them both safe. Even when I asked him what happened to him and his brother during those months, he refused to tell me anything. He was too frightened.

I did not mind though. As long as my nephew came home safe, that was enough for me. But something still bothered me. If this child could come back, and why couldn't my husband and child return? Why couldn't Vincent return along with my sister? Why didn't Vincent marry me instead? Why did God become cruel with me?

I finally decided that I would right all the wrongs I've dealt and care for my nephew as much as I can.

"How beautiful you were, Madam, covered in your victims' blood. I loved you so much," Grell says
as he removes his black coat and tosses it aside.

Ciel looks up at Grell with rage in his eyes. "You..." he snarls as he stands on his feet. "You BASTARD!"

He nearly lunges at Grell, only to be grabbed around the waist and pulled back by Mey-Rin. He struggles against her hold, thrashing and kicked viciously. "Let me go! Let me go!"

"What a disappointment you turned out to be," Grell says as he approaches Madam Red's dead body. He lifts her body and removes the red coat from her before slipping it on himself. "You don't have what it takes to wear red. Your cheap melodrama ends now. It's over, Madam Red."

He looks at Mey-Rin and the boy. He can see the pain and sadness in the young maid's eyes as well as anger and hatred in the brat's eyes. Oh how much he loved her and Madam Red. He knows that Mey-Rin will never forgive him for this, which is why he finds it best to just leave. "Goodbye."

"I said get off me, Mey-Rin!" Ciel snaps as he pushes her back roughly. Mey-Rin takes a step back and stares at him as he kneels next to his aunt's body. He brushes his fingers through her red hair. "Aunt Ann." He then looks at Sebastian with a venomous glare who's still holding the bloody socket where his arm used to be. "What are you standing around for? I thought I told you to put an end to Jack the Ripper and he's still standing there."

Grell stops in his tracks upon hearing this.

"I gave you an order...Kill him!"

Sebastian smirks. "Certainly, my lord."

"Hmm. I was going to let you live," Grell says, "Professional courtesy and all. But if you insist. I'll send you and the boy to heaven together..."

Grell turns around, swinging his chainsaw to strike the boy, only for the blade to almost hit Mey-Rin's face. She stands between him and the boy, aiming a gun at him with tears in her glaring eyes. "No," she says.

"Move, Mey-Rin, or you will end up like the boy's aunt."

"He's my master," she says, "I swore to protect him, even at the cost of my life. So no."

"If that's what you wish," he says. He swinging the death scythe at Mey-Rin but the blade is caught in Sebastian's hand.

"You should be a lot quicker than that," Sebastian says with his eyes glowing red again. Mey-Rin returns to Ciel's side to guard him. Grell simply stares at him in complete shock. "You hesitated. As for heaven. Clearly, you must have been joking. I know nothing of heaven."

He kicks his leg at Grell but the red shinigami leans his head back. Grell grabs the leg and throws Sebastian to the wall.

"You'd hit a lady in the face!" he snaps in outrage.

"Sorry, miss, but you are no lady. You are in fact a monster."

"You really think you can kill me," Grell laughs. "Have you forgotten that I'm more powerful than you?"
Sebastian chuckles as a response. "Certainly. You see, if my master orders me to win, then that is what I will do."

"You really care for that little brat." He looks Mey-Rin before looking back at Sebastian. "Demon or not, you will still be destroyed by my death scythe. Aren't you afraid?"

"Not at all, I belong to my master. My soul and my body down to the last hair. The contract remains. I follow his every order, and that's what it means to be a butler."

Grell growls viciously and charges at Sebastian. He swings the death scythe at him once more but Sebastian backflips. He turns and swings another kick at Grell but the shinigami jumps high on the roof of a nearby building. He grins down at the three individuals down below. He turns his attention to Sebastian and gestures him to come closer with a wave of his hand.

Expression turning dark, Sebastian jumps onto the roof as well, leaving Mey-Rin to guard Ciel. Here they are. Demon and shinigami. Standing on the rooftop in the pale moonlight. Grell's smile widens. "I'm guessing we'll never resolve this. These feelings that we have are forbidden, like Romeo and Juliet. Oh I can already imagine ourselves kissing and caressing each other before our tragic death."

"Will you continue talking or will you shut up and fight?" Sebastian growls in annoyance.

"Oh how cruelly you treat me. If you deny your master, I know we can be happy together."

Sebastian smirks, finding these words to be nothing more than a joke. "The moment the master utter my new name, the word became our solemn contract. I was once again baptized as his and his alone. By that day, I was Sebastian and will be so until the very end."

"What a beautiful tyrant you are." He attacks Sebastian once more, lashing the roaring blade at the demon butler.

The moment Grell stabs the death scythe into the shingled roof, Sebastian steps on the blade to keep it from being pulled out. Grell grins again. Bitch please.

"Oh Bassy, my love, if only cruel morning would never come. Then the two of us can go on like this forever. Our love permanently lit by the moon's seductive glow," he says, "But no, I'm afraid our adventure ends here." He winks before bashing his head against Sebastian's. The demon butler staggers back disoriented. This gives Grell the opportunity to pull his death scythe from the shingle. "Now shall we depart with a passionate kiss? No? Then goodnight, my love, a thousand times goodnight."

He slashes Sebastian's chest with the death scythe. Sebastian falls back on his ass and looks at the bloody gash.

"Surely your cinematic records will be far more interesting than any human's," Grell says.

Sebastian presses his hand to his chest to keep his cinematic record to come out as he struggles to get back on his feet. "I sincerely doubt that. The only thing you'd be seeing are the daily chores of being doing for the past three years. Even if you reach the core of my beginning, I will never allow you to see it."

Grell charges at Sebastian again but the demon butler flips over the shinigami's shoulder and kicks him in the lower back. Sebastian let out a sighs as he looks down at his tattered and bloody attire. "My clothes are ruined again. How irritating. But it can't be helped, unfortunately."

"Huh, you must be awfully confident to worry about your clothes. Of course, I always appreciate a
sharp-looking man," Grell says.

Again, Sebastian sighs in disappointment as he removes his black coat. "There is one last technique I did not want to use but it seem that I have no other choice."

"So, are you going to fight me seriously this time?" Grell says after finally having enough of silly games. Though he wouldn't mind playing with the handsome demon a little while longer. "Shall I descend the curtain down for the finale. I shall miss you terribly. But perhaps we'll meet again. Farewell."

The two charge at each other. Grell swings his death scythe at Sebastian one more time. He misses. The demon leans back as the blade glides over him. The is a ripping sound though. The blade must have made contact with flesh. However, something happens that makes Grell's green eyes grow wide. His death scythe stops rotating. What happened? When he looks down, he sees Sebastian's jacket wedged between the blade and the motor.

"What the fuck!?!" he screams.

"That was my finest tailcoat. It was made on the highest quality of Yorkshire wool," Sebastian explains, "It's a very tricky fabric. Once it's caught in something, it becomes very difficult to remove."

"You son of a bitch!" Grell yells as he tries to pull the tailcoat from his death scythe but it's stuck pretty well tight.

"I acquired that coat at the manor and didn't want to waste it on this. However..." Grell looks over his shoulder with wide eyes to see Sebastian approaching him with eyes glowing their blood red hue. "You've already ruined it."

"No please, just one request," he begs, "...Not the face."

Sebastian ignores this request and punches Grell in the face. He strikes the shinigami multiple times in the face, kicking and punching him. He gives him one last punch before kicking him in the stomach, causing Grell to fall off the roof and land harshly on the ground. He almost landed on Ciel but Mey-Rin pulls him aside.

Sebastian jumps off the roof and lands gracefully on the cobblestone ground.

"Forgive me for not measuring the distance, master," Sebastian says with a bow.

"You're a bloody idiot," Ciel growls angrily.

"Don't worry. I shall take care of this momentarily," he says. He grabs the handle of the death scythe and detaches it from the ground. "I supposed one can't kill a shinigami with bare fists. I'll try this instead. His special death scythe. I hear that death gods' death scythes can cut through anything. In other words, shinigamis are no expection." He rips off the tailcoat from the motor. "There, that should do it. Now, it's time to end this once and for all."

Grell stares fearfully at Sebastian. He glimpses at Mey-Rin who also looks terrified but she's not the one who's about to get hacked by his own death scythe. He tries to crawl away but Sebastian stamps his foot on his lower spine. Grell cries out in pain. Mey-Rin gasps and covers her mouth. "Despite not liking being kicked myself, I do enjoy kicking others."

"Stop! Stop, it hurts!" he begs and reaches out his hand towards the young maid though she's out of reach. "Please, I'm sorry."
"Look away, Mey-Rin," Ciel commands and the young maid averts her eyes as told.

"Sorry for the interruption." Everyone looks up in surprise and they see another man standing on the rooftop. A tall man with short, neatly-combed dark brown hair, and wearing a black suit and rectangular glasses. There's no doubt in Mey-Rin's mind that this man is another shinigami because of the bright green eyes. And his death scythe is...a pruner? "But I'm afraid you have something that belongs to me."

"Will?" Grell says, his eyes widening in surprise and then sighs in relief, "Oh, Will, you've come to save me -.

Before Grell finishes the sentence, the shinigami called Will jumps off the roof and lands on Grell's back, making the red death god cry out. He retrieves the pruner from the ground and bows to Sebastian. "Let me introduce myself. My name is William T. Spears of the Dispatch Management Division of the Death Gods. However, you may call it the Grim Reaper Society to make it easier. I am here to retrieve a certain death god." He says this while glaring down at Grell.

Mey-Rin remains staring in confusion as the death god William T. Spears retrieves a brown leather-bound book from his coat and reads out loud. "Dispatch member Grell Sutcliff, you are being taken into custody for violation of several regulations. First, you killed people that were not on the TO DIE LIST. And finally, you used a death scythe that was modified without authorization or proper procedures." He bows to Sebastian once. Mey-Rin sees that this man shows no type of emotion whatsoever. "I apologize for the trouble this wretched shinigami has caused. Here. Please accept my card." He takes out a card from his coat with the pruner and offers it to Sebastian. He hesitates at first but eventually takes the card from the neutral shinigami.

William straightens up and pushes back his glasses with the pruner before letting out a deep sigh. "Honestly, I never thought I'd have to bow my head to demon scum like you. It's aggravating and a disgrace to all death gods."

Sebastian huffs at the comment and tosses the card away. "Then perhaps you should keep a better eye on your minions so they won't trouble us. Humans are so easily tempted. They will do anything in great utter despair. They will grasp at any thread that will help them that promises to save them from unhappiness, no matter the consequences. You should know that by now."

"How hypocritical you are, considering that you demons capitalize on that more often than we do. However, you seem to be a tamed dog at the moment," William says. This makes Sebastian narrow his eyes. "That makes you far less dangerous than the rabid mongrels running around free." He bends down and grabs Grell by his long red hair. "Come, Grell. You're already in enough trouble as it. You will return to the Dispatch where you will trialed for the violations you've committed."

He then turns his attention Mey-Rin who remains staring back. The shinigami narrows his eyes and looks through his book once more before looking back at her. "You," he points. Mey-Rin's eyes widen and she takes a step back. "Come here, girl."

When Mey-Rin refuses to approach him, William starts walking towards her. However, he is stopped by Grell who grabs him by the leg. "No, Will! Leave her!"

William responds by kicking Grell in the face. "I will not have more interference -." He doesn't finish talking when he is throw at with Grell death scythe. He catches the death scythe in his hands and turns to glare at the smiling butler. Mey-Rin takes this as opportunity to make a run for it and disappears through an alley.

"I suppose you wanted that back," Sebastian says.
When William returns his attention to Mey-Rin, she was already gone. He glares back at Sebastian. "Yes, thank you."

After Grell is dragged away by the other shinigami, Sebastian tends to the young lord since Mey-Rin ran off to god-knows-where. He feels it was for the bed. She's not needed here anyways. She is simply a nuisance. If he had to guess where she ran off to, he suspects she returned to the townhouse, the closest place she knows she'll be safe.

He sees the young boy still kneeled next to his aunt's body, looking limp and his eye hollow.

"Forgive my lord, I let Jack the Ripper escape," he apologizes.

"It's fine," Ciel says, "And Mey-Rin?"

"She ran off," he explains, "It seems that Mr. Spears was going to kill her. I think leaving was the best decision she ever made."

"We should find her then. The streets are too dangerous for her to be out there on her."

Sebastian places his hand on the young master's cheek. "You're cold," he says before standing up straight, "Come. A nice cup of tea will warm you right up. If I'm correct, Mey-Rin ran back to the townhouse."

Ciel nods in agreement. "Yes, I suppose a cup of tea will be nice."

Ciel stands up from the ground. They will leave the body here on the ground. Sebastian knows that it wouldn't be wise to take Madam Red's body with them. Scotland Yard and others will ask questions. It's best to let them assume that Madam Red became one of Jack the Ripper's unfortunate victims. Scotland Yard will find the bodies of both her and Mary Jane Kelly, then they will call the young master to report him of his aunt's death. Sebastian wonders how the young master will perform once he gets the call.

Ciel stumbles back, nearly falling to the ground. Sebastian puts his arm around the boy's waist to steady him, only for Ciel to smack arm away and push him away angrily. "Get off me! Don't touch me!"

Sebastian stares at him in completely shock. He has not acted that way since the day he met the little brat.

He watches him finally calm down but does not dare to look at the demon butler. "I'm fine. I'm...I'm just tired."

Mey-Rin returns to the townhouse where she knows she'll be safe from all the madness that has happened. She enters through the backdoor of the kitchen and hurries upstairs to the washroom. In the bathroom, she turns the faucet of the bathtub and lets the water fill up for a few minutes. Sobbing and gasping profusely, she kicks off her boots and nearly tears at her coat and maid uniform (that are still drenched and sticky in Mary's blood) as she removes them from her body until she now stands completely naked. She looks at herself in the mirror. Her eyes are shadowy and hollow while her face is pale as a ghost. Her hand touches the exit wound where Madam Red stabbed her, and hisses in pain. Tears continue streaming down her cheeks that are also stained in blood. She unravels the braid Grell did to her and ties her back in a bun.

She gets into the bathtub once its filled up near the brim, sinking into the comfort of hot water. She
can't stop crying as she scrubs off the blood from her face, neck, stomach and small chest. The water turns red with Mary's blood as well as her own.

*I failed him. I failed the young master. This is all my fault. Madam Red and Mary are dead and I didn't do anything to stop it.*

She throws the sponge away as it is now stained with blood. "Fuck!" she screams.

After washing the blood from her body, she gets out of the bathtub and empties it, watching the bloody water go down the drain. She dries herself off and wraps bandages around her chest to seal her wound. She knows that it needs stitches but she is not doctor to stitch the wound up herself.

Once she has herself bandaged, she wraps herself in a towel and walks back to her bedroom room. She locks the door and dresses up in her nightgown. She went to bed, hiding under the green comforter, wrapping herself around with it like a caterpillar. She feels safe now. She knows the master is safe. He's with Sebastian. He doesn't need her.

She remains looking at the ceiling as she cannot sleep. Her thoughts of Grell, Madam Red and the prostitutes' deaths swarm around her head like angry wasps. She also listens to any sign of Ciel and Sebastian returning to the townhouse. The sound of their footsteps perhaps. Or maybe the door slamming. She knows that Ciel will show signs of anger once he arrives. Will he be angry at her for underestimating Jack the Ripper? Will she get fired or killed by Sebastian as promised?

More tears fall from her eyes and silently sobs until she falls asleep.

Undertaker works on his latest victim, a young man who had an unfortunate accident with a carriage. The wheel crushed the poor unfortunate soul's skull and took Undertaker hours to put it back into shape. What a difficult task it turned out to be. However, he enjoy challenges and puzzles.

He was adjusting a white carnation flower on the man's black suit when he suddenly hears a knock on the door. It's late. He already sent his assistant home. Who could be knocking on the door at this late hour?

Undertaker washes his hands before opening the door. Scotland Yard's commissioner Arthur Randall and detective Frederick Abberline are standing outside in the rain.

"I'm rather busy tonight with another guest, I'm afraid. Let me guess, another Jack the Ripper victim?" he asks with his usual grin as he steps into the rain to meet them.

"These are the last victims," Commissioner Randall says gruffly, "Jack the Ripper has finally been caught. You don't have to worry about burying prostitutes anymore."

"Hehehe. For the moment, that is," Undertaker says, "Let's see what you two have for me."

The commissioner and the detective lead the mortician to the cart where the body of Mary Kelly lies nearly mutilated there and covered by a white sheet. Undertaker's smile falls. Mary Kelly is not the only victim he sees on the cart.

"That's Madam Red, isn't it?" he asks.

"The poor doctor was caught in the middle of it all," the commissioner says.

"Does the Lord Phantomhive know?"
"Indeed he does. He wants both of them to have a proper burial in less than two days," Detective Abberline says, "Do you think you can have them ready by then?"

Undertaker looks over at Madam Red for a moment before saying yes to Scotland Yard. He would have the bodies ready in less than two days. So you finally left us, Madam Red, especially when your nephew needed you the most. Goddamn it.

Mey-Rin's eyes flutter open when she feels a hand gently pet her head. She gasps and sits up when she sees Ciel sitting next to her bed. Next to him, there's a tray containing Sevres china full of scones, green grapes and boiled eggs.

"We've searched for you," Ciel says as he pours tea into one of the cups, "Sebastian said you'd be here."

"Forgive me, my lord," she apologizes, looking down in shame, "I shouldn't have left your side. I should have stayed. I panicked."

"It's a good thing you did," he says, "That reaper with the pruner would have killed you. I don't know why he intended to kill you but he was going to."

She remembers. She didn't know what that William T. Spears man was going to do with her but knew it wasn't to shake her hand. Grell grabbed his leg, stopping him from reaching her. After everything that happened, why did Grell tried to stop William from killing her? Wasn't he going to kill her before? "...Grell stopped him, my lo-"

"I don't want to hear about him right now," he snaps irritably, "I don't want to listen to his name. Do you understand me?" Knowing that he's being serious, she nods his head. She knows that he's not in the mood to talk about Grell. "Are you all right?" he suddenly asks, his mood shifting to a more calm yet cold tone. "How are you feeling?"

Mey-Rin sighs. She cannot lie to him. He and Sebastian will see it eventually. She unbuttons the front of her nightgown to show him her bandaged chest that has a large spot of blood bloomed in the middle.

Ciel sighs. "I'll have Sebastian fix that for you."

"I'm all right, my lord. It will heal -.""I'm not asking you, Mey-Rin," he says sternly.

"...Yes, my lord," she says quietly.

"Sebastian made us some tea." He places the teacup on the nightstand as well as plate with eggs and grapes. "You need your strength."

Mey-Rin hesitates for moment but eventually gives in as her stomach starts growling. She takes the plate in her hands and takes a bite on one of the green grapes. It tastes...like nothing. It does not taste like grapes. It just tastes like plain water and cloth. She pretends to make it taste good by smiling at the young lord. She hasn't been able to taste anything for many days after waking up from her coma. No matter how much Sebastian tried to make the food taste good, she can't taste anything. Why? What's wrong with her?

"I'm sorry," she says.
Ciel stares at her blankly for a moment before responding. "For what?"

"I failed you. Madam Red and Mary Kelly are dead because of me. It's my fault."

Ciel shakes his head in denial. "No. It's my fault," he says "I was too focused on catching Jack the Ripper that I forgot that your life and that of Mary Kelly's was in danger. I shouldn't have sent you out there on your own."

"I sent myself out there," she clarifies.

"Only because you knew that I needed to catch him as soon as possible. You were willing to risk your life to help me catch the Ripper and I allowed you. I used you as bait. It seems that we were both foolish."

She didn't like the young lord blaming himself for his aunt's death. The way he looked. The way he had his aunt on his lap, trying to get her to stay with him to no avail. She was gone and Ciel was pissed off. He even tried to lunge at Grell and got pissed when Mey-Rin held him back. She knew that Grell would kill him if he tried to attack him. Yes, he would be pissed off at her for it but she promised to keep him safe.

"I reported to the Queen and Scotland Yard that Jack the Ripper killed Mary Kelly and Madam Red but were able to stop him once and for all. There will be no more butchered prostitutes on the streets. But you will not tell Scotland Yard of what you've seen. You were never there. You don't know anything. There was no second Jack the Ripper. There was only one. There was no death god, only a deranged lunatic. Do you understand me?" he asks. When Mey-Rin doesn't respond, his tone becomes more harsh and stern. "I said, do you understand me, Mey-Rin?"

She nods in agreement. She understands. "Can I ask you something, my lord?"

"What is it?"

As much as he doesn't like Grell being mentioned, she can't help but bring it up. "Is it true what Grell and that other reaper said?" she asks with a trembling voice, "Is Sebastian a demon? As in, an actual demon from hell?"

Ciel remains silent for a moment "...You already know the answer to that, Mey-Rin."

It made sense now. The sharp teeth, the dark shadows, his incredible speed, the red eyes and the pentagram on the young master's right eye. For a second, she thought Sebastian was a vampire or something of the sort. But she never thought demon and that the pentagram on the master's eye was some sort of anomaly.

"And you made a contract with him?" she asks. "You sold your soul to him? Why?"

Ciel scoffs at the comment like a bad joke. "You know why," he says. It hits her all at once. His parents. He's doing it for them.

"Do yourself a favour. Don't try to change my mind. Don't get in his way. He hates it. And he'll kill you," he warns her, "Trust me, Mey-Rin. Leave it be."

Her eyes fill up with tears again. Ciel looks away. He will not pay attention to tears so he won't cry himself. He stands up from his chair. "Get some rest." He then leaves the room.

She places her hand over her hands and mouth as she begins to cry once more. Oh my God.
End of the Ripper (Part...Fuck it, I lost count)
Nearly done with the first part of my fanfiction. Finally. I'll be making the second part of the story separately as well as other few arcs. I will also be introducing OC new characters very soon. One of the OC characters is introduced in this very chapter. I hope you enjoy.

Feel free to leave a comment down below and tell me what you think.

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**Skandar Keynes as Tom Brown**

After being escorted from the court, Grell is placed in a cell with bright white walls, a large metal door with a small glass window on it. They confiscated his death scythe and made him dress in dull beige pajama-like clothing. Once placed in the cell, his cuffs are removed from his wrists and they shut the door locked up tight. The cell is made for no Shinigami to escape.

Grell rubs his sore wrists, marked red and raw by the cuffs that grinded against his pale skin. The society didn't want to take any chances by not cuffing him. According to the Grim Reaper Society, Grell has been deemed insane and unstable. A danger to himself and others. No one spoke on his behalf because there was nothing to contradict the statement. Everyone in the court agreed that Grell Sutcliff was not a mentally stable person. Final sentence? 100 years of solitary confinement until he becomes more stable and if he behaves, he might be released earlier. He will be kept close-watch. If he tries attacking the guards, more years will be added to his sentence as well as being restrained in a straitjacket and medicated by force. One would find it a little extreme but with Grell Sutcliff, nothing is too extreme.

He sits on the low bed with his knees to his chest and his head reclined against the wall.

He never thought he would end up in solitary confinement. Yes, he knew that he's insane. There was no need to remind him. But he keeps thinking to himself how his insanity was not his fault. It was his father. *The old bastard did this to me*, he thought. *He's the real monster, not me.*

Grell still remembers the day he died as a human. His sister was the one who found him dead in the bathtub with the water red with his blood, the colour that he adores so much. He watched her grow up without him from afar. He wanted to be beside her. But he knows that can never happen, especially now. Especially after turning into that monster that killed people for the fun of it. He knows that if he ever got close to her, she would be afraid of him, just like Mey-Rin was afraid of him when she found out the truth about him and Madam Red. He didn't think things would get so out of hand so quickly. *I should have let her die in that fucking carriage along with the baby and that ugly husband of hers.* But he knows that his thoughts are false. He killed Madam Red out of anger because she refused to kill her own nephew even after she killed Mary Kelly and tried to kill Mey-Rin. However, he never thought he would end up killing Madam Red. At the end, he realized too late he didn't want to kill her.

He gasps and screams repeatedly in devastation while grasping the roots of his red hair. He's really gone insane.

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Detective Frederick Abberline returns to the crime scene to check if there's anything missing. Yes, Jack the Ripper has been stopped but there's something about the whole thing that doesn't feel right. Jack the Ripper has been stopped but what happened to him? Is he arrested? Is he dead? If so,
where's the body? He has a few other policemen from Scotland Yard checking the area as well. However, they look rather lackluster. Since the investigation is over, they find no reason to accompany Abberline to check the crime scene.

Abberline is kneeled on the cracked cobblestone ground, looking through his magnifying glass until he finds a strand of red hair stuck between the cracks.

A carriage stops at the crime scene and Commissioner Arthur Randall steps out of it, adjusting his top hat and glowering at Abberline and the rest of the Scotland Yard police.

"What are you still doing here, Abberline?" he asks bitterly, "The investigation is over."

"Are we sure?" Abberline asks as he stands up with the strand of red hair now between his finger, "How can we be certain? The circumstances are very shadowy. I think it's our duty to investigate further."

"Our country has a long and rich history, and with it comes with a number of secrets. Secrets to which I would advise you to stay away," he warns, "It has been decided. This case is part of the Underworld and it will be solved in the Underworld."

"Decided? By whom?"

"If you want to know, get yourself promoted but I guarantee you'll regret finding out. Some rocks are better left unturned." He then walks back to his carriage. "Trust me on this, Abberline."

*Guess I'll have to write back to Moscow and tell them their services are no longer needed then.* Abberline sighs in irritation and looks up when he suddenly hears cawing. He sees a raven standing on the edge of the roof, cawing and flapping its wings while looking straight at the detective.

"What the bloody hell are you looking at?"

The raven’s eyes turn red and it hisses, making Detective Abberline jump back with a fright. It then flies away from the crime scene, disappearing from sight.

*What on earth was that?*

The lid of the coffin is lifted up, revealing the body of Angelina Dalles inside, dressed in white and surrounded by lilies. Ciel looks down at the body, glowering at the state of it distastefully. *This isn't right at all,* he thinks as he looks at Undertaker and his new apprentice Thomas "Tom" Brown, a scrawny eighteen-year-old pale-faced boy with black hair and wearing a pageboy hat. Undertaker hired him to assist him at the parlour but it looks he's regretting it. Tom has done a terrible job so far, just by looking how Madam Red looks in the coffin. Undertaker does not look pleased either. *You have one job, Mr. Brown, one job,* Ciel thinks, *and you're fucking it up.*

"You expect me to bury my aunt in that? Why is she dressed like that?" he asks bitterly. "It's atrocious and these are not the flowers I asked for. Your apprentice is an incompetent, Undertaker."

Undertaker turns to Tom. The boy jumped, giving a startled and nervous expression. "Do you see what you've done?" the mortician hisses in a displeased tone. "You've brought the wrong flowers again. My client said *spider* lilies. Not *water* lilies. Weren't you listening?"

"Sorry, Mr. Undertaker," Tom apologizes in a nervous bubbly tone, reminding Ciel of the man who killed his aunt.
"Honestly, I don't know why I hired you," Undertaker growls irritably while Ciel and Sebastian watch.

Ciel knows how serious Undertaker takes his job. It's his duty to make sure his guests are presentable and accommodated for their last party. They're last family reunion, before being buried to never be seen again. When his works isn't done right, he gets frustrated and sometimes angry. Ciel has seen Undertaker's anger before and it's not a pretty sight. Tom should know by now that Undertaker is a force to be reckon with.

"Go get the flowers I asked or you're fired. Understood?" he threatens and Tom hurriedly bolts out of the funeral parlour. "Apprentices are such a nuisance these days."

"White flowers and plain dresses never suited her. Not in life or in death." Ciel whispers to himself. He snaps his fingers and Sebastian brings a white box in his gloved hands. He opens the box, revealing a beautiful crimson dress inside. "You belong in red, the colour of passion. Colour of spider lilies." Colour of blood. He then turns his attention to Undertaker. "Do you think you can have her ready before ten o'clock?"

Undertaker smiles. "If Tom hurries back with the flowers, perhaps."

"Take care of the rest then," he says and Sebastian gives the box to Undertaker.

"Are you sure it's a good idea to trust me in undressing your aunt, m'lord?" the mortician asks with a chuckle.

Ciel huffs irritably. "Don't be so cheeky."

"Very well, m'lord."

Before leaving, Ciel plants a kiss on his aunt's cold cheek. "Goodbye, Aunt Ann." He then leaves with his butler.

Undertaker smiles and looks back at the dead madam before gently stroking her red hair. "You've done your job, Madam. Leave the rest to me."

The funeral is silent. Family members are set on the front row as most funerals while close friends and co-workers are set in the rest of the rows behind. The mortician watched a few attendants muttering about the scarlet dress the madam is wearing, how inappropriate it looks for a funeral. He can't help but snicker. They don't know that red was her favourite. The earl knows and that's why he had Undertaker redress her before the funeral. His apprentice Tom is instructed to wait outside with the other servants. Undertaker can't have him messing about, especially after bringing the wrong flowers. Spider lilies are difficult to find. They mostly grow in Asia. That's why had decorated the altar with both spider lilies and roses.

"She has departed from us now," the pastor continues saying while many remained silent, some crying and some with solemn faces. "As all mankind must die. As someday we all must. The flesh will turn to ashes but her spirit will remain. May God watch over her."

Undertaker notices Lady Elizabeth Midford shedding tears and hiccupping.

"Goodbye, Auntie Ann," she whimpers. Oh how much she loved Madam Red, just as much the boys did.

He sees her mother Francis Midford sitting next to her with her usual cold expression. The cold-stone
bitch can't even show a bit of sympathy for the departed lady. She has always been cold, even at her own brother's funeral. Despite not attending the funeral, he watched from a window. Francis did not shed a single tear for her brother. She remained stern while the others cried for the Lord and Lady Phantomhives as well as the two young boys. Only one of their children made it out alive. She never showed concern or any signs that she missed them. Many assumed they were dead. So did she. He then sees the Earl Phantomhive sitting next to Elizabeth's right side, looking glum. Where's the butler? Can he not step into holy ground? Does he burst into flames if he tries to step foot into the church?

Undertaker watches the earl clench his fist and taking deep breaths, as if he were trying not to cry. He leans over to whisper something into Lady Elizabeth's ear, who nods, before getting up from his seat and walking over to the coffin. He holds his aunt's hand in his. His face looks drained from colour.

"Farewell, Madam Red." He gives her a kiss on the cheek like he did at the funeral parlour before disappearing into the hallway.

*Where does the boy think he's going?*

The servants, Baldroy, Tanaka, Finnian and Mey-Rin are waiting outside the church along with the apprentice Tom Brown. Baldroy sees him as an odd fellow. Not simply because he wears a pageboy hat. However, Finnian seems to get along with him just fine.

"The funeral must be starting right now," Tom says. "I might take a look but Undertaker says I might break something."

Finnian sighs sadly. "Madam Red won't be coming to visit us anymore. It will be so quiet now."

Baldroy sighs and lights up his cigarette. "We need to keep it together now. The young master will need us more than ever now."

"I supposed you're right," Finnian says before turning his attention to Tom. "How long have you worked for the Undertaker?"

"Not long. Two weeks. I just hope I don't get fired like in my last two jobs. Hey, can I have a cigarette too?" he asks Baldroy.

Baldroy takes out another cigarette and lights it up before giving it to him. "Knock yourself out."

"Thanks," Tom says and starts puffing.

Baldroy looks around after noticing something amiss. "Hey, has anyone seen Mey-Rin? Wasn't she here just a few moments ago?"

Tanaka silently points to the left while sipping his tea.

Baldroy sees Mey-Rin standing behind a tree with her hand placed over her mouth and her shoulders shaking. Knowing that she's crying, Baldroy heads over to where she stands to see if she's all right. He knows the answer to that though.

He puts a hand on her shoulder and she gasps frightfully.

"Hey, whoa, easy there, Mey," Baldroy says with his hands raised. "Are you all right?"
"The young master's aunt died, Baldroy. What do you think?"

"Sorry."

"No, Baldroy. *I'm* sorry," she says. Baldroy can understand what Mey-Rin is going through though. The moment she told him that she offered herself as bait for Jack the Ripper, he went nuts. He wanted to snap at Sebastian for it but she told him not to blame Sebastian for her decision. If only he knew why she insisted not to pursue Sebastian. "It's just that...I feel like I failed the master. It was my idea to be bait for Jack the Ripper. I could have stopped him from killing Mary Kelly and Madam Red but I let him kill Miss Kelly and I didn't do anything to save Madam Red. I was more worried for the young master than stopping Jack the Ripper and I failed him -.

"Mey-Rin, listen, you didn't fail the young master," he says as he places his hands on her shoulders. "You did what you could. Protecting the young master was your top priority and you've done your job well. No one expected for the killer to murder the madam. It's not your fault. Don't blame yourself for it. You need to keep it together, all right? The young master needs us more than ever now."

Mey-Rin embraces Baldroy and continues to cry. She's scared, Baldroy can see it. Something is scaring her. And he suspects Sebastian has something to do with it.

"The funeral was lovely today. I thank you for what you've done for Madam Red," Francis says to Undertaker. "It's sad for my nephew to lose another member of his family."

*His* family, not hers. Undertaker knows that Francis never considered Madam Red or Rachel Phantomhive as a member of the family. Normally because Phantomhives have always been married to cousins or other people in the family bloodline. He's not sure if Alexis is a member of the Phantomhive family but Vincent is one of the few people that chose to marry out of family blood.

"Funny you should say that, m'lady, considering that she was also a family member of yours by marriage," he says to her.

"Hmmm. I'm surprised you decided to attend the funeral at all, considering that you never attended my brother's funeral. You were one of his closest companions. Why is it that?"

"My lady, it was already hard enough for me to prepare a funeral for a pile of ashes of an old friend, let alone attend it. I wish I had been there but I didn't have the courage," he says.

"You've buried my mother and father, and other members of the Phantomhive family, Mr. Undertaker. You should already be used to it by now...I worry for Ciel. Who will take care of him now that his loving aunt is dead?" she says and his smile falls. Francis smirks smugly before turning to her daughter. "Come along, Elizabeth. Paula has dinner waiting for us at home."

Elizabeth nods and looks at the mortician with a feeble smile. "Have a good day, Undertaker."

Undertaker smiles at the blonde-haired girl. He knows that it's not her fault her mother is a smug whore. Why should he scold her for her mother's bitter cold personality. "Be safe, child," he says while taking her hand and patting it.

Elizabeth nods and leaves with her mother, father and brother. Undertaker never liked Edward Midford either. He's insanely overprotective of his sister and a bit of an idiot. He pities Lord Alexis. Such a kind lord. It's unfortunate for that man to be married to someone like Francis. Undertaker doesn't even try to think about how the two fucked to make Elizabeth and Edward.
However, he's more concerned for the young girl Lizzie. The earl's cousin. Just the thought of the earl marrying his cousin makes Undertaker want to vomit. But neither of them know any better. Not to mention that they have no choice as the marriage has been arranged since they were born. The poor girl is too sweet and naïve to know how wrong their marriage is and how her mother and brother are suffocating her.

As the Midfords leave, he pulls the middle finger at the Lady Midford behind her back. Bitch.

Once all the attendants leave the church, Undertaker and Tom begin to take down the flowers from the altar. He tells Tom to be careful with the flowers because they're poisonous. The poor boy Undertaker hired was too stupid to tied his own shoes, let alone allow him to take down the flowers by himself. He forced Tom to wear gloves to avoid any cuts that could lead the boy to the hospital. Undertaker doesn't need any gloves because he knows how to deal with poisonous flowers without getting intoxicated.

Undertaker suddenly stops when he hears the sound of sniffling.

He wanders away from the altar and heads further into the church where the crypts are.

He sees Ciel Phantomhive, the little earl himself, sitting behind a large stone coffin, with his legs bent to his chest and the back of his hand constantly rubbing his nose and eyes. Undertaker can see the tears falling from the boy's eyes. The little lord is crying. Undertaker's smile fades into a thin line. He never saw the little lord cry since he was small child, not even during his aunt's funeral. Only showed displeasure when he saw her in the dress that did not suit her at all. That idiot Tom can't do anything right. First the damn bloke broke one of his coffins, dropped one of the bodies on the floor and then brought the wrong flowers for the funeral. It's enough to send even the young lord into a spiraling rage. But never cause him to cry.

He slowly approaches the earl and kneels next to him without the boy even noticing. Ciel is definitely crying over his aunt's death. This is clear to him. The reason why he's crying in secret is because he doesn't want anyone to see him like this. Apparently tears equalizes weakness. The earl doesn't want to be seen as weak. Like father, like son. Oh how late he is for that.

When Undertaker places his hand on his shoulder, the earl gasps and scrambles to his feet. He stares at the mortician with his eye wide. Undertaker can see the tear stains on the boy's face as well as the redness in his eyes and nose. The earl quickly wipes his tears away and storms away before Undertaker can say anything.

"Master, will you not report the identity of Jack the Ripper to the queen?" Sebastian asks while handing the young master a napkin to clean himself up from the stains on his cheek. He finds it unnecessary to ask if the young master was all right. He knew the answer to it.

"I don't think it's necessary," Ciel says as he puts away the napkin in the breast pocket of his black coat. "She simply instructed me to stop the killings. I've done my part."

"Are you not afraid of her anger if she finds out the truth?"

"That's the thing. I should be afraid of her. But I'm not," he looks at his butler with a solemn expression. "Why should I be afraid? It's not like I have anything left to lose, other than my title as the queen's guard dog."

"It seems like you don't care much about losing your title," Sebastian says, "You must be careful, young master. Your world is full of quicksand and you'll end up sinking further and further in. And
once you reach the point of no return, there will be no one to help you. No one will hear your cries and screams. And even if they do, they'll simply ignore them. So I suggest not to be so stubborn about the ordeal and remind yourself that your queen will treat you like one of the enemies she orders you to put down if you're not careful."

"I don't want to have this conversation with you, Sebastian," the boy says harshly. "We have somewhere else to be. Come."

Sebastian smirks and bows. "Yes, my lord."

He follows Ciel through the cemetery until they finally meet up with the Undertaker who's standing next to a tombstone with the name MARY JANE KELLY engraved on the stone. Jack the Ripper's last victim. She was born in 1863 and died in 1888.

"Is this her?" Sebastian asks.

"Yes, it is. My last customer from Jack the Ripper," Undertaker says.

"Apparently, she was an immigrant," Ciel says, "She had to know family in the country to come and claim her body. But it seems that she was disowned for being a prostitute."

"So our kind lord had me pretty her up and bury even after being disgraced and disowned. A truly noble act on your part, eh?"

Ciel sighs at the comment. "This isn't noble at all. The noble thing to do would have been to save her. And I could have, if I'd put her life first. But no, I had to catch him. Apprehending Jack the Ripper was more important. I know they intended to kill her and I let her die along with my aunt."

"You regret what you did, my lord?"

"No, I don't," he lies. Sebastian can see the lies right through him, like glass. He does regret what he did as well as he regret risking Mey-Rin's life to catch the murderer. "Jack the Ripper is gone forever. And I've done exactly what her majesty asked me to do."

Undertaker huffs, much to Ciel's surprise. "Victoria, eh? I don't much like her. She just sits back and watches while people like you do all the dirty work for her. It doesn't seem fair to me." The mortician grabs the boy's hand to look at the blue diamond ring he wears around his finger. "And that ring you Phantomhives wear reminds me of a collar the master puts on a dog. You're forever tied to the queen by the leash of duty. A slave to her orders. Until she finally decides to either release or put you down."

Ciel tugs at the firm grip, trying to force Undertaker to let go. "I chose this path. Stop it!" He finally tugs his hand free, only to get grabbed by the upper arm instead and pulled forward, becoming face to face with the mortician.

"Lord Phantomhive, you should be wary of the path that duty will take you. Otherwise the queen will choke with your own collar. We wouldn't want that, now would we?"

"Let go of me!" Ciel pulls hard until Undertaker finally let go and the boy falls back on the ground. Luckily, he's not harmed. Otherwise, Sebastian will see to it that Undertaker doesn't damage him.

The mortician gives the bouquet of white lilies to Sebastian and turns to leave. "Do come to my shop if you need my assistance again. You and that hilarious butler of yours are always welcome. Hehehe."
Once he's gone, Ciel stands up from the ground and brushes off the dirt from his sleeves and trousers. He rubs the arm where Undertaker grabbed him, as if it hurt. He suddenly starts coughing. Sebastian's eyes immediately turn red.

"Are you all right, my lord?" he asks, "Did he hurt you?"

Ciel shakes his head as he takes a deep breath. "I'm sure there will be a bruise on my arm later on but no, he didn't hurt me."

Sebastian grabbed the master's cape and draped it over his shoulders. "What you did was noble, my lord."

Ciel scoffs and glares at the demon. "Don't make me repeat myself," he hisses, "What I did was not noble."

"I thought it was. So did Mey-Rin. But if you think it wasn't nobility, maybe it was weakness."

The boy's eye widens at this and Sebastian smiles. He knew he hit a nerve. "What?"

"Tell me, why didn't you kill her?" he asks. Ciel continues to stare at him in shock. "Your own aunt was threatening you. It looks like she was going to take your life. She even stabbed Mey-Rin. You could have stopped her. You could have defended yourself if you wanted to. You aimed the gun at her but you wavered. And you gave the gun to Mey-Rin despite knowing her attempts. And when Mey-Rin tried to shoot her, you stopped her. Why, master? Were you afraid of killing Madam Red with your own hands? Would it have been easier if she were a stranger instead of someone from your own blood?"

"I held back because it was your job," he says sternly. "I knew that you would protect me even at the cost of your own life. That's why I didn't shoot. That's why I didn't allow Mey-Rin to shoot. Knowing how sentimental she is, Mey-Rin would have ended up traumatized if she shot her. Because Madam Red was my aunt. She thought that by shooting her meant betrayal towards me. But it's the opposite. I didn't let her shoot because the job of protecting me belongs to you. Our contract demands that you serve and protect me until I achieve my goal. Until the day comes when I do not worry for my safety. I guess you demons don't know anything about principles or loyalty but you do know about deals and because of the deal you made with me, you'll protect me no matter the circumstances. Am I wrong?"

"Of course not, my lord. But you stopped me from killing her as well," Sebastian says. He can see the young master freeze, his face turning pale again.

""Sebastian, stop! Don't kill her!"

"When she moved for the kill, there was hesitation in her eyes," he continues to lie. "I knew she wouldn't be able to do it. Not to me. Her nephew. Her blood. One wrong move can cost you your life, just like chess. She hesitated and lost sight of her next move. That's all there is to it." He then puts on his top hat and walks past Sebastian. "That's why I don't hesitate."

Sebastian's eyes grow wide when he hears the young master say this. A smirk slowly creeps up his face. "Now that's what I like to hear. Always skillfully manipulate your pieces. That's how you survive. You use me, Mey-Rin and Madam Red. Any piece within your reach even if the bodies of your pawns pile up at the foot of your throne. Because if the kind falls, this game is over."

"I won't hesitate. I won't regret the moves I've made. You're the one person who can never betray me. You can never leave my side. That's an order."
Sebastian smiles and bows before his master. "Yes, my lord."

He will be there. Anywhere the young lord wishes for him to follow. Even if Master Phantomhive's throne crumbles to the ground, his brilliant crown lusts. Even when the mountain of bodies piles at his feet, Sebastian will stay beside him. They will be side by side atop their fallen pawns. Until the last bell tolls, he will be there. Even if he does change his mind at the end, there will be no turning back. No escape. His aunt is no longer here to save him now. When the time comes, he will finally consume his soul.

Ciel wakes up coughing in the middle of the night. He gasps, wheezes and coughs profusely as he found himself out of breath. He gasps for air that barely enters his throat. It's like something got lodged in his throat. He runs for the washroom and turns on the sink. Despite it being something unsanitary, drinks the water from the pipes until the lodging feeling finally vanishing and he's able to gasp for air again. He coughs again but it becomes less intense. After a few minutes, he's finally at ease. He prays no one heard him coughing, especially Sebastian. He doesn't want to be disturbed by the demon's false concern for him. It's pathetic and annoying.

He stays there with his head resting on the edge of the sink for a few minutes, panting in exhaustion, before finally heading back to bed. He wraps himself in the soft comforter and lays his head against the pillow.

The moment he's finally drifting off to sleep, he feels something caress his cheek. Something soft yet cold touching his cheek faintly. Knowing that it's Sebastian, he swats his hand away like a bug.

"I'm fine," he mumbles, "Go back to your duties and let me sleep."

After moment, he is able to drift off to sleep again without Sebastian waking him up. However, this doesn't last long as he feels the soft cold touch on his cheek again. Growling in irritation, he sits up from his bed.

"What?" The moment he opens his eyes, he is shocked to see his aunt Angelina Dalles. Madam Red. She is standing, wearing the same red dress she had when she died. Her chest still has the slash where Grell hacked her with the death scythe and blood covering her mouth. Ciel remembers how she coughed up blood before she died. How is she here? She's dead, Ciel thinks as he stares at her fearfully. There's something different in her eyes. They're glassy and empty. "Aunt Ann."

"Shh." She puts a finger over her lips as she leans closer to him. "I need to tell you something," she whispers as more blood comes out of her mouth.

"Shh." She puts a finger over her lips as she leans closer to him. "I need to tell you something," she whispers as more blood comes out of her mouth.

Ciel gasps and scrambles back towards the lamp on his nightstand. He switches it on. When he turns to face his aunt again, she was already gone.

"Aunt Ann?" he says while looking around for any signs of her but it seems that he's the only one in the bedroom. "Please come back. You were going to tell me something. I didn't mean to scare you away. Please don't leave me…Aunt Ann!"

Mey-Rin kneels next to her bed and begins to pray to God. She has never been a believer of God or other religions as she thought they were being used to control people into order and conduct. Women and men have been burned and killed by those who called themselves followers of God, Catholic or Christians. But after recent events, the idea of God's existence doesn't seem so farfetched. The question still remains, is God good or evil? Many say that God is good and just. If that were so, why allow a young boy involve himself with an entity such as Sebastian? Why allow Grell to kill Mary
Kelly and Madam Red? Why allow these terrible things, to happen instead of preventing them from happening? Is this a game to him? Some kind of idea of a joke?

"He won't answer you." Mey-Rin looks over her shoulder to see Sebastian standing behind her, his eyes glowing bright red. *When did he come in?* She had the door locked. "He doesn't answer to anyone. He just sits there, watching how the world he created falls apart. That's what he does every day. So why bother praying to someone who doesn't care?"

"Perhaps she might make an exception -.

"God can't help you, Mey-Rin -.

"It's not me I'm praying for. It's the young master I'm praying for," she tells him as she slowly stands from the floor. "He lost so much already. I am praying in hopes he doesn't lose his way."

Sebastian's eyes flare at this. "God helps no one. You should know that by now. And even if he does, he will never help a spoiled brat who's already been marked by a demon. The young master made his choice long ago, because he lost his faith in that God many worship so much."

"And what makes you think he won't change his mind."

Sebastian is suddenly close to her face and she nearly jumps back. "Mey-Rin, I suggest you don't test me. I don't like it when I'm being tested. You already know my secret. You're plunging yourself into darkness in order to protect the young lord but I'm warning you, don't get in my way."

"I never planned to get in your way, Sebastian. Really, I didn't. Knowing that Azurro Vanel was going to kill the young master, my instinct kicked in. I knew I had to protect him. I never expected to see you in your true form. Sometimes I wish I can forget what I saw but I know that I will never be able to erase the memory from my mind," she says. Sebastian continues to stare at her. "I will never tell anyone your secret. I made a promise to protect the young master, by any means necessary. Even if it means keeping those dark secrets of yours. However, if you endanger the master's life, I will have to step in."

Sebastian chuckles in amusement. "And what will you do if I ended up threatening the young master's life. Will you attempt to kill me? I'd like to see you try."

"If it comes to that, then perhaps." She regrets saying those words. She wishes she can take them back as Sebastian was the one who found her and brought her to the master. Her words make her sound ungrateful.

"Mey-Rin, I know you'll do anything to protect the master. Even if it means giving your own life or trying to take mine. I admire your great amount of loyalty and devotion. However, you forget something very important." Mey-Rin is suddenly removed from her glasses by gloved hands and Sebastian places them on the nightstand. "You may be an assassin hidden behind glasses but even when you take them off, you are still human and demons are far stronger than humans. You are no threat to me. Every word you use as threats are nothing but empty promises to me. And even if you try to keep your promises, you and I both know I will kill you in an instant. You know that very well." Sebastian takes her hand in his and pats it. "But there's no need to be afraid. I have no reason to kill you tonight. The young master will never forgive me if I do."

"You can't save the young master, Mey-Rin. Do you want to know why?" When Mey-Rin doesn't answer, he continues speaking, taunting her some more. "He's beyond saving. He's bound to me until his goal is complete."
"What goal?"

"Finding the people who killed his parents and brother, and then eradicate them all. Once his revenge is complete, his soul will be mine to devour. The innocence he had as a child went away along with his family, now replaced by anger, hatred, cynic and selfishness. He will use every pawn in his disposal to reach his goal even if millions of bodies pile at his feet. He has no remorse for his actions. He has no sympathy for those who stand in the crossfire. His soul has already been lost since the beginning. I'm only eating what's left of it. You can't save him. His aunt can't save him. No one will save him. There's no place for him in heaven now, only in the pits of hell with me. And there's nothing you can do about it. So I ask you kindly to stop wasting your time on useless prayers and stay out of my way. Do you understand?" She doesn't respond but Sebastian can see the fear and pain in her eyes. She nods. This makes Sebastian smile pleasingly. "Good. Tomorrow you will wash the windows. Have a good night's rest, Mey-Rin."

Sebastian leaves her room and Mey-Rin sits on the edge of the bed with her hands to her face as she cries.

He doesn't know it but Sebastian is wrong when he told Mey-Rin when he said the young master held no remorse over letting Madam Red die. If he had entered his bedroom instead of passively threatening Mey-Rin, he would have found Ciel awake in his bed, holding the picture frame of him, his brother and Madam while crying. The old Ciel is still there. It's simply hidden under all that anger and coldness. He's right about one thing though. Mey-Rin can't save him. God can't save him. No one can save...He has to save himself.

Writing this chapter made me feel like crap. Is it just me or did I make Sebastian too much of an asshole in this?
A week after Madam Red died, Ciel continues to work as the queen's guard-dog, maintaining his loyalty to her majesty no matter what this path makes him. A heartless person, that's what he is. He let his aunt die. Ciel could have told Sebastian to save her like he told him to save Mey-Rin but he didn't, because he knew that if she lived, she would never stop killing prostitutes. How Ciel wish it were Grell or Viscount Druitt instead of her. He really did. Ciel and his brother thought she was good but apparently, they were wrong. Her good and caring nature was a façade. It was a mask she placed over her face to hide her true nature and for a moment, Ciel lost sight of the face behind the mask and the last of her victims died.

He hears the door open and Sebastian walks into the study without permission. He didn't knock.

"Master -." 

"Get out!" Ciel snaps at his butler. "I'm not in the mood right now."

"I understand, my lord. However, I simply came here to deliver a letter I found at our doorstep," Sebastian informs. He takes out an envelope from the brand new tailcoat Ciel acquired after the previous one got tattered and covered in blood no thanks to the red-headed shinigami.

Ciel frowns at the letter in his butler's hand. "Is it from Queen Victoria?"

"No."

"Then I have no interest in reading it right now."

"It's from the lady of the Bannett House." Ciel stops working and looks up at Sebastian. "Your aunt."

"Is this some kind of sick joke to you?" Sebastian has always been known for his cruel jokes and pranks but this is obscene and he does not appreciate it one bit. "My aunt just died, Sebastian."

"It is no prank, I swear," he promises, "It has the seal of the house. I'm simply informing you, my lord. I shall place it here for you to decide whether to read it or not." Sebastian does this and places the envelope on the desk's wooden surface. He smiles at Ciel and bows. "I shall have dinner prepared very soon."

With that, he leaves the study.

Ciel looks down at the letter that's supposedly written by his aunt who is now dead, taunting him. Surely one of Sebastian's pranks to make his blood boil. It surely is a distasteful joke, one that Ciel doubts Sebastian would ever do, especially after just one week after his aunt's death. Sebastian is rather evil, isn't he?

Sighing, Ciel gives in and takes the envelope in his hands. He rips is open and take out as few sheets
of paper that were folded neatly. He unfolds the papers and recognizes his aunt's handwriting immediately. It could have been Sebastian falsifying the handwriting but the letter was written two nights before her death.

"My dearest nephew," Ciel reads the letter, "It's possible that you will receive this letter after I'm gone for I plan to…"

Leave London with Grell. I wish you could come with me. I wish we could leave together and start anew somewhere else but I'm afraid you're forever tied to Queen Victoria as he guard-dog. For that, I know you shall never be free. That ring you hold around your finger is your prison cell. However, I see that the choice you made was justifying. Mine was not. Once you finish reading this letter, you will realize who I really am and what made me become the horrible monster I turned into.

I was fifteen when I met your father. I was young, small and frail like your brother. I hated the blood red hair I inherited from your grandfather, my father. It wasn't a normal colour for women of high society. Too vibrant and often scandalous for it was too passionate. I hated the colour red, that was until I met the man who married your mother. When my father introduced Vincent to us, I kept my hair tied and hidden under a bonnet for I did not want him to look at my scandalous red hair.

He was so handsome and kind to me. He made me love my red hair, saying that it was beautiful and that I should be proud of it instead of being ashamed of it. It reminded him of spider lilies. That's when I fell in love with him. Yes, Ciel. I was, indeed, in love with your father and like a fool, I thought he loved me. But I learned, the hard way, that kindness is not the same as love. Since your mother was my older sister, it gave her the right to marry the man I fell in love with. And so she did.

Despite my heart being broken, I could not bring myself to hate my sister or your father. I loved them both and wished nothing but happiness for them.

Nine months later, I was called and rushed to Phantomhive Manor for my sister was bringing two beautiful boys into this dark world. You Ciel and your brother. You were healthy and strong. Your brother, however, was the complete opposite. He was small and weak. He never opened his eyes, never laughed or cried, and slept day and night. Your mother held you while I held your brother. He only opened his eyes once to meet mine. But it was not enough. I wanted your brother to open his eyes every day. His skin was a sickly blue. John was the one who named your brother Little Blue Boy because of how blue he was. Your aunt Francis and I never thought you would live before reaching first age. Those few words caused an event that I wished to forget.

Before I tell you this, you must know that your mother loved your brother very much. She never wanted to hurt him. She didn't want him to go through the pain and thought that what she almost did was an act of mercy. She did not know that it was actually an act of infanticide.

I found Rachel pressing a pillow to your brother's face. I stopped her from taking his life. I never thought how strong words can affect people. She sobbed, saying that she didn't know what else to do. She loved him but didn't think he would live so why allow him to suffer a slow death. After the event, I thought he was dead. I couldn't hear his heart beating nor could I hear his breathing. I sobbed holding your brother until I fell asleep on the armchair. I thought he was dead. However, when I opened my eyes the next morning, your brother was no longer in my arms. I almost panicked. I thought one of the servants took the body from my arms. Then I saw your brother in the arms of the mortician in black robes and black top hat. Your father's friend and ally. The one you call Undertaker.

I found him in the man's arms. His eyes were open, his face was no longer blue and he was squirming and whimpering. He was alive. It was not an illusion. I thought your brother was dead so it surprised me to see him alive in the Undertaker's arms. The man said that the little one simply
needed some fresh air and warm sunlight. Apparently being confined behind four walls was not doing any good. But I was no fool. I knew he did something to your brother. He did something that allowed him to live for ten more years. He gave me the little one and told me to take him well. I cried when I held him in my arms; I saw him smile. And it was all thanks to the mortician. I pretended not to know him when we first met with him at the funeral parlour. I did not want him to bring the subject. I didn't want you to know your mother's secret for I want you to remember her as the mother who loved you and not the woman who tried to kill your brother.

I knew that I had to look after him, make him strong and healthy so he would live to be at your side. Even when had no husband, I still had a family and considered you and your brother as my own children. I needed to care for your brother the most for I knew that more harm would come to him if I didn't look after him.

I attended parties I once hated with great frequencies. I attended them dressed in lavish long dresses and make-up. I don't remember when it happened but I was soon called Madam Red. And for some reason, I ended up loving the name. I got annoyed every time you and Elizabeth called me Auntie Ann instead of Madam Red. I always insisted you and Lizzie to call me Madam Red but I could never force your brother to call me by that name for he still had trouble speaking.

In one of the parties I met your uncle John Bannett. He was not as handsome as Vincent but he was still kind-hearted and I grew to love him. It didn't happen the way I wanted to but still, I was happy. A few months after, I became pregnant. John was so excited. He would place his head on my belly to listen the baby's heartbeat or feel it kick. He wouldn't stop pestering about it being whether a girl or a boy. He loved me. Even if I still loved your father, I loved your uncle as well.

I thought I found happiness. But then the accident came and it all slipped away. John and I were hit by a carriage. We were taken to a hospital. I survived the accident. Unfortunately, John was not so lucky. He died instantly. The doctor said that in order to save my life, they had to remove my uterus along with my baby.

After that, everything fell apart. I lost the man I loved along with the child I loved so dearly before it was even born. However, I tried to maintain strong for I still had my sister, her husband, you and your brother whom I grew to love as if you were my own. The two of you came to visit me frequently with your mother. You always sat on my lap to embrace me despite how much it hurt. Your brother, however, held my hand instead for he knew that I was in a lot of pain. He may have been small and frail but he was no fool. Rachel insisted for me to go to your 10th birthday party. It would have also been a celebration of my recovery. I didn't want to go for I was still grieving over the deaths of my husband and unborn child. But how could I say no to you two?

I arrived at the manor but the carriage abruptly stopped. When I stepped out, I saw the most horrific sight. The stain spread. It covered everything. The colour red I hated so much. The fire consumed the entire Phantomhive Manor along with the rest of you. Rachel was buried with her husband but you and your brother were never found. If only my heart had been buried along with them.

I tried to move on with my life. I was convinced that you were dead. Unfortunately, I could not move on when I was constantly reminded by vermin of my past.

My first patient, Martha Tabram, came to me to abort her child she recently had in her belly. She had no desires to keep the child. She didn’t know who the father was nor did she care. I asked Miss Tabram to reconsider but she insisted on the abortion. She thought the child she had was a burden that needed to be removed before it could grow. As I washed the blood from my hands after the surgery, I let my rage seethe. What wrongs have I committed? Why was I the only one cursed with this unfortunate fate? I lost everything. That woman had what I wanted most. What I would never
I went to visit her a week later. She was standing outside her home, waving goodbye to one of her customers. I wanted to stain her as well. I recall her eyes widening in terror when she saw the knife in my hands. I sliced her throat open. I decided to stain everything red with my own hands. There were many things I felt that day. Anger. Fear. Shock. But mostly anger.

That was the day I met Grell, my blood red Shinigami. My Grim Reaper. I saw him standing on top of the roof with that odd contraption in his hands, grinning down at me with those frightful teeth of his. But even with his terrifying appearance, I felt I could trust him. He held me in his arms like my mother used to do with me and my sister, to comfort us when we were sad. He said he wanted children as well but could not because he was a man. He said he would help me since we had many things in common. I cut away my hair that was stained with blood. Killing after killing. Blood after blood. It was never enough.

Several months later, I received news that you were still alive. I rushed to the mansion I thought was in ruins but was surprisingly completely intact as if the fire never happened. As if it were repaired by magic. I found you in the parlour, seated near the fireplace with a sheet over your shoulders, your feet dirty and bloody, bandages over the right eye your lost and next to you, stood a butler dressed in black. I took one good look at you and held you in my arms. But I knew that something was not right. Something terrible happened to you during those several months as you grew stiff and began to shake when I embraced you. Something terrible happened to you and your brother, something that caused the little one's death. If only I was there to keep the two of you safe. Even when I asked you what happened during those months, you refused to tell me anything. You were too frightened.

I did not mind though. Even though I failed to protect your brother, I can still protect you. As long as you're home safe, that was enough for me.

I was not satisfied though. I wanted your father back. I wanted your mother back. And your brother, I wish he was here too. I decided that day to right the wrongs I've dealt with and take care of you as much as I can. But I'm afraid I will fail you again which is why I need to leave England so you. The moment you find out I'm Jack the Ripper, I am sure you will be angry and devastated. You will probably hate me, because I am no longer the aunt you and your brother used to sing and play with in the garden. The aunt you knew has been gone for many years. The moment you find out my true identity, I will have to dispose of you like I have done to the many prostitutes. It is something I will never do. I love you, Ciel, just like I loved your mother, father and brother. And for that reason, I need to leave England before you discover my secret.

But know this. None of this is your fault. I did not become Jack the Ripper because of you or John. It was a decision I made alone because I believe it is the right decision. Just like you decided to be the queen's guard dog. I know something terrible happened to you after your parents die. I know that you're not only doing it for yourself. I am no fool. You're doing this for your parents and your brother. I can't force you to leave London with me nor can I force you to leave London with me. This is your choice. I shall only ask you for one thing, Ciel.

Don't do the same mistakes I made for I know I will suffer the consequences at the end. And be careful. You may be the queen's guard dog but you're still a child. This is a dangerous world for you. As the queen's guard dog, you are bound to make many enemies and they will try to kill you. Protect yourself. There will come a time where Sebastian may not be able to be at your side to save you. When that time comes, you need to learn to save yourself. Be brave and be strong, my dear Ciel for I know who you are. You're a Phantomhive. And the Phantomhives do not surrender to their enemies. They fight.
This is goodbye, Ciel. Perhaps, I shall see you again. Perhaps not. I just want you to know the truth. You will rise higher than me, higher than your father and higher than the queen...

"...With all my love, Madam Red," Ciel finishes reading the letter with tears falling down his cheeks uncontrollably. Aunt Ann. No. Don't leave me alone. I don't want to be alone. Please don't leave me.

He buries his face into his hands as he quietly sobs. He still can't believe that his own mother tried to kill him in his crib. And what's worse is that Madam Red kept the secret from him for so many years. Was that the reason why she appeared in the middle of the night in the bedroom days after she died? To tell him the truth about her and his mother?

In the letter, Madam Red said that his mother loved him very much and it hurt her trying to kill him but if she was wrong. What if his mother never loved him? What if she only need the stronger boy and didn't need the other?

Once he finally recovers from his tears, he folds the letter and slips it back into the envelope. He opens the drawer of his desk and attempts to put it away but freezes. What if Sebastian reads it? What if Mey-Rin reads it? Sebastian would mock him. Mey-Rin would be devastated. What if the Queen discovers it? If the letter is discovered, the Queen will know Madam Red as Jack the Ripper and his reputation and family name will end. He cannot lose his reputation. It one of the only things that will help him hunt down his parents' murderer. Sebastian and his other servants are not enough.

At the last decision, Ciel throws the letter into the fireplace, allowing the fire to consume it. More tears fall pour down his cheeks as he watches his aunt's confession burn. It could be the heat making his eyes water but he cannot deny that his tears are of sorrow. The white parchment turning carbon black and the confession forever hidden away. Only he knows the truth of his aunt's motives and his mother's attempt of infanticide. Him and no one else. The queen must never know the truth. He will take the secret to his grave like his aunt did.

He looks down at the letter opener on the desk's surface, the flame reflecting against the sharp blade. He takes in his hand and presses it against his wrist, the point threatening to pierce his flesh and slice his vein open, which will cause him to bleed to death. He will take the secret to his grave. Will Sebastian eat his soul even if he commits suicide? Possibly. Will it help him escape? Perhaps. He would be in hell with his aunt. However, if he does commit suicide, the people who killed his parents will win and he doesn't want them to win. He wants to watch them suffer the way he and his suffered but it will never happen if he dies here in his study.

He will do what his aunt asked in the letter. He will be brave. He will be strong. He will rise higher than his father and probably will rise higher than the queen. He will not surrender to his enemies nor will he give them the satisfaction of seeing him cry. He will fight to the end. He will find his parents' murderers and he will win.

End of Chapter 14 (I think it's chapter 14)
After Madam Red's death, things have become different in the Phantomhive Manor. It's been quite for the past few weeks. Ciel has been a lot more distant than usual. Many of the Phantomhive family expect for Ciel to move on with his life in just a short time (Francis Midford has done a good job after her brother died) but it's not as easy as they make it sound. Mey-Rin still hasn't gotten over Mary Kelly's death and how Grell ran his death scythe through Madam Red's chest.

Grell. A Shinigami. Mey-Rin never thought they'd actually exist. She was wrong once more. And again, he didn't look anything like the grim reapers in the stories she read. There were many emotions Mey-Rin felt that day after finding out Grell being both a Shinigami and Jack the Ripper. Hurt. Betrayal. Anger. Confusion. Fear. She thought Grell was her friend yet he killed those prostitutes. He even tried to kill the young master. That shit is not okay. However, he hesitated when trying to kill Mey-Rin. When the other Shinigami with black hair tried to approach her, probably to kill her, Grell grabbed him by the foot, giving Mey-Rin the opportunity to run before he could reach her with his death scythe. She wonders what will happen to him now? Perhaps she will never know.

There's something that's still bothering her. Was he the one she saw on the roof when Azzurro Vanel shot her?

Her thoughts are interrupted by a poking on the shoulders. She's been hanging the sheets outside the mansion after washing them. She turns around to see Sebastian, looking calm but serious as usual.

"I'm almost done hanging the sheets, sir," she says.

"Good," he says, "Mey-Rin, after you're done hanging the sheets, I need you to go to the bakery and pick up a cake. Do you think you can do that?"

Mey-Rin nods. She's not much in the mood for instructions. However, her heart lightens when Sebastian gives her the strip of paper which she's told to give to the baker. She almost forgot today's date. She's been so wrapped up in her grief for Mary and Madam Red's death and Grell's betrayal that she nearly forgot today's special day. It's Ciel's fourteenth birthday.

Wearing her grey tweeted coat (after washing the blood from it and stitching the tears together), her brown boots and blue hat, she walks her way to London despite Sebastian offering her a carriage. She prefers to walk, stating that she prefers the fresh air rather than being confined between four walls of a moving box. It will also give her time to clear her head. However, she has to be back at the mansion before noon and the cake better be in one piece. Otherwise, she'll be in big trouble.

Once she arrives to London, she stops for a moment to take off her boots and check her aching feet. She massages her deformed feet and twists them around, listening to them pop and crack, like adjusting the time needle on a grandfather clock. She hisses in pain, thinking that she should really see a doctor about this. When she looks up, she sees two elderly women watching her with a grimace look on their faces while muttering to each other. The old hags are looking at her first. Mey-Rin immediately shoves her feet back into her boots and gets up.
"Mind your own bloody business!" she snaps at them before continuing her way to the bakery shop. She's not in the mood to deal with those nosy old women.

She waits in line at the bakery. There are only four people left. Nothing more. When it's finally her turn, she gives the strip of paper to the baker, a bald fat man wearing an apron. He frowns when reading the paper before looking at the young girl.

"I was already wondering who ordered this cake," he says. "You people have a strange taste."

Mey-Rin smiles timidly. "Our lives are strange every day."

The baker heads for the back of the shop to retrieve the cake while Mey-Rin waits behind the counter.

"Hehehe, you're right about that, dearie."

Recognizing that giggling, Mey-Rin turns around to see Undertaker standing in line right behind her. She didn't even notice him in the shop until now. In his forearm, he carries a basket similar to the one Mey-Rin has. The basket contains two bags of flour, a glass bottle of milk, a few dozen eggs and a jar of cinnamon.

"Mr. Undertaker, what a surprise!" It really is a surprise. She didn't expect to see him here, unless he was following her. That would be creepy. "What brings you here?"

"Just purchasing a few ingredients for a new batch of biscuits I'm preparing. That bloody apprentice of mine keeps eating them," he says with his usual smile, "It's rude to receive clients and not have anything to offer them, as you must know. Especially when you have your assistant eating them every now and then. I'll have to hide the jar this time. What of you? What brings you here?"

Before Mey-Rin can answer, the baker returns with a devil dog chocolate cake topped with strawberries and the round edges covered in cream.

"It's the young master's birthday," she says, trying not to sound grim. Ciel just lost his aunt and Sebastian sent her off to buy cake for his birthday as if nothing happened. She's certain the young master will not be in the mood to celebrate. Who knows. Perhaps a birthday party will lighten his mood, or perhaps it will make it worse. Mey-Rin doesn't even have a birthday present for him.

Undertaker looks at the cake and taps his chin with his fingernail. "I see. I didn't think he would want to celebrate it after his aunt's funeral."

"I think he's trying to hide it," she says automatically before she could stop herself. She then returns her attention to the baker. "Can you put it in a box, sir?"

"It's going to cost you extra, kid," the bake says.

"I have enough money for it."

The cake nearly costed thirty pounds. Good thing Sebastian gave her more than that. The baker put the cake in a white box and Mey-Rin carefully places it in the basket. "Thank you, have a good day," she then turns to the mortician, "It was nice seeing you again, Mr. Undertaker."

Undertaker chuckles and taps his hat. "Likewise. I hope the young lord enjoys it."

Mey-Rin nods and walks out of the bakery shop. She feels bad about accusing Undertaker for being Jack the Ripper. She actually thought he was the killer when it turned out to be Madam Red and
Grell Sutcliff. He probably didn't take the accusation to heart but it still makes Mey-Rin feels guilty. She stands outside the shop and waits for the mortician to come out.

He emerges from the shop with his paid goods and Mey-Rin approaches him.

"Mr. Undertaker," she says and the mortician turns to face her with the same smile. Does he ever stop smiling? "I just want to apologize for accusing you for being Jack the Ripper. It wasn't my place to make assumptions so quickly."

"Oh, so the accusation was serious, eh?" he says in an almost angry tone but then starts giggling, "I'm joking, dearie. I know you were being serious about me being the killer. As I said before, anyone could have been Jack the Ripper, including me. You were only doing your job. I didn't take it personally. As you can see, the killings have stopped so that means Jack the Ripper is gone. That's all that matters."

"Honestly, I don't see how it matters if we couldn't prevent the last victim from being killed." Mey-Rin still has the memory of Grell ramming his infernal death scythe through Mary's back. It still haunts her in her dreams. It took her days to wash the blood from her coat.

"Oh my dear girl, you should know that you can't save everyone," he says, "People live and die every day. If you and the young lord couldn't save her, it's because she was never meant to be saved. So try not to be hurt about it."

Mey-Rin smiles but it's not a motivating smile. She didn't just want to save Mary, she wanted to save Grell as well just as Ciel wanted to save his aunt. They did neither of those things. Madam Red and Mary Kelly are dead, and Grell is gone. Undertaker is right though. Jack the Ripper is gone. That's all that matters, even if they had to make sacrifices. Maybe it's what Ciel was talking about. Stopping evil even if it means sacrificing people you care for most. She simply can't afford to think like that.

However, she can't help but nod in agreement. "Perhaps," she says, "Would you like to come to the party? Not sure if it's going to be an actually party since Lady Midford and Lady Elizabeth will be the only attendants but I think the cake might be enough for one more guest."

Undertaker remains staring at her without saying another word. Mey-Rin feels a little bit uncomfortable being stared at without knowing what he's thinking about. "Your offer is quite generous," he finally says, "But as you can see, I'll be very busy today."

"I-I know," she stutters awkwardly, "but it would mean the world to the young master if you were there."

He chuckles in amusement. "Is that so? Tell me, my dear girl, how much did the lord tell you about my involvement with the Phantomhives?"

She shrugs at the question. "Not much -."

Two boys suddenly run between Mey-Rin and Undertaker, pushing them aside roughly. "Make way for us Irish men, you English rats!" One of them yells and they disappear laughing.

Mey-Rin fell on her knees after being pushed to the ground. Luckily, she held her hand to the ground to keep herself from falling flat. She hopes the cake didn't suffer any damages. However, Undertaker isn't so lucky. He was pushed and fell hard on his side, his elbow crushing his basket. Mey-Rin gasps and grabs his arm, slowly pulling him back on his feet. He nearly falls again due to loss of balance but Mey-Rin holds him up.

Glaring at the two Irish boys that just pushed them, Mey-Rin's eyes take a darker colour and her
other hand reaches for her gun in her coat. "Brutes!" Her wrist is grabbed before she can even take out the gun.

"Steady now," Undertaker tells her as he held her wrist in a firm grip to keep her from shooting the two Irish boys. "We both know that shooting them dead won't help you in any way."

"They just pushed us both like nothing!" she snaps. She's more worried about Undertaker as he is an older man and he was pushed more harshly than her.

The mortician struggles back on his feet and this time, he does not fall. Mey-Rin notices that he wears long boots with grey leather straps and silver buckles but tries not to think about it. She looks at the mess on the cobblestone road. A few eggs fell and cracked and the bottle of milk is shattered. The two bags of flour are still in the basket but are now damp and the remaining eggs show to be cracked. The only thing that managed to survive is the jar of cinnamon.

"I wouldn't worry about them if I were you," he says, "Those two Irish blokes have been causing trouble in London for over a year now. Theft. Vandalism. They've even attacked old fellows like me."

Mey-Rin looks at him in astonishment. "A year? And no one has ever bothered to report Scotland Yard about it?"

"Scotland Yard have been after them for a year but they've never been able to catch those bastards. So I doubt they'll be caught anytime soon."

Mey-Rin hears small dripping sounds. She looks at Undertaker's hand and sees blood trickling down the back of his hand and dripping from his fingertips to the lid of the cinnamon jar.

"You're bleeding," she gasps.

Undertaker looks at his hand but doesn't make much of it. "I see. I should get going then. I don't think the baker will appreciate me bleeding in front of his shop. It will scare the costumers away."

"Would you like me to walk you home?" she asks worriedly. She doesn't know if Undertaker does live at the funeral parlour but it's the only place she knows where to take him. She has a feeling he wouldn't want to go to the hospital if she asked him to.

The mortician giggles as response. "You're such a dear. Thank you, but I think I'll handle it on my own -."

"But -."

"Now don't you worry about little ol' me. Be sure that cake arrives at the Phantomhive Manor safely. Perhaps I might stop by later on." He pats her on the shoulder. "Have a good day, Mey-Rin."

"Take care of yourself, Undertaker."

Mey-Rin watches him leave, holding his unoccupied hand to his upper arm where the bleeding must be coming from. She can hear him muttering an eerie yet tuneful song as he leaves. It's hard to hear him completely since he's already far from reach but she's able to pick up a few sentences. "...My breath is earthly strong...And if you kiss my cold clay, you days they won't be long."

She stops to check if the cake is all right. So far, it didn't suffer any damages, minus the cream getting smudged but Baldroy can easily fix it, if he doesn't use the flamethrower, that is. She can't say the same for Undertaker. What a wicked thing those two boys have done! Pushing an older man and
running away while laughing. They didn't think they could have actually hurt him. If they had pushed any harder, Undertaker could have fallen in the middle of the street and get hit by a carriage. If she ever sees those two boys again, she will shoot them.

She continues her way back to Phantomhive Manor.

As she walks past an alleyway, she hears a small whimpering. Mey-Rin stops in her tracks. She looks into the alleyway. Standing in a muddy puddle sits a small pup. Upon getting closer, Mey-Rin realizes it's a wolf pup. Despite being wet and dark with mud, under all that is snow white fur and its eyes are beady and red like blood. A curious little thing. How did a wolf pup end up here in the city? Did it wander off from its mother and wound up getting lost? It looks scared, confused and sad, Mey-Rin can tell. Or perhaps it was abandoned. She's heard of stories of wolf mothers abandoning their pups if they're born small, weak and undesirable. The runt of the litter, that's what they're calling it. Is this pup one of them? The runt of the litter? Has the mother left it to die?

*That's how cruel the world is.* Those were one of the last things Mary said when explaining why she aborted her baby.

The pup won't last a single day in London. It could end up starving to death, run over by a carriage or killed by those two Irish boys, and it be a cruel death. Putting it down with a quick shot in the head will make it a merciful death.

Mey-Rin takes out her gun and aims it at the pup's head. It look at her with those blood red eyes, whimpering and wagging its tail, unaware that Mey-Rin about to pull the trigger.

"You've been abandoned. Betrayed. No one will want you. In fact, everyone will hate you. You're the runt of the litter. They will kill you, look down on you as rubbish and step on your small form until you're nothing but blood and fur. You will die alone, unloved and no one will miss you. Consider this…"

*An act of mercy.* Her eyes widen in horror when she almost said those words after removing the safety. She knew one person who said those words. *Oh my God. I'm becoming like them.* And the way the pup looks at her reminds her the way Ciel looked at his aunt when she tried to kill him. The eyes that pleaded Madam Red to stop. Otherwise, she would regret it. Mey-Rin realizes that she's becoming like her. If she kills the pup, she's no better than Madam Red or Mary Kelly…or Grell. It doesn't matter if it's only a pup. It's still alive.

She immediately puts away the gun and picks up the pup from the mud. "I am so sorry. That was unkind of me."

The pup wags its tail and lets out a squeaky bark. Mey-Rin checks if the pup is a girl or a boy. It has a penis. *Yep, it's a boy.* And this little fellow needs a bath for sure. But she can't let Sebastian see it, especially if it's a wild animal and a muddy one. She'll probably end up getting kicked out of the house along with it.

"Come, little one. Let's get you home," she says. "You might make a lovely present for the young master."

She leaves with the pup in her arms, unaware that she's being watched by a woman with white blonde hair and ice blue eyes. Those eyes turn into a bright shade of purple before turning blue again and she disappears into the shadows.

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It's Ciel's fourteenth birthday and he's not exactly in the best mood. He didn't even want to celebrate
it today. But Sebastian insisted since Aunt Francis and Lizzie were coming over to celebrate it with him though he is aware that they're coming to see if everything is all right after Madam Red's death. No, he's not all right. But he can't allow it to be seen. He'll force himself to grin and bear it until the day is done.

Right now, he, Aunt Francis and Lizzie are out in the groves just a few feet outside of Phantomhive Manor, hunting hare while Sebastian and the rest of the staff prepare for the party Ciel knows he will not enjoy. Sebastian already sent Mey-Rin out to London to fetch the cake. Ciel hopes that she returns safely. After the Jack the Ripper case, none of them became the same. Both of them became distant, pensive and glum. He owes her for everything she went through because of him. After almost getting her killed by Grell Sutcliff.

Ciel has his target on sight as he and his cousin and aunt hide behind hollow fallen tree trunks. A Belgian hare, a large rabbit of red-brown fur. A large fellow. It will do well for this evening's dinner. All that needs to be done is have it shot dead and skinned. It's eating grass, nibbling actually. It hasn't done anything to provoke Ciel to kill it. He even feels sorry for it. Sorry, friend, it's eat or die.

Ciel pulls the trigger of his hunting rifle and the bullet hits straight through the hare's skull, making its head pop and the body falls to the earthy grass. Lizzie gasps in complete shock. Francis smirks in satisfaction. Ciel knows how much Aunt Francis loves hunting and knows how much Lizzie hates it. She sees a lot of animals as cute while hunting is brutal and not cute at all.

"That was quite cruel, Ciel," she says in a devastating tone.
"It's the way it is, Lizzie," he says, "These things die every day. Hunters kill them for survival and sports. It's eat or die, and I prefer not to starve to death. Do you?"

"I'm considering of becoming a vegetarian," she says.

"You will do no such thing, Elizabeth. Ciel is right," Francis says, "You're not going to live the rest of your life as a vegetarian, are you? Imagine snowstorms, wars and fire taking away the crops until there's nothing edible left but that hare over there. Start learning how to harden your heart. It will make hunting easier."

Lizzie bows her head shamefully. "Yes, Mother."

The three emerge from their hiding place and head over to where the hare once stood to make sure it's dead. Blood is flowing from its ears and the hole on the side of its head where Ciel shot it, the red liquid being swallowed by the brown earth. Red…Madam Red. Grell Sutcliff. Ciel still remembers it. The bright green eye of the reaper and the death scythe going through his aunt's heart. Red. Like the blood of the hare. Red. Like the blood of Mary Kelly. Red. Like the blood of his butler. Like the blood of Mey-Rin. And like his own blood that will soon shed.

"Ciel." He looks up at Aunt Francis who's looking down at him with a frown. "Are you all right?"

"Yes," he lies. Aunt Francis and Lizzie aren't falling for it though. He hasn't been good at lying these days.

"If you wish to talk, we're all ears," Lizzie says.

Talk about what? That Aunt Ann and her butler were Jack the Ripper, and tried to kill me, my butler and my maid but then changed her mind and ended up getting killed by her butler who turned out to be a Shinigami? Like anyone is going to believe that. Fuck off, Lizzie. "No, thank you. I'm fine," he says instead.
Francis picks up the dead hare and puts it in a osnaburg sack. They return to Phantomhive Manor where they will empty and skin the hare. Since Ciel is the one who killed it, he should be the one to empty it. Aunt Francis will do the skinning because Ciel knows nothing about skinning an animal. Lizzie will simply stand there and look away. Francis showed him how to empty an animal's body. Start from the neck with a sharp weapon and drag it down to its lower stomach near its private parts, creating a vertical line in the middle of the stomach that splits open and all the organs and blood spill out. Ciel has to be careful, however. If the knife breaks through the intestines and sac, the contents of the hare's digested meal and acid will ruin the meat and will be considered inedible.

Hanging the dead hare on a hook in one of the garden's trees, Ciel jabs the knife into the hare's neck and drags it down in a vertical line. The stomach splits open and everything inside it spills out of the body and into a tin bucket below.

Francis smiles. "Well done, Ciel."

"Thank you, Aunt Francis."

Ciel doesn't smile though. He's not very proud of his fine work. In fact, it's making his own stomach turn. *First, he slits her throat with a sharp weapon, Undertaker had said, and rips open her insides and takes her precious womanly parts.* What's worse is that the hare he killed was female. It had no penis. He looks at the sharp weapon he used to rip her open and suddenly feels like Jack the Ripper. Like Grell and Madam Red.

"Are we really going to eat her for dinner?" Lizzie asks.

"Leg or liver, your choice, Lizzie," he says in a mildly cold manner.

"I'll take care of the skinning, children," Francis says.

Ciel and Lizzie take a walk through the garden while Francis skins the hare. Lizzie has her arm around Ciel's with her head resting on his shoulder as they both silently walk through the parterre garden like husband and wife. They are not married yet, however, and probably won't be until they're both seventeen or eighteen. Yet Ciel doesn't really know if he wants to marry Lizzie. He loves Lizzie very much but doesn't show much affection towards her, the same affection a future husband should. Nobles marry other nobles. Since birth, Ciel Phantomhive and Elizabeth Midford were arranged to be married by the parents to keep the family bloodline pure, to maintain the Phantomhive name intact.

Despite this being an obligation as a Phantomhive, Ciel really does care for Lizzie. But does he love her enough for marriage? Not really. This is only his duty. His choice in that matter no longer counts as he is the only Phantomhive who survived the fire. He's forced to continue the lineage whether he like it or not. Whether it makes him happy or not. *I was never allowed to be happy to begin with, why should I be now?*

"You've been awfully quiet these past few weeks," Lizzie finally speaks up, "I know it's because of Auntie Ann."

"I rather not talk about it," he says.

Lizzie suddenly stops in her tracks, halting him as well. Ciel looks at her, more likely at her round green eyes. The eyes of a Midford, not a Phantomhive.

"I'm worried about you, Ciel," she says in a sad tone, "And so is Mother. Today is your birthday and you've been spending the morning with us unhappy. And I want you to be happy on your special
"I don't see what's so special about a birthday," he says, "It's the anniversary of birth yet when you look around, that day is the same as any other day."

"I remember you used to be excited about your birthday," she smiles slightly but that smile quickly vanishes. "Those were the days you and your brother used to be happy. When we were all happy. I'm guessing everything changed when your brother, Uncle Vincent and Aunt Rachel died."

*I never seem to exist anymore.* Ciel remembers sitting by the window when he was physically ill, watching Lizzie playing tea time with Madam Red and his brother while his mother and father watched with amusement. All faces full of smiles. All of them happy while Ciel sat by the window with the family dog Sebastian.

"Those people…the ones that killed your parents and brother, they took that little boy that used to smile all the time," she says, "A lot of things made you happy. Now you no longer smile, laugh or cry. It's like all of your emotions were swept away by the fire."

"I stopped crying the day they were murdered," he says. He's lying though. He stopped crying after he and his brother were defiled. "I came to realize that tears and begging for mercy would never stop them. It only gave them pleasure. So I decided not to give them the pleasure of seeing me cry any longer. I will never shed a tear in front of my enemies again."

Lizzie nods feebly. "Yes. But we're not your enemies, are we?"

With that, Ciel's heart sinks. Pierced through like an invisible arrow. He never thought for a minute that Lizzie would say something like that. The girl he's destined to marry who's always full of joy and finds many things cute. It's unlike her to say that. He doesn't know how to respond to that.

"We're your family, remember?" she says as she holds his hand, "You don't need to hide your tears from us."

Before Ciel can open his mouth to answer, Francis calls them back. She finished skinning the hare.

"Must we really eat it?" Lizzie asks, the previous subject being dropped.

"It's what we're having for dinner," Ciel says.

He decides to bare it for the rest of the day. Lizzie's right. She and Aunt Francis are not his enemies. Why should he treat them like it?

Mey-Rin returns to the mansion as quickly as possible with the birthday cake and Ciel's present. The wolf pup with the fur covered in mud and smelling of rubbish. She knows that Sebastian will never allow it into the house if he sees it. That's why she needs to hide it.

She enters through the backdoor that leads to the kitchen. She prays not to encounter Sebastian. Luckily, it's only Baldroy chopping down rabbit meat with a butcher's knife, Tanaka sipping his tea and Finnian boiling the water in the cauldron. The moment the door closes, everyone turns their head to her. Finnian's eyes grow wide and he gasps excitedly when he sees the wolf pup in the crook of Mey-Rin's arm.

"Oh my goodness! That's the most adorable thing I have ever seen!" he squeals joyfully. Mey-Rin shushes him immediately and puts the cake down on the table.
"You finally got the cake," Baldroy says as he looks at the wolf pup as well, "And you brought a friend. Let me guess, Sebastian doesn't know?"

Mey-Rin shakes her head. "We all know that he's not very fond of dogs. If he sees this little fellow, he'll get rid of it."

"Well, it's muddy and smells like shit," he says while covering his nose with his wrists since his hands are greasy and bloody. "Even I'd throw it out."

"You will do no such thing!" Finnian cries out in outrage. "You will not be allowed to throw out an adorable helpless puppie -.

"I'm joking, Finny," Baldroy chuckles in amusement, "A good bath will fix the smelly creature right up."

"Hohoho," Tanaka laughs.

Mey-Rin suddenly hears footsteps approaching the kitchen. Knowing that it's Sebastian, she hides the pup in one of the cupboards and slams the door shut, locking the latch tightly so it doesn't get out. Baldroy and Finnian return to their duties while Tanaka remains sipping his tea quietly. Mey-Rin quickly takes off her coat and hat and hangs them on the hook near the door.

When Sebastian enters the kitchen, everyone looks at him. He frowns at the three servants strangely.

"I thought I heard Finnian yelling," he says, "Is everything all right?"

Baldroy shrugs his shoulders. "Finny just got excited over Mey-Rin brought back. He wants a slice."

"But I told him he needs to wait after lunch because the cake is to be served after dinner. Also, the young master and Lady Elizabeth are the ones who are allowed to eat the first slice," Mey-Rin says while slipping on the apron and tying the strings behind her back, praying that the pup doesn't start barking or scratching at the cupboard door.

Finnian scratches the back of his head and grins. "It just looks so delicious. I got a little excited. That's all."

Sebastian rolls his eyes and sighs before looking at Mey-Rin. "I hope the cake didn't suffer any damages on the way here."

She hopes so as well, especially after what these two Irish boys did back in the city. Without saying another word, she opens the box to reveal the cake perfectly intact, minus the cream being smeared over the strawberries. Shite. "It's not perfect condition but I was able to keep it safe. It is the young master's birthday after all."

"Did you trip again on the way back?"

"Not really. More like pushed," she explains, "Two Irish boys but nothing serious."

Sebastian inspects the cake with his gloved fingers tapping his chin. "This can be fixed easily. At least it's not mashed into clumps ." He stops mid-sentences and looks around the kitchen with a distasteful frown on his brow. He then pinches his nose and grunts in disgust. "What is that God-awful smell?"

Mey-Rin nearly forgot that Sebastian is not human, meaning that he has an acute sense of smell. If he smell the pup she's doomed.
Sebastian then looks over at Mey-Rin's coat and back at her. "Why do you stink?"

"The boys pushed me into a puddle," she explains.

"I suggest you clean yourself up before the young master's party. Otherwise, no one will be able to enjoy the evening with that dreadful odour."

"Yeah, Mey-Rin, you smell like shit," Baldroy says with half a laugh. This earns him a glare from the demon butler.

"I hope you learn to hold your tongue during the party," he says, "I do not appreciate you using a foul tongue, especially in front of the master and the ladies of Midford."

Baldroy gulps nervously and continues chopping the rabbit meat. Sebastian takes the cake in his hands.

"I shall keep this somewhere safe while the rest of you finish up. Once you're done, report to the ballroom. Am I clear?"

"Yes, Sebastian!" the trio nod while Tanaka chuckles.

Sebastian then leaves.

Mey-Rin waits for several minutes until she's sure Sebastian is no longer around before letting out a deep sigh of relief and opens the cupboard door to let the pup out. It whimpers and Mey-Rin carries it in her hands. "I was afraid he would have noticed."

"I'll get the bath started," Finnian says excitedly as he leaves the cauldron to boil itself. He clogs the sink drain with a wooden cork and turns the faucet, letting the water fill up to the half and turns off the faucet.

"Oh, and thanks for saying that I smell like rubbish, Bard," Mey-Rin says sarcastically while carrying the pup over to the sink. "So nice of you to say that."

"It was either that or let Sebastian find out you brought a muddy pup into the kitchen," Baldroy says. She would give him the middle finger but she's too busy washing the pup now with Finnian's help. "Gently, Finny. Careful you don't break his bones," she says this as she knows how strong Finnian is. One small mishap can kill the poor pup. Finnian tries to be gentle scrubbing the mud and dirt from the pup's fur and he's being successful so far. The pup struggles as it looks like it doesn't like baths but Mey-Rin keeps it still for the most part. She would ask Baldroy to help as well but he's cooking the meat. Tanaka is simply sipping his tea without a care in the world. Mey-Rin and Finnian scrub the mud and dirt away until the pup's fur is white as snow and no longer dark and grey and brown.

"That's the whitest fur I've ever seen," Finnian says, "What shall we call him?"

Mey-Rin shrugs. "I don't know. Um, that's sort of the young master's decision to make."

Baldroy stop for a moment to look at her with a confused frown. "What are you talking about? Are you saying the pup is for the young master?"

Mey-Rin looks at him over her shoulder and shrugs. "Why not? It is his birthday, after all."

"That's very nice of you to bring the young master a present," Finnian says.

"Hey, Finnian, wake up and smell the scent of reality," Baldroy says, "The moment Sebastian finds
out Mey-Rin brought that thing in here, he's going to have all of our heads."

"That's up to the mast though," Mey-Rin says, "It's for him, not Sebastian. Madam Red just died so I thought this would make the young master smile again. It's his decision whether he wants the pup or not."

"And what if he doesn't want it?"

Mey-Rin put a bit of thought into it. What if the master doesn't want the pup? She can't take it back to the streets of London. It will starve to death. And Sebastian will never let them keep it. Putting it down would be the last option, something Mey-Rin doesn't want to do. "I'll give it to someone else who wants it," she says this to avoid upsetting Finnian, knowing how sensitive he becomes.

She prays the young master will like the present. Perhaps she won't have to put the poor pup to sleep forever.

Ciel opens his first present. A very nice blue frock made by Nina. It's quite strong, soft, warm and well-tailored. Elizabeth brought it on Nina's behalf since she can't make it herself. She's too busy making ballet uniforms for a theatre group. In fact, only Elizabeth and Aunt Francis are present for his birthday as Klaus had to return to Italy to resolve a personal issue with his company and Diederich returned to Germany for reasons unknown to him. The second present Ciel receives on Diederich's behalf is a new edition of the English to German dictionary.

"Diederich hopes you'll visit him in Germany one day," Francis says.

Ciel mentally scolds the dictionary and places it down on the floor where she's seated along with Lizzie while Francis is seat on a chair.

Oh how he hated Diederich when he taught German. Never did he have a more terrible teacher than Diederich. Ciel still remembers the times he wept when scolded and yelled at by Diederich for not getting the pronunciation or spelling right. His brother would always get it right. The man would snap at the young boy who was still at an age where he still couldn't pronounce English words correctly yet. It was humiliating and terrifying. He remembers trembling in terror whenever the hour of German lessons neared. Ciel would beg his father not to make him go to his lessons. However, Vincent said that being an earl requires tolerance and knowledge of everything they give you. If Ciel didn't learn German, he was an ignorant. But how can he learn German when the man wouldn't stop scolding and snapping at him? It nearly drove him insane. Ciel will consider telling Sebastian to burn the dictionary later on. Another book. This time from Klaus. Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. Ciel is familiar with Dante's work, knowing that the writer describing the nine levels of hell but never got to read the book in general. He doesn't know if his father had a copy of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in the library but he's glad that Klaus thought of giving him something he liked instead of a dictionary. Lau sent him a strange green Chinese shirt as well as a solid gold cat.

Mey-Rin, Finnian, Baldroy and Tanaka stand in the corner watching. Ciel can see them looking at each other uneasily. *What's eating them?*

Sebastian knows that something isn't quite right as the stench he smelled from the kitchen earlier continues to linger. He already told Mey-Rin to bathe before coming down here to the ballroom so she wouldn't disturb the master and Lady Elizabeth with the smell of feces and damp musk. She no longer smell of it yet the scent continues to linger somewhere around the house. However, it's no longer the smell of excrement. The scent has lightened with soap but he can still smell something unpleasant.
While Mey-Rin slices the cake, Sebastian sneaks away from the ballroom to investigate the source of the terrible smell. He knows that it's coming from the kitchen where he first smelled it. Whatever it is, Mey-Rin was the one who brought it and it's still there. He heard shouting from Finnian but when he entered the kitchen, everything fell into silence yet Mey-Rin looked nervous. She always looked nervous but the way she clasped her hands behind her back indicated she was hiding something.

As he nears the kitchen, he can hear the sound of scratching behind the door.

When he opens the door, his eyes flare red and his temple throbs as he finds himself face to face with an evil and disgusting beast from hell. The beast of razor sharp teeth, soulless eyes, terrible breath and haunting nightmarish presence.

A pup.

"Mey-Riiiiiiiin!"

Everyone stops what they're doing the moment they hear Sebastian shout angrily. Mey-Rin's face grows extremely pale. The eyes of both Baldroy and Finnian widen and their faces become colourless. Tanaka sips his tea casually but his face does not express humour. He's thinking the same thing the trio are thinking. They're in big trouble.

Ciel frowns upon hearing Sebastian's angry voice and looks up at the young maid. "What on earth did you do this time?"

"I, um ."

The doors burst open and the wolf pup from the kitchen bolts into the ballroom with Sebastian chasing after it. Mey-Rin gasps in complete terror as Sebastian nearly grabs the pup by the neck but the little thing dodges and continues with his tail wagging happily. It then spots Ciel, barks and bolts right towards him. Ciel's eyes widen as the pup runs right at him in full speed and put his hands up to shield himself. He still get rammed by the pup and tackled to the floor. For something so small, it's quite strong. It attacks Ciel's face with licks and wet kisses while wagging its tail. Ciel struggles to get him off but the effort has proven to be useless.

"Aw, look at it!" Lizzie exclaims excitedly as she watches the pup lick Ciel repeatedly. "It's so cute! And I think he likes you, Ciel!"

"A little too much, perhaps," Ciel grunts as he tries to push the pup's face away from him.

Mey-Rin would smile if Sebastian wasn't glaring at her right now, his eyes nearly glowing red with internal rage. She knows she's in a lot of trouble for this and the punishment will be excruciating.

"Someone get it off him right now!" Francis snaps, "Honestly, where on earth did that little beast come from and who brought it in?"

Mey-Rin immediately steps in. "It was me, Lady Midford. Forgive me," she apologizes before taking the pup from the young master. Ciel sits up and wipes off the dog's saliva from his face with his sleeves. Sebastian will probably have her wash that later on, if she lives by the end of the day. "I found him alone in the street. There were no signs of his parents or siblings so I brought him here. I thought he might make a nice present for the master. I bathed him so he's perfectly clean."

"Clean or not, you do not bring strays into the house," Francis says bitterly. Lizzie looks sad but does not say anything to defend the pup. Ciel simply glares at his aunt in annoyance. How dare she make decisions over him with his very own house! "Get rid of that beast at once."
Mey-Rin nods sadly, her eyes looking down at the floor in disappointment. Knowing that she can never actually do real harm to the pup, she hands him over to Sebastian for him to deal with. The butler nearly snatches it from her hands harshly. The pup whimpers and cries as it struggles to get out of Sebastian's hold but the butler ignores its efforts.

"We're going to have a serious talk afterwards," he says to Mey-Rin in a very threatening tone. She nods as a response but does not dare to look at him. Baldroy glares at Sebastian with his arms crossed but says nothing while Finnian is at the verge of tears.

"Wait!" Ciel holds his hands up, stopping Sebastian before he can even think about leaving the ballroom with the pup. "Don't I get a say in this? This is my home after all. I'm the head of the Phantomhive Manor." He says this while giving his aunt a stern look. Francis stares at him in complete shock. "I decide what stays in this house. Sebastian, give me the pup. That's an order."

Sebastian remains glaring at Mey-Rin for a little while longer but closes his eyes and sighs deeply before giving the pup to Ciel. Everyone watches as Ciel examines the pup's unique appearance. Snow white fur and bright red eyes, almost like Sebastian's eyes but no pupils. The pup stares back at Ciel, making pleading whimpers.

After a minute or so, Ciel smiles and pets the pup's head. "He shall be the Phantomhive's new pet. He shall be the Queen's guard dog's guard dog."

"Yay!" Finnian shouts out happily. Lizzie also squeals happily and claps her hands.

"I'm not cleaning up after him. That's all I'm saying," Baldroy says and Tanaka chuckles as a response, his expression showing contentment once more.

Mey-Rin smiles as she watches the young master laugh when the pup attacks him with licks once more. She can't believe what she's seeing right now. Ciel Phantomhive is actually smiling. Not the usual arrogant smirk he gives to everyone. But an actual warm smile. A laugh, even. He's actually happy, for the first time in weeks. It makes Mey-Rin happy to see the young master happy, despite still being glared at by Sebastian and Lady Francis. She'll endure it though. In fact, she'll endure any type of punishment has ready for her. It no longer matters to her, as long as the young lord is happy.

"Do you have any idea what you've done by bringing that thing in here?" he whispers to her.

"We were strays once as well," she reminds him, "but then you and the young master found us. I'm simply doing what you've taught us."

"Honestly, if it weren't for the young master, I would have tossed you off the clock tower a long time ago," he says. Mey-Rin's eyes become wide in surprise. Did he really just say that?

"It's the young master's birthday, Sebastian," she tells him, "Let him want something for once. Let him be happy…Or are you that cold-hearted?"

Sebastian's glare softens. He opens his mouth to say something but immediately shuts up. He looks at both Ciel and Lizzie.

"What will you call him?" Elizabeth asks while petting the pup's head.

"Pluto," Ciel says, "His name is Pluto, like Edgar Allan Poe's cat."

The pup, now named Pluto, licks Elizabeth's nose before returning to Ciel and licks his face repeatedly, causing him to giggle in amusement.
"You're becoming an annoyance, Mey-Rin," Sebastian says. "But I admire your defiance for the master's sake. I do hope we get to play this sort of game more often."

"…Thank you?"

Sebastian suddenly hears a knock on the door. The knock is too faint for any human ear to listen but he can hear it just fine. He leaves the ballroom to attend whoever is waiting at the door. Another guest perhaps? Maybe not. The Ladies of Midford were the only ones who were coming. The others had confirmed they wouldn't be able to make it to the young master's party.

When he opens the door, he finds no one standing outside of Phantomhive Manor. There are no signs of anyone around the estate. *That's odd.* He did hear someone knock on the door. He didn't imagine it. Perhaps someone thought it would be a funny prank to knock on the door and run away before someone could answer.

However, his eyes widen in surprise when he looks down to see a black box with a light blue bow on top and a basket full of devilled eggs with a black ribbon tied to the handle. He picks up the two items to inspect them closer. There's no name on the box or the basket, only a tag hanging from the box's corner that says *Happy Birthday, Lord Phantomhive.* Sebastian sniffs at the devilled eggs to see if they're poisoned or if they contain some sort of drug that could do some serious harm to the young master. So far, the devilled eggs seem clean. He puts his ear to the box to hear any signs of a bomb. Nothing of the sort. Still, he wonders who could have sent these to the young master and not stay? Why put these here and leave?

Sebastian shuts the door and returns to the ballroom with the two items in his hands.

The pup is still running around the ballroom happily, trying to get everyone's attention as they all play with him. Pluto even tries to tug at Tanaka's pants with his jaw, growling and tugging the fabric. Tanaka laughs and Finnian picks him up from the floor.

"Aren't you a good boy?" he says and Pluto responds by licking him.

"Master," Sebastian says and Ciel's head whips around to look at him, his smile disappearing. "Someone left these at the door. They're for you."

Ciel looks at the basket of devilled eggs as they're set down in front of him along with the black box. The devilled eggs are covered in paprika. He stares at the box and then at the basket in complete awe. He hasn't seen a basket of devilled eggs like that since…

Baldroy picks up one of the eggs from the basket and sniffs at it before taking a bite of it. He makes an odd face but finishes eating the egg in three bites. "Too much paprika. It's still edible though."

Ciel smiles slightly before picking up one of the other devilled eggs from the basket. "His devilled eggs remind me of doll eyes."

*His* Mey-Rin stares at the basket of eggs, wondering who could have brought them. Then she remembers Undertaker carrying the basket full of eggs, sacks of flour and a jar of what looked like cinnamon. What if it wasn't cinnamon? What if it was paprika? Mey-Rin smiles.

Ciel removes the light blue bow from the top and opens the black box. Inside the black box lies another box. This time made of mahogany wood with golden roses imprinted around the edges and a larger rose imprinted in the middle of the wooden lid.

"Oh wow, that's so lovely," Lizzie says, "What do you think is in it?"
Ciel shrugs but opens the mahogany box to find out. When he opens the box, music starts playing. Lovely and calming chiming music with a couple standing upright and dancing together. The lady has a pink dress and blonde hair tied back in a bun. The gent is wearing a blue suit with his brown hair tied in a ponytail. The hair reminds Ciel a bit of Grell Sutcliff but knows that this is no Grell Sutcliff. The lid has a mirror behind it. He can see his own face reflected on it. The face of a boy who practically lost his entire world and has made terrible decisions. How can he deserve such lovely gift! Why should he be given this?

Lizzie gasps when she sees the music box. "Oh my God, it's so beautiful."

"It is quite lovely," Francis agrees for once. "It looks hand-made. Is there a name anywhere?"

Ciel shakes his head. There is no name on the box. There is no need though. He already knows who it's from. "I thought the devilled eggs might have given you a clue already."

He smiles at his new present before closing it, the music falling into abrupt silence.

Lying in bed, Ciel continues staring at his new music box which is now lying on the nightstand next to him. Pluto, his new pup, is curled up at the footboard of the bed despite Sebastian insisting not to let it sleep on the bed for the boy might catch an allergy. Sebastian seems to forget that Ciel is allergic to cats, not dogs. So, he has no problem letting Pluto sleep on his bed. Besides, the thing will simply cry all night if left alone and Ciel prefers to have a goodnight sleep than deal with a whining dog. Also, he doesn't mind his company.

Ciel reaches out for the box and opens it, letting the music play and the couple dance. Pluto wakes up and looks at Ciel, his head tilting to the side in confusion, but makes nothing of it and goes back to sleep. Ciel smiles at the music box and holds his pillow closer to him, closing his eye as the calm chiming music helps him fall asleep.

8 years ago...

Ciel sat outside the original Phantomhive Manor, on a bench and looking glum in the face while the party continued on inside without him. It was his sixth birthday but it didn't feel like his birthday. He felt a bit ignored and abandoned as no one noticed him leave the party to sit alone.

"No one seems to be eating my devilled eggs." Ciel turned his head to see Undertaker walking towards him with a plate of five devilled eggs covered in paprika. The mortician sat down on the bench next to the boy with the plate on his lap and let out a deep sigh. "What do you think? Did I add too much paprika?"

Ciel took one of the eggs and bit into it. "A little too much paprika," he said with his mouth full, "but it's still good. Your devilled eggs remind me of doll eyes."

Undertaker snickered in amusement. "Do they?" He put two devilled eggs to his bangs, making them look like eyes, and Ciel giggled hysterically. "It would be so sad if laughter should disappear, would it not?" Ciel stopped laughing and returned to his glum state. "Why so glum, Lord Phantomhive? Isn't today your birthday? Don't birthdays make you happy?"

"It's not really my birthday if it's someone else's party," he said sadly.

Undertaker tapped his chin. "Really? Then who will I give this present to?" He took out a black rectangular box with a light blue bow on top and placed it on the boy's lap.
Ciel stared at Undertaker in surprise but took the box in his hands and opened it. Inside the box laid a doll. A male doll dressed in a blue sailor suit. It had brown bowl-cut hair and blue eyes. It almost looked like Ciel himself. The boy smiled and looked at the mortician.

"Is this for me?" he asked.

Undertaker chuckled. "Well, I don't see another Phantomhive with your name on it."

Ciel took the doll from its box and hugged it. "Thank you. I love it."

Undertaker patted him on the head. "This is your party too, my lord. You're a Phantomhive. Don't let them tell you otherwise."

Ciel smiled and nodded. He never allowed anyone to tell him he was never a Phantomhive. Weak or not. Sick or not. He was and always would be a Phantomhive.

After returning to the home that burned down along with his dead parents, Ciel retrieved the doll from the ashes. He did not allow Sebastian to replicate his personal belongings. The doll was one of them. It now sits on one of the fireplace's top of his bedroom with parts of the sailor suit burned and the porcelain skin covered in soot but the hair and eyes remained intact.

End of Chapter 15
End of an Old Chapter

This chapter is going to be sexual and a bit explicit so you've been warned. Oh and I will be using female pronouns for Grell at the end.

Undertaker gulps down a large chug of ale and slams the jug the wooden bar in front of him. The bartender asks if he wants another but he kindly refuses. The sound of laughing and yelling in the pub is already making his head throb. He's glad Tom isn't here. He already gave him enough headaches at the parlour. He's not in the mood for Tom's recklessness. He's not in the mood for anyone.

After Madam Red's death, all he wants is peace and some alone time. He could be checking on the earl and see if he's doing well but doubts the boy wants to talk to anyone. Besides, he has that butler of his and the Midfords. The boy doesn't need a creep like the undertaker right now.

"Would you like some company, sir?" a prostitute asks him while caressing his arm, sending goosebumps up his arms. It's the drink opening his senses. She's a very attractive woman with voluminous breasts and blonde messy hair.

Despite not in the mood for fucking anyone right now, his body does crave for it.

When the woman reaches to push away his bangs, he immediately snatches her wrist.

"No," he says sternly, taking the woman by surprise. "Not you. You," he points at a young man standing behind the woman. The boy is quite handsome with dark shoulder-length hair and dark eyes. A fine gentleman. The young man smiles as Undertaker gestures him to come closer. The woman scoffs at the rejection and stomps away in anger.

"What's your name?"

"James."

"Urgh. Such a common name. Common names bore me. Listen, James. I am not in the mood tonight. You think you can make me happy?" Undertaker grins as he brings James close by the arm.

"I can make you whatever you want," he says while taking Undertaker's chin in his hand.

The mortician grins once more before lifting up the black robe to his hip and taking the young man's hand, putting inside his trouser where his cock is swelling with need.

"Make me happy then, James," he whispers in the young man's ear and brings him into a heated kiss.

The young man leads Undertaker away from the noisy pub and into quiet darkness of a room, the only place he knows he feels comfortable in. In the dark room, Undertaker removes his top hat and black robe, now only standing in his cassock.

"Are you a priest?" James asks.

Undertaker chuckles in amusement. "If I were, God will certainly condemn me to hell for it. Yet, I don't give a fuck."
James smiles and kisses him again.

Undertaker gets pushed over a table by the young man, his long grey hair spilling over the wooden surface. His breath grows heavy at the feel of his cassock being lifted up to his lower back and his trousers being pulled down. He smiles at the sound of buckles being removed. Undertaker then feels something wet press against his entrance before finally pushing in, making him suppress a lustful cry. Luckily the music and the laughter is loud enough to drown the sounds of moaning, crying and hissing. The thick flesh fills him completely, making Undertaker grit his teeth. James thrusts into Undertaker roughly, giving him exactly what he needs.

Both men engage in a heated kiss, tongues touching each other with James gripping Undertaker's waist as he drives himself deeper into him. Soft whines and moans escape Undertaker's throat at the harsh treatment. Lips caress the side of his neck and he tilts his head to give James more access to it. Fingers fist into the mortician's hair, having his head pulled back and James bites into his neck, causing him to cry out. He then feels a hand rubbing his cock in fast and eager strokes, making him a moaning mess as the thrusts become harder.

After twenty minutes, Undertaker finally comes and feels the young man's hot release enter his body.

"Happy?" James whispers the question into Undertaker's ear.

He looks over his shoulder and grins. "Definitely," he says before kissing the young man again.

"Mey-Rin."

"Yes, Sebastian."

"The master is heading for London. He is asking for your company."

"Yes, sir."

She has no idea where the young master is taking her. Nevertheless, she obeys him and quickly heads to her bedroom to get dressed in casual clothing. Five minutes later, she boards the carriage with the young lord with Sebastian driving. She'll be alone in the carriage with the master, which makes her very nervous. She does not know his intention.

The carriage departs from the Phantomhive Estate. Mey-Rin is seated at the opposite side across the young master, her hands fiddling nervously. Curled up next to Ciel is Pluto. Neither Ciel nor Mey-Rin have said a word to each other for the next five minutes. Baldroy and Finnian are probably wondering her whereabouts as she did not tell them she was leaving with Ciel and Sebastian. Ciel was in a hurry. Baldroy is probably worrying sick.

She still wonders about the young master's intention of bringing her. What did he bring me for? Does he plan to punish me? Does he plant to kill me because I know his secrets? Mey-Rin planned to take the young master's secrets to her grave. It might happen earlier than expected. She nearly got killed twice. It doesn't surprise her if the third attempt becomes a success. Perhaps the young master will be merciful and won't have Sebastian hack her into pieces like Grell did to Mary Kelly and nearly did the same to her.

Grell. Again, she can't get him out of her head. He was her first friend. Or at least, she thought he was. But it turned out she was simply a sadistic madman who enjoyed opening people and painting the walls with their blood. Red. His favourite color. Mey-Rin has not spoken of the subject since that day, for the fear she might anger Ciel.
"Is there something on your mind?" the young master suddenly asks. Mey-Rin looks up to find him staring at her intently with Pluto still sleeping. She locks eyes with him for a moment but quickly looks away and shakes her head. But it seems that Ciel has the power to read minds. "Go on. Speak up. Share your thoughts."

"She hesitates for a moment before eventually opening her mouth to speak. "Am I brought to be punished, my lord?"

"I know why you're asking but no, I did not bring you here for punishment," he replies, "If I wanted to hurt you, I would have Sebastian do it a long time ago."

"...That sounds perturbing."

"You're also thinking about Grell. I can tell."

"I did not want to anger you," she says.

"My anger has passed, for the moment," he says.

"There's another thing that keeps crossing my mind."

Ciel stares at her. She knows this is not the kind of topic he wishes to her. "What is it?"

"...The more I learn people's secrets, the less sense this world becomes to me. I was fooled into believing Grell was a good man. I thought for him to be my friend. Then when he captured me and killed Mary Kelly before my very eyes, I saw his true face. His eyes glowing bright green and his smile similar to the Cheshire cat with sharp teeth. The face of a madman lusting for bloodshed." Her eyes become blurry with tears. "If only I saw it coming. Perhaps I would have stopped him from killing Mary."

"Neither of us thought Grell would turn out to be a death god gone rogue. You can't blame yourself for something you had no control of. None of use saw it coming," he says, "Madam Red, however, I knew she had to be Jack the Ripper. She was on the suspect list from the start. The connections were all there in plain sight. Yet I hunted damn Viscount Druitt instead. Because I wanted to prove myself wrong and deny that my aunt had any involvement. All I did was endanger the girls even more by letting her roam free. Both Alice McKenzie and Mary Kelly died because of the decision I made. And you almost died because I let you be used as bait. If anyone's to be blamed here, it should be me."

Mey-Rin scoffs up a laugh which she immediately hides with her hand. Ciel frowns at her.

"What is it?"

"It's nothing really."

"Tell me anyways," he says, leaning forwards.

"You ask me not to blame myself for the deaths of Mary Keylly yet you blame yourself for the death of your own aunt. You ask me to forgive when you can't even forgive yourself."

Ciel remains silent at her statement, staring right into her soul. Mey-Rin bites her lip, knowing that she should have kept her mouth shut.

"The reason why I blame myself, Mey-Rin, is because as the queen's guard dog, capturing Jack the Ripper was my responsibility. Not yours. If Queen Victoria were here, she would agree with my
"And I would have to disagree."

"Why are you suddenly defying me? You and I have come to an agreement that you would aid me as long as you don't get in the way. You agreed to follow my orders."

"And I am -.

"Yet you defy me with your words."

"Because I also agreed to protect you. Forgive my authoritative speech, my lord, but just because I agreed to follow orders, it does not give me the obligation to share the same opinion as yours. Nor do I feel the obligation to agree with the queen if those words do not suit either of us. It shouldn't be an obligation for you either."

The young master does not reply this time. He remains silent, looking down at his lap.

"I'm sorry, master," she apologizes.

"Don't be, because you're right," he says, "The thing is, even if it shouldn't be an obligation. I have no other choice. My free will got stripped away a long time ago. So all the decision I make will never be mine. Which is why I sometimes envy you. Because at least you have choice and it angers me when you chose to stay by my side instead of choosing to leave."

"If I left London, it wouldn't have been my choice then."

They do not say another word to each other throughout the entire journey.

They arrive to London but they do not stop at the townhouse. Instead, they stop at the Lyceum Theatre, a 2,100-seat West End theatre in Wellington Street, which Mey-Rin finds off as the theatre does not seem to be showing any operas or plays today. Why would Sebastian stop the carriage here?

The carriage door opens and Sebastian is waiting outside. "We have arrive, my lord."

"Obviously," Ciel scoffs as he takes his cane in one hand and carries Pluto in his left arm before stepping out of the carriage. Mey-Rin steps out of the carriage afterwards, her foot nearly tripping her over but Sebastian immediately catches her and straightens her up.

"Carefully, Mey-Rin, you don't want to break your neck, now do you?"

"Thank you, Sebastian," she says nervously, "What are we here for?"

"If you come with me and stop asking questions, you'll see why I've brought us here," Ciel says almost coldly. Pluto whimpers and wags his tail.

The three enter the theatre, the place being darkly lit. The moment they enter, Mey-Rin sees four ballet dancers on stage, dressed in white and dancing on the tip of their toes while piano music is playing and a woman dressed in black shouting instructions to the four dancers. The dancing instructor is American. Mey-Rin can tell by the accent.

"Perhaps I should give you an explanation now," Ciel says before turning his attention to Mey-Rin. "Your footing is awful. Your lack of balance and foot coordination are a disadvantage to me and Sebastian. It is also a hazard. I don't want you harming yourself or others because of your crooked words."
feet. You'll be brought here every week in the morning and you'll spend the entire day dancing to
practice your balance."

"But young master, you know I can't dance."

Ciel ignores this, however. "Consider it as recompense for your assistance."

"Were you aware of this?" Mey-Rin asks Sebastian.

"To be honest, I'm just as surprised as you are," he says.

They climb up the stage to meet the dancing instructor, a very attractive lady with red lips and black
hair tied back in a bun.

"You must be Jacqueline Hayden, the dancing instructor," Ciel says as he shakes hands with the
lady.

"Lord Phantomhive. It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance. Miss Hopkins has told me amazing
things about you." she shakes hands with him, "You wanted to ask a favour from me but you
decided to discuss this in person. What can I help you with?"

"Miss Hayden, this is my butler, Sebastian Michaelis. And this is my maid, Mey-Rin Lijaun," he
introduces her to the instructor, "She's the reason why I wanted to speak with you in person. I want
you to accept her into your dancing class."

Miss Hayden looks up and down at Mey-Rin in a skeptical way, taking awhile in examining her,
before turning his attention to Ciel. "I don't allow just anyone to join the group, Lord Phantomhive."

Ciel nods in agreement. He takes out a small bag from inside his cape and offers it to the dance
instructor. "You could make an exception."

Miss Hayden takes the money and counts them. "She's pretty but can she dance?" she asks after
finishing counting the golden coins.

"She has a few issues with her feet but I think she can manage," Ciel admits.

A lot of thoughts are swimming in Mey-Rin's mind. What's going on? I'm not cut out for this. This
can't be happening.

"Let me have a look at them," the instructor says with her arms crossed.

Mey-Rin closes her eyes and sighs. She knew the instructor would ask her this and she certainly
doesn't want to remove her boots in front if the other dancers. However, after meeting the master's
certainly sterne stare, she knew she had to take them off.

She removes her boots, revealing her deformed feet. Many of the dancers gasp at the sight. The
instructor covers her hand over her mouth in shock before telling the dancers to take twenty minutes.
Miss Hayden asks how did her feet become like that.

"It's best to let her keep her life private," he says. At least Mey-Rin is able to give her that. She
doesn't feel comfortable about telling strangers of her private life.

"Can you stand on your toes?" she asks.

Mey-Rin nods and stands on the tip of her feet. They hurt but she's been through worst pain before.
"She needs to come here twice a week," the instructor says to Ciel, "She'll be practicing the basics first. We'll see how she does on the first week. If she does well, she can continue in my class. Can we agree on that?"

Ciel smirks in amusement. "You'll be surprised what a fast learner she is."

"I don't have a uniform for her though. They won't fit as she's too small," she says, "Go and see Nina Hopkins. She's backstage preparing the uniforms for Swan Lake. She'll help you out."

Mey-Rin, Ciel and Sebastian head backstage where the designer with brown ponytail and glasses is standing in front of a mannequin dressed in a black feathered ballet dress that sparkled beautifully.

The moment Nina turns around to see Ciel and Mey-Rin, she smiles. However, she gives a sour look when she sees Sebastian. Mey-Rin knew she would make that face. The last time she saw Nina, Sebastian made a distasteful comment on her designs and way of dressing and she didn't take it too well. She basically slapped him across the face.

However, she returns to smile at Ciel, pretending as if the situation never happened. "Ciel, I didn't expect to see you here. How can I help you?"

"I was hoping you can make a ballet uniform for Mey-Rin," he says.

Nina frowns. "She's going to join Miss Natasha's dancing group?"

"Apparently, yes," Mey-Rin answers.

Nina sighs and puts the needle and thread down. "And just when I was almost finish...Well, I don't see why I can't make another one" She gestures Mey-Rin to come closer. "Step right in dear."

Mey-Rin nods nervously as she takes a step forward towards Nina. She is aware of what will happen next. Nina is not one to keep her hands to herself. She knows this from the many times Nina grabbed her ass and cupped her breast while taking her measurements for her maid uniform. It was humiliating.

"You have always been my favourite client," she says, "Now, I can take your measurements properly while dressed in layers of clothing. I'm going to need you to remove the coat and the dress you're wearing."

"We'll just wait outside," Ciel says.

However, Nina stops them before he and Sebastian can exit the backstage. "Oh no, Ciel, you and Sebastian can stay."

The three of them have their eyes wide. "What?"

"Mey-Rin has a beautiful body and she's like any other human being so there's no shame in seeing a naked body," Nina says.

"I don't feel comfortable at the idea of having the young master watching me undress," Mey-Rin says.

Nina scoffs at the statement. "Nonsense. Come now. I don't have all day."

Mey-Rin hesitates, finding undressing in front of Sebastian and the young master inappropriate and uncomfortable. However, she gives in. Luckily she has her back turned to them.
She removes her coat and gloves and sets it on a stool. She unbuttons her white blouse and slips them off, now only standing in her corset and skirt. The chilly air is making her skin have goosebumps.

"Mey-Rin, you have to remove the corset as well," Nina says while taking out the brown measuring tape.

Ciel's face turns into a rosy pink colour as he watches Mey-Rin's hands untie the strings on the back of her corset. The infernal contraption splits opens, revealing her pale back. His face turns red as she sets the corset down on the stool along with her coat and blouse but that's not the reason why he's blushing. There's a golden-framed mirror hanging against the wall far ahead. In the mirror, he can see Mey-Rin's front side. He can see her breasts on the mirror's reflection.

Nina puts the measuring tape around her waist. "For a maid, you're very fit." She puts her hands under her skirt and squeezes her ass, making Mey-Rin nearly squeal. "Most men appreciate a full figure."

His eyes widen and looks away. However, he glances at the mirror every now and then, his face turning redder and redder.

He covers his mouth to hide his gasp as he feels a tightness in his short trousers. Pluto seems to notice as he starts sniffing him there. Ciel puts Pluto down on the floor and covers his cloak over the tight bulge beneath his trouser. He quickly scurries away to hide in the shadows so no one could see the bulge.

Not knowing what to do about it, he starts hitting it lightly hoping that it will go away but it doesn't work. It only stings. "Damn it," he mutters in frustration.

"Is there something wrong young master?" Ciel jumps and turns around at the sound of Sebastian's voice. He abruptly turns around to face him.

"I..." He pauses for a moment to look around to make sure no one is listening. "Something is wrong in my pants," he whispers irritably to the butler, "My cock is standing up for some reason and it won't go down."

Sebastian nearly bursts laughing but immediately covers his hand over his mouth. Ciel's cheeks turn red in embarrassment and anger.

"Don't laugh," he growls as Sebastian continues laughing to himself, "It's not funny, you bastard."

Sebastian stops laughing to take a deep breath. "I'm guessing it happened when you saw Mey-Rin's bosom through the mirror."

The comment makes him growl. He saw as well. "You ass. You knew and you didn't warn me."

"I didn't think you'd be looking."

"And why did you look?"

"I've already seen a woman's body before, my lord. They're no stranger to me. However, you're new to the sight which may be the cause for the hard problem in your trousers. Your body must have reacted to it. I'm surprised, considering that you never reacted this way with Lady Elizabeth."

"Shut up," he hisses. The way he speaks of Lizzie makes his stomach turn. "Tell me how to get rid of this. Right now."
"All right, all right. Calm down, my lord. There's no need to get upset. Come here, I'll tell you how to get rid of the problem."

Ciel asked Nina where the washroom was, excusing himself from backstage. He leaves his gloves with Sebastian after being told it was necessary. Otherwise, he'll end up soiling them. He enters the midden closet where the stench of feces is overwhelming but has nowhere else to go. He pulls down his trousers to his ankles and looks down at his small length. Sebastian instructed him what to do but is still wary about it. Will it hurt? What if it doesn't go away?

He takes a deep breath and gets on with it.

Ciel presses his head against the wall, hissing and huffing as he continues to touch himself. He never thought it would burn this much. Sebastian warned him about it but also told him not to stop until his length falls limp once he finishes emptying himself. Despite it burning, it does feel pleasant.

After a few minutes of touching himself, he gasps at the rush of his release leaving him and falling into the hole below him. His body trembles and he shudders shaky breaths. This will be the last time he will look at a woman's breasts.

However, after putting much into it, he did admire how beautiful Mey-Rin is. He never noticed because he was solely focused on capturing Jack the Ripper. But now that it's over, he has taken his time to actually see Mey-Rin loyalty and dedication, not just her beauty. She may be older than him but it doesn't stop him from thinking of her and the reflection of her body in the mirror.

When he looks down at his length, he sees it rising up again. "Are you fucking kidding me?"

Once he is finally done, he steps out of the midden closet, he sees Sebastian still chuckling. Growling in annoyance, Ciel gives him the middle finger and tells him to fuck off.

"Wait, wait for me!" A young woman with a Russian accent yells as she chases after the train that's heading for London. She runs as fast as she can, trying to catch up to it while keeping her hat from flying away.

She throws the suitcase into the closest cart and jumps, grabbing the handlebar and swinging herself onto the train before it left the depot.

She pants heavily after finally getting onto the train and stands upright. She takes off her hat, revealing a beautiful woman with white blonde hair and golden eyes, and leans back against the wall in exhaustion. Oh thank God I made it.

Grell tries to eat her food but finds the mushed green beans and grey meat disgusting. She freezes in her seat and her heart skips a beat when she sees two shinigamis coming right towards him. However, her heart becomes at ease when the shinigamis walk past her. Instead, they grab one of the shinigamis next to her. A bald-headed fellow with a five o’clock shadow. The fellow tries to get away but one of the shinigamis punches him in the gut, knocking the wind out of him while the other grabs the fellow by the arm.

Grell does nothing to stop them. She doesn't even look at the poor fellow as he's being dragged out of the lunchroom by the two shinigamis kicking and screaming. She gulps nervously, knowing exactly where he's being taken but says nothing. Poor man. She hopes she doesn't end up like him.

"Where is he being taken?" one of the shinigamis sitting across her asks. A young boy, probably fourteen, with brown hair and freckles. Grell will never ask why he was placed in solitary
"If you behave, perhaps you'll never find out," she says.

Mey-Rin opens her eyes after hearing a knock on the door. She hasn't had any nightmares for the moment but hasn't had any dreams either. None at all.

She sits up from her bed, her red hair falling over her shoulders. She puts her shawl around herself before getting out of bed completely. When she opens the door, she sees the young master standing there outside her bedroom with Pluto in his arms. He looks very tired but also very sad.

"Is everything all right, master?" she asks.

"I wonder if I could sleep in your room tonight," he says, "I...I don't want to be alone right now."

She nods. "Of course."

She lets him into her bedroom. He sets Pluto down on the floor and walks over to her bed, getting under the sheets. Pluto jumps up into the bed like a kangaroo and curls up near the foot-board.

Mey-Rin shuts the door and locks it before getting into bed herself. Ciel curls up into a ball. She can see that he looks nervous being in the same bed with her.

"Is everything all right, my lord?"

"It's nothing. I'm fine," he lies. There's no way of pulling the truth out of him.

"All right then," she nods, "Have a goodnight, my lord."

"Why are still here?" he suddenly asks. Mey-Rin turns around to look at him in surprise. "After everything you saw. After everything I made you go through, you still remain by my side. I expected you to pack up and leave London. But you're still here. Why?"

She frowns at the question. "Why would I leave you? After everything you did for me, for Baldroy and for Finnian. You gave us a home. You gave us a family? How can you think I'd throw it all away because I'm scared of Sebastian?"

She never denied being afraid of Sebastian. She never tried to hide her fear of him. But she was more afraid what he would do to Ciel, rather than what he would do to her.

"I've already had people abandon me," Ciel says. "My parents. My brother. My own aunt. They've all abandoned me. I thought you might abandon me as well."

"Your parents didn't abandon you. They were taken away," she says, "I understand why you made a deal with Sebastian. I see it now." She holds his hand gently.

To her surprise, Ciel suddenly leans forward and presses his lips against hers.

She nearly gasps but doesn't separate herself from him. Why is he kissing her?

She expects for him to depart first. Instead, he threads his hand through her hair and continues to kiss her as he straddles on top of her with hands cupping either side of her face. Surprisingly, she finds herself kissing him back. They are not rough or forceful. They are soft kisses, as if it were Ciel's first time kissing a girl. His first inexperienced kiss.
She doesn't even notice his hands untying the frontal strings of her nightgown until she feels cold skin touch her right breast. She slides her hands up his arms to his shoulders. That's when he abruptly sits up, immediately breaking the kiss.

Ciel stares at Mey-Rin in complete shock and she stares back the same way. Did she do something wrong? Did he know what he was doing? By the look on his face, it seems he was acting on impulse. An urge. A sudden desire to kiss someone, knowing that one will never get the chance. Ciel knows that he could die, either by a criminal's hand or Sebastian's, so this is his only chance to experience something he might never experience in the future.

"Sorry, my lord," she apologizes to him as if it were her fault.

"No, I'm sorry. I shouldn't..." he says, still in shock. His cheeks are in a faint shade of pink. He immediately turns his back to her and wraps the sheets tightly around himself. "Goodnight, Mey-Rin."

She raises her hand to touch his shoulder but hesitates and lies back in bed instead. "Good night, my lord."

In the middle of the night as Ciel remains sleeping, Mey-Rin slowly opens her eyes at a strange sound coming outside Phantomhive Manor. She slowly sits up and carefully slips out of bed. Pluto wakes up and stares at her with the tilt of his head. Mey-Rin puts a finger over her lips, telling him to stay quiet. She takes out her rifle from under her bed and walks out of her room, quietly closing the door so she wouldn't disturb his slumber.

"Brandel wants us to make it quiet," a man says while sitting on a tree, aiming a sniper rifle at the window of Ciel Phantomhive's bedchamber. "The servants don't need to know that they're master is going to die."

The man in the tree falls to the ground all of the sudden with a bloody hole on his forehead. The other two gasp at the sight of their fallen commerade and they look around for any signs of the shooter. The second mercenary gets shot in the neck. The third one runs for the woods but only makes it twenty feet before getting shot dead on the back of the head.

On the rooftop, Mey-Rin smirks after shooting the three men that attempted against the young master's life. *This is my home too.*

**End of Part 1**
My Fancasting - With Pictures

Chapter Summary

My idea of who should play our BB characters. This is just my opinion by the way. This will also include a few OC characters. However, there are so many characters in BB that it's going to be difficult to fit them all in one page so I'll post more in other pages. I hope you enjoy.

Lin Yun as Mey-Rin Lijuan
Noah Schnapp as Ciel Phantomhive
Ben Barnes as Sebastian Michaelis
Eddie Redmayne as Grell Sutcliff
William Moseley as Baldroy Gibbons
Tom Holland as Finnian Bournemann
Togo Igawa as Tanaka Shino
Jessica Chastain as Angelina Dalles/Madam Red
Henry Cavill as William T. Spears
Jack Gleeson as Alois Trancy
Henry Golding as Lau
Lin Yun as Ran-Mao
Ian Somerhalder as Claude Faustus
Lesley Ann-Brandt as Hannah Annafellows
Jamie Campbell Bower as Aleistor Chamber/Viscount Drutt
Elle Fanning as Elizabeth Midford/Lizzie
Sidharth Malhotra as Agni
Melissa Benoist as Catherine Makarova

Priyanka Chopra as Meena
Lena Headey as Francis Midford
Georgie Henley as Annabelle Swann/Doll/Freckles

Melanie Liburd (Don't know if I made the right choice. I just loved her in Dark Matter) as Amelia Kindred/Mally/Beast
Jerome Flynn as Klaus
Armin Rohde as Diederich

Kate Winslet as Nina Hopkins
Cameron Monaghan as Pitt
Pierfrancesco Favino as Lord Damian
Tom Hiddleston as Vincent Phantomhive
Keira Knightley as Rachel Phantomhive
???? as Undertaker

Hugh Dancy as Frederick Abberline

Timothy Dalton as Arthur Randall
Skandar Keynes as Tom Brown

Caleb Landry Jones as James Norrington
This is going to be a little short before going back to the actual story. This chapter is pointless. I simply wanted to write it. Lol

Three Months Later...

Visiting his family's graves is something he never enjoyed doing. It's eerie and makes him want to cry every time he enters the cemetery. The clouds turn grey and snow starts to fall from the sky softly. He hates looking at their pictures that were framed in golden lockets and planted on the tombstones. Pictures that were cut out from the family photograph and placed separately. Those smiles. How they were once happy before that dreadful day. His father's smile is almost like Sebastian's but they do not hold evil intent like that demon. His mother's smile is sweet and warm. And his brother's smile was joyful and full of energy. However, Madam Red's smile was fake. Her eyes showed sadness being that fake smile. She was always sad even before the death of Uncle John. If only he saw the sadness sooner. Maybe he could have helped her and perhaps stop her from committing murderer that eventually led to her death.

"When burying my parents, there were no bodies for you to put in a coffin, were there?" he asks as he looks up at Undertaker who is now standing beside him.

Undertaker shakes his head. "No. Just ashes. Your brother's body couldn't be found either."

Ciel doesn't say anything as he puts the spider lilies on Madam Red's grave. Of course they will never find his brother's body, because his body burned to ashes somewhere else. He burned away with the rest of the people that killed him.

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

"Doubt you would have done it anyways."

"You were one of my father's closest friends," Ciel says, "You visited the Phantomhive Manor more than anyone else. How did you feel when you had to bury him? I hear you didn't even attend at their funeral..."

He feels Undertaker grab his arm like he did before when visiting Mary Kelly's grave but less tight. He gets turned around to face Undertaker. He looks at him with his eye wide in shock.

After a few moments, Undertaker lets go of his arm and smiles at him, grinning from ear to ear. "As much as I would love to give you details of my personal life, earl, that's none of your business."

"It is, if it involves my family," he says.

Undertaker remains silent for a moment. "...I'll see you soon, earl." He says in his usual cheery voice. However, Ciel notices something broken in that voice. Undertaker then goes back to his duties, holding a dirty shovel over his shoulder and a bouquet of lilacs in his other hand.

Ciel returns to the carriage where Sebastian is waiting. He rubs his arm from the strong hold Undertaker had on him. It made him shudder in fear. He knows better than to provoke the Undertaker. The man's reaction is unpredictable.

He sits in the carriage and Sebastian drives him home. A small tear fall from his eye and runs down
his cheek.
3 years ago...

"Mother! Father!" Ciel cries out as he runs throughout the mansion looking for his parents and his brother. But they are nowhere to be found. Someone has broken into their home and is killing all of the servants. He even found their dog dead. "Mother! Father!"

He enters the study where they would usually be. He sees his father standing in front of his mother as he is shot in the head. Ciel's eyes widen as he sees his father's body drop to the floor. He finally screams when he sees his mother get shot as well.

The killer aims his gun at the boy but Ciel immediately runs as the trigger is pulled.

Now...

Winter has always been a grey season for England, enveloped in thick sheets of snows. After the events of Jack the Ripper, London returned to its peaceful state...for the moment.

A crowd of people gather around a scene where Scotland Yard are cutting down dead bodies of British citizens that have been stripped from their clothing and hung upside down outside of Hindustani Coffee House in Portman Square. All of them are tied and have bloody wounds on the heads. Death by a blow to the head. How savage.

"Damn it, this is the 20th one now," curses Commissioner Arthur Randall of Scotland Yard as he watches the men being placed on a cart by the Undertaker. He looks over at Abberline who returned from his search for the killer. "Have you not apprehended the killer, Abberline?"

"We've searched everywhere," he says, "Unfortunately, we found no signs of the attacker. Sorry."

"Damn it," Commissioner Randall says, "First our glory of catching Jack the Ripper was stolen from us by that Phantomhive brat and now this."

"Sorry to be such a brat then."

Ciel is standing right behind him with his butler Sebastian and a rather large wolf-like dog with white fur and blood red eyes. Ciel frowns at the commissioner and the detective.

"Wait a second, how did you get past the guards?" Detective Abberline asks but Commissioner Randall immediately brushes it off.

"Leave it be, Abberline," he says, "What are you doing here, Lord Phantomhive?"

Ciel smirks in amusement. The dog sits next to the queen's guard dog and Ciel pets its head. "Isn't it obvious? I'm here to clean up the mess made by an old pathetic hunting dog." He snatches the clipboard from Detective Abberline's hands despite the man's protests. He reads the report out loud. "A crime targeted only at people who have returned from India to England. Two dead and four injured."

Commissioner Randall snatches the clipboard back. "You can't just come here and think you can take over our case."
Ciel arches his eyebrow at the commissioner. "I can't?" He reaches into his cape and takes out an envelope. He shows it to the commissioner. The letter has the queen's seal on it. "If it was just a highwayman, I wouldn't be here right now. So, I'm sorry to disappoint you but I can take over your case if the queen is not pleased with your progress." He snatches the clipboard again from the commissioner and continues to read. "The criminals are described as chosen children of sloth and depravity which is quite accurate. I agree that England would be better off without India's wealthy upstarts. But perhaps India will be better off without us demanding so much from them."

"The British Empires Dominion of India," Sebastian says as he writes down the information. "At the present time, a lot of British settlers were living in Britain's Indian Colonies. The 3rd or 4rth child from upper class families who can't afford luxury in England live in India like aristocrats."

"Those who return from India are called Anglo Indians and those who don't leave the lazy lifestyle they developed in the luxury of India are called Indian Upstarts," Ciel says.

"They are cowards who were too busy with extravagance and indulged themselves in worthless past times," the commissioner remarks harshly, "Most of them are upper class people in this so-called Great Britain."

"Upper Class? How worthless? My maid would disagree with you if she were here," he says and his eye squints at the letter with a tongue marked on the bottom. "What is this mark?"

"He's making a fool out of us!" Commissioner Randall shouts angrily, making Ciel's eye widen in surprise. Well then. "Us British folks and the queen! Targeting those who return from Indian means that the criminal can't be anyone other than a vulgar Indian barbarian!"

The wolf-like dog lunges forward and growls at Randall angrily. Ciel immediately yanks at the leash in his hand and pulls him back. "Easy, Pluto."

"Randall, please calm down," Detective Abberline begs him. His temper has become thin. The detective is afraid he might strike the boy or that the dog might bite him. It's possible the dog might bite Randall before he can even try to strike the earl.

"So that's the reason I've been called here?" Ciel says. He clicks his tongue in disappointment. "A majority of smuggling Indians have a stronghold in East End. I can see even city yards don't know what to do with a dark street like East End. How difficult can it be for you to identify the route and exact number of smugglers?"

Commissioner Randall growls in irritation. However, he doesn't snap at the boy again because of the dog.

Ciel looks at Sebastian. "Do you have everything I need?"

Sebastian nods. "We still need the letter."

Commissioner Randall refuses to give the letter to the young boy. "The letter is Scotland Yard property," he says.

"Very well. This will have to do then," Ciel says. He looks over to where Undertaker is loading the two dead bodies of the noblemen onto his cart. He turns his gaze away when Undertaker turns to look at him. "Come, Sebastian. I wish to go home now."

Sebastian bows. "Yes, my lord."

"Come along, Pluto," Ciel tugs the wolf-like dog away from the crime scene.
As the detective and the commissioner leave the scene, a local boy comes running out of the shadows and snatches the letter from the clipboard before disappearing into another alleyway.

"Hey, you come back here with that letter!"

Randall and Abberline chase after the local boy who stole the letter down the alley. The boy slips on thin sheet of ice but quickly gets up and continues running. Randall and Abberline almost catch up to the boy when he jumps over the fence ahead and disappears completely.

Ciel and Sebastian walk further away from the crime scene. Out of the corner of Ciel's eye, he sees a local boy running up to him with the letter he clearly stole from Commissioner Randall. Pluto barks and wags his tail happily when seeing the boy. He gives the letter to Ciel.

"Here you go, master," he says and removes the pageboy hat, revealing to actually be Mey-Rin disguised as a boy. Pluto jumps at Mey-Rin's lap and starts licking her face. He giggles as a response. He's already big enough to jump up on his hind legs and reach her head. It's only been a month since he was brought to the Phantomhive Manor and now he's almost as big as Ciel. "Hello, Pluto."

"Good work, Mey-Rin," Ciel says. "You're lucky Sir Randall didn't catch you."

"He almost caught me. I slipped on thin ice," she confesses, "I had to jump over a fence just to get away from him."

"Good," he says. "It wouldn't be convenient for any of us if you get arrested for stealing a letter."

"I guessing you wouldn't pay for my release," she says.

He smirks teasingly. "Of course not." Mey-Rin tries not to laugh as a response.

"What does the letter say, my lord?" Sebastian asks.

Ciel returns his attention to the letter. "Watch this, you wild, pathetic chosen children of sloth and depravity. England is the motherland of the devil. It steals everything and forces its worthless, rotten and decadent culture on you instead. To all bitch-dominated idiots of this land, you are the ones that deserve the vengeance of Heaven. Now the Day has come. The tongue drawn on the bottom obviously symbolizes mockery, just like Randall said."

"That's sort of cruel, attacking and hanging those men like that," Mey-Rin says. Ciel scoffs at the comment. She still remains naive even after the incident with Jack the Ripper. She still has a lot to learn. He can't expect anything else from someone with a soft heart. "You don't think it was an Indian who did this, do you?" she asks, "Sir Randall's comment was out of place. I don't like him much, to be honest."

"Indeed. However, there's only one way to find out whether it was an Indian or not," he says.

"We'll have to interrogate the inhabitants of the East End. Am I correct, young master?" Sebastian asks.

"Indeed," Ciel says, "but first, I want some tea and a hot bath. I'm tired. We shall be staying at the townhouse for the time-being. At least until we catch whoever is committing these crimes."

"Yes, master," Sebastian says, bowing his head.
Mey-Rin walks up closer to Ciel and whispers in his ear. "Was making me dress as a boy really necessary?"

The first time Ciel obligated Mey-Rin to dress as a boy, she protested. She felt uncomfortable wearing trousers and wandering the city without a corset on and still does; she used gauze to flatten her breasts instead. She also had to pin her hair up and hide it under the pageboy hat. She feels naked and exposed without proper lady's clothing.

"Listen, if I had to suffer wearing a dress, then you're going to have to suffer as well."

Lizzie arrives at Phantomhive Manor to visit Ciel and steps out of the carriage. He's probably busy but her mother insisted for her to go, stating that her company might make him feel better. She dresses up pretty as always, wearing a pink coat and a straw bonnet with a pink rose on it.

The moment she steps out of the carriage, a gust of wind suddenly sends her bonnet flying, her blonde hair being released from the bun. She gasps and runs after it. Her mother has told her to never run as it is inappropriate for a lady to do so but Nina will never forgive if she loses the bonnet she made for her.

The bonnet is caught by Finnian who jumps up and grabs the brim in mid-air. Lizzie sighs of relief. Finnian walks to her with the bonnet, his other hand dragging a large fir tree behind him. For a young boy his age, he's surprisingly strong. He's three years older than Ciel but still...

Finnian gives her back the bonnet and smiles warmly. "Here you go, Lady Elizabeth."

She smiles in return. "Thank you so much. It's Mr. Bournemann, right?"

He nods in agreement. "Everyone calls me Finnian or Finny. If you're looking for the young master, he's not here. He's in London with Sebastian."

"Oh. I did not know."

"Would you like to come inside anyways? It's quite cold out here. I don't know how to make tea but I can always ask Tanaka."

Lizzie sighs in disappointment. She didn't want to go home so early to her mother. She'll be displeased.

"Thank you but I don't think my mother would be happy with me wasting my time in Phantomhive Manor if Ciel's not here," she says as she turns to leave.

"Um, Lady Elizabeth?" Lizzie turns around to look at Finnian, wondering what he's going to tell her. She can see the pink blush on his cheek and his eyes looking down in embarrassment. "You...look very lovely today."

Lizzie looks at him for a moment before smiling. "Thank you." She then returns to her carriage with her maid Paula. She knows that her mother will be displeased with Ciel's absence. She'll have to make some sort of excuse. Yet for some reason, she can't help but smile. It's the first time she had someone tell her how lovely she looks. How pretty she is. And to be honest, she never thought she would hear it from the gardener.

The Scotland Yard police gathered around a private room to have Commissioner Arthur Randall discuss about the highwayman assaulting noble Englishmen that migrated to India for some time.
Abberline finds it a little inconsiderate that Randall still believes that the highway was an Indian, mainly because they were hung in front of an Indian's coffee shop. He knows there's a lot more to it. But Randall believes the Indians to be barbaric. He also believes that Mey-Rin Lijaun could have been the one who murdered the Italian man Lord Damiano of the Poseidon Company. When Abberline asked why he suspected this, Randall replied stating "You can never trust a China girl, Abberline. That's much I know."

Now, the term China Girl (since Mey-Rin Lijaun is Chinese) doesn't really bother Abberline much. What does bother him is the way Randall said it, as if she weren't a person which is quite cruel. Despite having the right motive to kill Lord Damiano, Abberline doesn't think the girl capable of doing actual harm. She looks quite young (she says she's nineteen but looks sixteen) and inexperienced. Besides, she was the one who found the body. There was no blood on her hands or uniform. Only bruises on her neck that showed Lord Damiano tried to strangle the poor thing. However, Randall doesn't exactly see shades of grey. Only black or white.

Randal displays the picture of one of the noblemen that died in the hospital due to injuries in the head. A nobleman named Brendon Price. He got multiple blows to the head, according to the Undertaker, and the inside of his skull filled up with blood, asphyxiating the brain.

"All right, men," Commissioner Randall says to the rest of Scotland Yard. Undertaker is sitting in a corner with his back leaned against the wall and taking a bite out of a bone-shaped biscuit. He's simply waiting for Scotland Yard to return the body so he can get it ready for the funeral. But it seems that he enjoys listening to the gruesome details "We all know that the victims are nobles returning from India. We need to catch this bastard and hang him for his crimes. Now, we don't have any leads but we suspect that the man who's committing these crimes could be an Indian."

"Are we sure it was an India, Randall?" Detective Abberline questions, still opposing to the idea of the highwayman being Indian. "There could be other possibilities. Simply because the men were found hanging."

"You should listen to your partner, commissioner," the voice of a woman says, "At least he's using his brains instead of pure adrenaline like the rest of you."

Everyone in Scotland Yard turns around to see a woman standing outside the room. A woman with curly blonde hair and wearing black leather trousers and a trench coat of burgundy velvet with black cuffs on the sleeves and silver buttons. Abberline's eyes grow slightly wide. The attire is not appropriate in public company, especially the company of men. She is not wearing a skirt. But what impacts Abberline the most is the way she spoke. Her accent is Russian. Could it be...? No, it can't be.

"Who the hell are you and how did you get in here?"

The woman walks into the room with her hands in her coat's pockets.

"I received authorization to be here," she says as she walks in, "You have no leads yet you assume that the thug is Indian. You also assume it's a man. Have you ever thought that it could be Englishman, or an Englishwoman. And if it were an Indian, does it have to be a man? Or was it an Englishman blaming an Indian? There's so many possibilities. And why must you resolve everything with hanging? It's so primitive. Are you all British single-minded or is it just you, commissioner?"

"Listen, girl," one of the police say, "I don't know what sort of game you think this is but you have no right to speak to the commissioner of Scotland Yard like that -."

"Actually, I can," she takes out a letter with the queen's official seal stamped on it. It has the stamp of
the Imperial Arms of House of Romanov, Russia's coat of arms. "I'm Catherine Makarovna from the Moscow City Police. Your department wrote to the Russian Empire, asking for the police force's aid to solve the case of Jack the Ripper. Since Jack the Ripper is now gone, you wrote again stating that our services were no longer required. Of course, the head of the Moscow City Police was not very pleased with your letter. He thought you were wasting his time. So he ignored your letter and sent me here to London instead, to help investigate these strange attacks on British noble returning from India."

"And you work for them?" Abberline asks.

"Let me correct myself. I am Lieutenant Catherine Makarovna. I'm sure you're familiar with my father Chief Makarovna."

The police of Scotland Yard continue to mutter with one another. Undertaker is snickering in the corner while Randall simply glares. Abberline stares in amazement. Not only is she a lieutenant of Moscow City Police but the chief's daughter.

"What are you doing here in London?"

"Isn't it obvious? I'm here to clean up the mess you Scotland Yard can't seem to clean yourselves," she says, "The queen sees you as incompetent now and feels that you can no longer handle the case yourselves, especially you, Commissioner Arthur Randall. Apparently, you have a record of immoral conduct such as discrimination towards people of different colour and prejudice against the lower and middle class. Not to mention a few innocent lives were taken because of false accusation and lack of evidence." She points at the picture of the man's cranium. "That man suffered twelve blows to the head. Not ten. There are two more between wounds 7 and 8."

"We can handle this ourselves, thank you very much," Randall protests, "There's no need for Russia to get involved."

"You do realize that if you deny the aid of the Moscow City Police, I will have to report to Queen Victoria and we both know she will not be happy with you, commissioner," she says.

"I don't care. This is my case and will not have it taken from me by no one. Not a child, or a woman!" Randall shouts, "So forgive my rudeness, Lieutenant Makarovna, but I will have to ask you to exit the station."

Abberline watches the woman's jaw clench. She then smiles and turns to leave the station. Everyone else in the station remains quiet as Randall continues to discuss about the highwayman. Abberline blames himself for this. He was the one who wrote the letter to Moscow City Police without Commissioner Randall's consent in the first place. He knows he needs to fix this soon before it gets him and Scotland Yard into even more trouble.

"Lieutenant Makarovna!" he shouts after her. When he finally catches up to her, he crouches down to gasp for air.

Lieutenant Makarovna looks at Abberline strangely. "Yes? And you are...?"

Once Abberline catches breath, he finally gets to speak. "Detective Frederick Abberline. I work with Commissioner Randall."

"He's not a very welcoming man, now is he?"

"No, he's not. I really am sorry for him treating you that way but please understand that this case -."
"I don't like people making excuses, detective," she interrupts him, "Nor do I like lies. I know a discriminator when I see one."

Abberline says. The truth cannot be hidden. But there's no need for the queen to be involved. "Please don't tell the queen, lieutenant. I have a wife and she's having a baby. If I lose my job, I don't know what I'll do."

"It's out of my hands. The commissioner should have thought of it before writing us in the first place."

"I was the one who wrote you, not him," he confesses.

The lieutenant's eyes widen in shock. "...What?"

"I know. It was stupid. But the Jack the Ripper case was getting out of hand. There were too many dead prostitutes on the streets. Scotland Yard barely did anything to stop it from happening."

"And you wrote back refusing our help? Are you that much of an idiot, detective?" she says, "Do you realize you were wasting the city police's time?"

"I really am sorry for wasting your time. I really am. I shouldn't have written that letter in the first place," he says and Lieutenant Makarovna frowns at him. That came out wrong. "But you're here now. You can help us catch the highwayman, even if Randall doesn't want to."

"Well, as you saw," she says, "Commissioner Randall is not interested in a Russian's help in solving their case."

"No," he says, "But I know who might be."

She folds her arms over her chest. "I'm listening."

"Have you ever met Earl Ciel Phantomhive?" he asks.

"The queen's guard dog? I've heard of him before from the Romanov family but never seen him before," she says.

Abberline takes out his notepad and pen, and writes her an address. "His townhouse is not far from here. You give him your name and tell him I sent you."

"Why should I tell him you sent me?" she asks sternly. She's stubborn, he noticed.

"Trust me, Lord Phantomhive is not very fond of surprise visits," he warns, knowing from experience, "But if anyone can help you, he can."

"Well, thank you," she says, "I will take consideration on not telling the queen. Just make sure the commissioner doesn't get in my way. Have a good day, Detective Abberline." She then walks away.

Abberline decides to head home to his wife after the meeting was over. It's getting late. She probably has dinner waiting by now.

However, he stops by an alleyway the moment his eye caught something familiar. He turns back. One of the homeless has a dirty shawl wrapped around him to keep him warm from the cold winter. Not just any shawl. The shawl has blue birds embroidered on it.

He walks over to the homeless man and asks him where he found that shawl. The man found it in an
alley near Whitechapel. It was lying in a puddle.

"I'm offering you a hundred pounds for it," Abberline offers, taking out a small brown bag from his trench coat, "This might be enough for bread and a place for you to stay to keep warm."

The man accepts Abberline's offer and gives him the shawl in exchange for the money. The man walks away with the money and Abberline continuing his way home with the shawl he gave to Mary Kelly as a present with the question of whether telling his wife the truth or not lingering in his head.

Undertaker is closing up shop when he hears the door open. He sighs. *Just when I was about to go to bed.* When he turns around, he sees the old bag of Margaret Norrington walking into his shop. Another family member of hers has died. If the black dress and veil over her face wasn't so obvious enough. Why is he not surprised? *These Norringtons are dropping like flies.*

"Hello there, Mrs. Norrington, it's a pleasant to see you again," Undertaker snickers in amusement at seeing the old bitter woman walk into his shop yet again. "I have not seen you since your husband's funeral. Tell, is there another family member of yours I need to bury soon."

"Yes," she nods, looking at the mortician with those bitter grey eyes of hers. He will take great pleasure in making her coffin when she dies. "My son, Andrew. He was exposed to the cold weather a few days ago and died of a fever yesterday."

"I see," he says, "I'm sorry to hear that. But people live and die every day so forgive me if I'm not sensible enough to shed a tear."

"I don't expect anything else from an undertaker," she says bitterly before giving him a bag of coins as payment for the funerals. Undertaker doesn't usually accepts the queen's coins as payment but he does need the money to buy more wood to make coffins and they're not exactly cheap. So he accepts the money.

Aside from the Phantomhives and the Midfords, the Norringtons have always been one of his most prominent customers. They're a large family of noble folks. Undertaker has buried Margaret Norrington's mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Last year, he buried her husband Frederick Norrington, a fat old man with a grey mustache. None of the Norringtons have been known to shed tears at funeral. As far as he knows, none of the family members practically like each other very much. Luckily Tom wasn't hired that year or he would have messed it up as well. He wonders whether to allow Tom help him with the Norringtons or not, seeing that he has already done plenty of damage. The Norringtons are very good clients of his and he will not have it ruined by an incompetent apprentice.

"Tell the gentlemen to bring the body out back," he says.

"Very well."

"Mother, Marc and I are freezing outside," a young man walks into the parlour. A handsome young man in his twenties with dark shoulder-length hair and dark eyes.

Undertaker's grin falls when he sees who it is. The young man he met (and fucked) at the pub three months ago after the Ripper case. The young man who calls himself *James.*

"If you can't stand one minute in the cold, you shouldn't have come at all," Margaret says sternly, "Mr. Undertaker, this is my youngest son, James Norrington. He just got back from his trip in India three months ago."
The moment James turns his attention to the mortician, his eyes widen in surprise. Both of them are thinking the same thing. *Ah shite.*

At eleven o’clock, Mey-Rin prepares chamomile tea for the young master to help him sleep more soundly. She has noticed how he hasn’t been sleeping well these days. She noticed the bags under his eye and his face becoming paler than usual. She worries for his health. *This will make him feel better.*

As she heads upstairs, she is immediately startled by Sebastian standing in front of her all of the sudden. "What are you doing?" he asks.

"I, um, bringing tea to the young master," she says nervously.

Sebastian sniffs at the tea in the pot and frowns. "Chamomile?"

"I thought this might help him sleep."

"I'll take it up for you," he says as he takes the tray from her. "You finish cleaning the library."

There’s a knock on the front door all of the sudden, making her jump.

Sebastian sighs. "Who could be out there at this hour, especially with the weather like this." He looks at Mey-Rin sternly and gives her the tray back. "Look like you’ll be taking care of the master for the moment while I answer the door."

"Yes, sir." She then heads upstairs to deliver the tea to the young master.

Sebastian walks over to the front door to see who’s out there in the middle of the rain. When he opens the door, he’s surprised to find a lovely woman standing in the middle of the rain with her blonde hair matted around her neck and face and her burgundy coat completely drenched and a hood unsuccessfully covering her head from the rain.

The woman gives him a friendly yet awkward smile. "Hi. Are you Earl Ciel Phantomhive?...I'm Catherine. Catherine Makarovna."
Alliance

Chapter Summary

I accidentally mispelled Catherine's name. It's Makarova, not Makarovna. My mistake. I'll have it fixed soon. Sorry.

Again, here's the casting for these two characters (and yes, I am replacing the actor for James with another actor), and Elizabeth's maid Paula:

Melissa Benoist as Catherine Makarova

Caleb Landry Jones as James Norrington

Mia Goth as Paula Pennington
Elizabeth Midford arrives late at home at the Midford Estate. The Midfords own the largest estates in England with fourteen thousand acres of rural land and property. With more than 600 properties to care for, they take care of the management in farming, forestry, residential and commercial property interests and take a long-term view of good investment and building strong local relationships. The house is Elizabethan styled, one of the reasons why her mother gave her the name Elizabeth, with its semi-renaissance, many tall glass windows and green plants lining up the expensive stone bricks which are more durable than middle and lower class houses that use timber and wattle.

The carriage finally stops after making it around the circle fountain in the middle of the gravel path.

"Paula..." Elizabeth says to her maid, Paula Pennington, a small-faced and button-nosed maid with soft brown hair, brown eyes and rosy lips. "Yes, my lady?" Elizabeth always thinks of Paula as an older sister. She's practically Mey-Rin Lijaun's age. She can be insufferable at times but knows that Paula is only trying to look after her, like today when they left Phantomhive Manor and Elizabeth decided to spend the day at the Frost Fair. She got irritated with Paula when she insisted in going home. She wasn't doing it out of spite. She was doing it to make sure Elizabeth doesn't get in trouble with her mother.

"Please do not tell Mother we weren't at the manor today," she practically begs Paula.

Paula stares at Elizabeth, hesitant, before nodding in agreement. "Yes, my lady."

They quickly enter the manor as it starts raining hard. A cold wouldn't be good for anyone. Elizabeth removes her coat and sets it hanging on the hook next to the door.

"Elizabeth!" Her mother, Francis Midford, approaches her with a stern expression on her face and her arms folded over her chest, and her heels clapping against the white marble floor. "Where have you been?"

"I was at the Phantomhive Manor all day," she lies. She left after realizing Ciel wasn't there. But she couldn't let her mother know that. "We wouldn't stop talking. I didn't realize it was late. I'm sorry, Mother."

Francis then looks at Paula. "Is it true?"
Paula, Elizabeth's valet maid, stares at Francis for a moment before nodding. "Yes, it's true. She's been in the Phantomhive Manor all day."

Francis snatches the bonnet from Elizabeth's head, "Look at your bonnet. It looks like it's been crushed. What happened to it?"

"The wind blew my bonnet away. The gardener caught it for me," she explains. That part wasn't a lie. Finnian caught her hat in mid-air when it flew away.

"The gardener?"

"Finnian Bournemann." Her mother never remembers the names of people she doesn't care about. She told her that the Undertaker has a name but she doesn't recall because she never cared much for the funeral director.

"...Elizabeth, you haven't been messing around with another boy, have you?" Francis asks suddenly.

"No," she frowns. She doesn't understand why her mother would ask that.

"Elizabeth..."

"I swear, I haven't." She doesn't want her mother to think her as a whore who offers herself to every man who sees her. She knows herself better than that.

Francis sighs and takes the bonnet away. "You're late for your lessons again," she says, "I'll have Nina fix this tomorrow. Get upstairs and get dressed."

Elizabeth bows her head and sighs. "Yes, Mother."

She curtsies and follows Paula upstairs.

"And Elizabeth?"

She stops in the middle of the staircase and turns to look down at her mother. "Yes?"

"You better not be lying to me. You know I don't like it when you lie to me."

Elizabeth swallows the lump that's been stuck in her throat since she entered the house. "...I know. Kiss Father goodnight for me." She then continues upstairs to her room.

When he opens the door, he's surprised to find a lovely woman standing in the middle of the rain with her blonde hair matted around her neck and face and her burgundy coat completely drenched and a hood unsuccessfully covering her head from the rain.

The woman gives him a friendly yet awkward smile. "Hi. Are you Earl Ciel Phantomhive?...I'm Catherine. Catherine Makarova."

"I'm Sebastian Michaelis, his butler," he says.

"Oh. Sorry," she apologize, "Since I never really met the earl before, I don't know what he looks like. I assumed you were the earl. Then again, what sort of earl answers his own door?"

"Miss...Makarova, is it? To what do I owe such a late visit?"

"Well, I would have come earlier but I had to solve an issue with the manager at a hotel," she
explains, "I'm a lieutenant. I work for the Moscow City Police in Russia."

It's quite obvious that she's from Russia. Sebastian can tell from the accent. He still wants to know her purpose of arriving to the townhouse at late hours of the night. He won't just let anyone into the townhouse, even if that someone is a lieutenant from the Moscow City Police.

"Do you have any evidence of that, lieutenant?"

"I do, actually. My documents are in my coat pocket."

"Let me see them."

"Wouldn't it be easier if you let me in?" she practically pleads while shivering, "It's pouring quite badly and it's very cold."

Sebastian prefers not to since he doesn't know anything about this girl and she just appeared out of blood nowhere. Who is to say she won't pull a gun on him and the master the moment she walks into the townhouse. However, it would be rude to let this young girl outside in the middle of the rain and freeze to death. It is rather cold tonight. If she does happen to attack the master, Sebastian will give her the finest of the Phantomhive's hospitality.

"...Very well," he says and steps aside.

Lieutenant Makarova sighs in relief and steps inside the townhouse. Sebastian leads her to the parlour, his kitchen knife hidden in his sleeve ready to strike if she tries anything against the young master. He doesn't care if she is a woman. Anyone who tries to harm or kill the master will be eliminated in seconds.

"Oh, um, here." Sebastian turns around to face her. He watches her reach for the inside of her coat. His eyes almost turn red, expecting for her to pull out a gun or a knife. Instead, she pulls out a few papers, which Sebastian assumes are the documents she's referring to. He takes the documents from her hands and read them thoroughly. It's not easy to falsify documents but it's not impossible. Sebastian would know when a document is falsified, from the grammar to the stamps. However, upon reading the documents, he sees that they're not falsified. They're legitimate. But he can never be too careful.

"Lieutenant Catherine Makarova. Age 25. You were born in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia. You've worked for the Moscow City Police for five years, am I reading this correctly?"

Catherine nods. "Yes, that is correct."

"Well, Lieutenant Makarova," he gives back the documents to her, "What brings a Russian policewoman here to England?"

"The highwayman that attacked the Englishmen earlier," she explains, "The ones that recently returned from India."

"Oh so you're here for that case?"

"Indeed. I was in Scotland Yard earlier but let's just say that their greeting wasn't very welcoming. They didn't seem to be very happy about my arrival."

"Scotland Yard aren't very welcoming people, lieutenant. As for the case of the highwayman, the master has been put in charge of the case and is currently investigating it right now -."
"Your master is the reason why I'm here," she says. Sebastian frowns at her strangely. "I, um, believe it would be best if I talk to him in person? If that's all right?"

Sebastian stares at her for awhile before smiling and bowing politely. "...Do please wait here while I get the master then. If you wish, I'll bring you a blanket and you can warm yourself by the fire."

Lieutenant Makarova smiles at him. Sebastian can't help but admit to himself that she has a very nice smile. Very adorable and sincere. He likes it a lot.

Mey-Rin walks upstairs to Ciel's bedroom with the tray in her hand. Indeed, a cup of chamomile tea will help him sleep more soundly. What if he doesn't want the tea though? What will she do then? Go back downstairs and toss it into the sink. That's what Sebastian always does when Ciel doesn't want tea.

She quietly opens the door and enters the room. "Master..."

Ciel is already in his bed with his eyepatch on the nightstand, his eyes looking up at the ceiling above him while Pluto is curled up at the foot of the bed, already sleeping. Mey-Rin can see the purple pentagram on the one eye he always hides under the patch. She understands why he has to hide it. What she doesn't understand is why hide it from her? She already knows. The moment he sees her enter the room, he quickly takes the eyepatch and puts it over his eye.

"It's just me, my lord," she says as she makes her way around the bed and puts the tray on the nightstand, "I brought you some chamomile tea, to help you sleep through the night."

"I never sleep peacefully, unfortunately," he says.

"Perhaps the tea will help." She pours chamomile tea into the teacup and gives the cup to Ciel, "Careful, it's hot."

"Thank you," he says and sips the warm tea, not caring that it's hot.

Mey-Rin smiles feebly at him "...Master, you don't need to hide your eye from me. I've already seen it."

Ciel slowly removes the eyepatch from his eye and sets it down next to the tray, looking up at Mey-Rin, the contract in his eye glowing dully. "Doesn't it frighten you?"

Mey-Rin shakes her head. "Not really. No. Not anymore."

"You should be," he says eerily, "because you already know who I made the deal with."

"...If you wish to talk about it, I'm here to listen -."

"Listen," he snaps, pulling her close by the arm. Mey-Rin simply stares at him shocked but doesn't pull away from his hold. "Nothing happened that night. Whatever you thought was all an illusion. What I did was pure impulse. It meant nothing to me. Do you understand?"

Mey-Rin looks down sadly, ashamed of herself for even bringing up the subject. "...Yes, master."

Ciel looks down and notices how tightly his hand is grabbing her arm. Realizing that he's hurting her, he lets go. "...I-." 

The door opens and Sebastian enters the bedroom. He frowns at Ciel. "Master, we have an unexpected guest and wishes to speak with you urgently."
Ciel looks at Mey-Rin for a moment before looking at Sebastian with a frown. "What guest?"

Ciel gets dressed, frustrated of having a visitor at this late hour when he really wants to sleep. He slips on a royal blue robe and ties the eyepatch over his contract eye before following Sebastian downstairs with Mey-Rin walking behind him. Pluto trots down past them while barking, almost knocking Sebastian to the side. Ciel holds back a laugh.

When they finally go downstairs to the parlour, Ciel is surprised to see a woman. She expected to see Detective Abberline or Commissioner Randall. He watches her take off her burgundy coat and gloves and kneel in front of the lit fireplace to warm herself up, putting her hands over the hot flames. Her blonde hair is still damp and curly from the rain, and the white blouse she wears is almost transparent.

"Ahem," Ciel says to catch her attention.

The woman turns her head to look at him and smiles. "Oh. Hello," she says. She's Russian, Ciel realizes. The woman stands up straight from the carpeted floor. "Are you the earl Ciel Phantomhive?"

"I am," he says, "And you are...?"

"Oh, um, I'm Catherine Makarova," she says, "Lieutenant Makarova, actually."

Ciel's eye widens in surprise. "A lieutenant?"

She nods. "Yes. I'm the lieutenant of Moscow City Police."

Ciel frowns. What is a Russian woman doing here in England? Why is she here? "And may I ask what brings you here to London, lieutenant?"

"I'm here to help catch the highwayman who's attacking the English noblemen who recently returned from India," she says.

"Did Commissioner Randall of Scotland Yard sent you here?" he asks, "I've already told him that the queen left me in charge of the investigation."

"I understand," she says, "But I'm here on my own account. I have no attachments to Scotland Yard."

Ciel sighs in frustration. This is going to give him a headache. First he had to deal with Commissioner Arthur Randall's incompetence and now has to deal with this Russian woman. He'll need to find a way to get rid of this girl and convince her that he doesn't need any assistance to catch the highwayman. He looks over to his maid. "Mey-Rin, have some tea ready for me and Lieutenant Makarova."

Mey-Rin hesitates, looking at the woman suspiciously, before bowing her head obediently. "Yes, master," she says and hurries to the kitchen.

After Lady Norrington leaves the shop (finally), Undertaker gets back to work. He's always working. He never has time to rest. Always working on bodies. Always preparing funerals. People seem to die every hour of the day. It can get very irritating at times. He takes one look at the oldest of the Norrington's son and makes an expression that shows disdain and disgust. Not a single wound in sight. How pathetic.
However, Undertaker feels like he's not alone. The air feels heavier and he can hear breathing somewhere. He knows someone is here.

"She's gone, you can come out now," he says. James immediately comes out of hiding. He's been hiding in the back of the shop the entire time. Undertaker expected it. He was the first one to leave the shop but no one saw him go home.

"We spent one night together. A very nice night, to be exact. I hope you're not angry with me," he says, his voice soft and shy. He's tied his light brown hair in a ponytail.

"Not really. I don't get angry much. The only time I get angry is when Tom breaks one of my coffins or brings me one of the wrong flowers," Undertaker explains as he puts the coffin with James' brother inside, "However, I am curious. Why didn't you tell me you were a noble?"

"You never asked."

"Hmmm. That is my mistake then." He knows he should have asked first before letting the boy fuck him but he was half-drunken and lost in the moment that he didn't even bother asking. This can damage his reputation. Not only because he was fucked by a young man who is clearly 18, he was fucked by the son of one of his customers. If Lady Norrington ever finds out, everything will go to shit.

"Do you have...anything against noblemen?" James asks awkwardly.

"I'm not very fond of them, to be honest," Undertaker walks over to the bowl of water behind his counter and washes his hands, "Nothing personal though. I'm not even fond of the old hag of Queen Victoria. Don't like her much."

"So I'm guessing we're not going to be seeing each other again, now that you know that I'm the son of a nobleman," he says.

"I never planned to see you again in general, nobleman or not," Undertaker explains bluntly, giving him the usual creepy grin, "It was just one night together. Nothing more. We'll pretend we never met and continue on with our lives. You get to go fuck with whoever you want and I'll do the same. We'll probably find something better."

"You're saying you didn't like our night together?" James asks in an almost wounded tone.

"Well, I never said that."

"But it sounded like you didn't like it."

Undertaker sighs at the comment. "I did. It was good. You were good. Great, actually. All I'm saying is that you should find someone else that will enjoy your cock that's not me," he says firmly. "I rather not get myself into trouble with your family. And you shouldn't either."

"...I'm the youngest son of Frederick and Margaret Norrington," James says, "Andrew was going to inherit everything while I'd be left with nothing. I doubt my family would have cared where I put my cock in."

"They will, especially if your carelessness ends up damaging your family name," Undertaker says as he locks the front door to his shop. "I don't care much for your hag of a mother nor do I care about your bloody brother here but I do like you. You're a good man and you look like you have a bright future ahead of you. Don't waste it all away by putting your phallus in places you're not supposed to. Do you understand?"
James sighs and slips on his overcoat. "Very well. If you say so. Do you mind if I leave through the back of your shop, since you locked the front door and all."

"Sure, go ahead."

James heads for the back again but stops for a moment. "My mother is preparing a dinner party after my brother's funeral. Though it's not really a party because she's inviting her work friends and I'm only inviting you. Will you come?"

"...Who knows," he smiles a bit, "I'll think about it."

With a nod, James Norrington leaves through the back of the shop and disappears into the night fog. Undertaker smiles faintly. Maybe they will meet again. His smile then falls when he notices something odd in Andrew Norrington's lips. He parts the man's cold clay lips and notices blackish stains in the inner part of his lips. Odd.

Mey-Rin pours some hot mint tea in Catherine Makarova's teacup and offers her some sugar cubes. The Lieutenant kindly rejects the offer.

"The moment I arrived to Scotland Yard, the commissioner wasn't very welcoming," Catherine says, "He says that Scotland Yard doesn't need help from the Russians at the moment. However, I believe he meant to say that he didn't need from a woman."

"I'm not surprised," Ciel says while Mey-Rin pours tea into his cup and puts four sugar cubes into his tea. He dismisses her and she goes to stand in a corner while Sebastian stands next to him. "Scotland Yard policemen are stubborn and misogynistic. They do not accept aid from anyone, not even from a child like you yet I held the closest connection with Queen Victoria. Commissioner Randall despises taking orders from someone he deems inferior to him."

The lieutenant sighs and fidgets her hands. "I've had my own set of problems with men at the Moscow City Police when I first started working there. But I've grown accustomed to it. It took me five years to gain the respect of my male colleagues and the commissioner who runs the station. So I wasn't surprised about Commissioner Randall's treatment towards me either. It was expected."

"What I really want to know is why should I allow you to participate in the investigation of the highwayman?" Ciel says, "As far as I can remember, the men hanging from the shop were Englishmen returning from India."

"Not all of them."

Ciel frowns at her words. "What do you mean not all of them?"

"One of the men that died. He wasn't English. He was Russian," she explains, "One of ours."

"He was a Russian police as well?"

Lieutenant Makarova nods. "A detective, but yes. Scotland Yard found his false identification. They identified him as Oliver Emmett Inchcombe but his real name is Shinsky Christov Yakovich."

"And how would you know this?" Sebastian asks, frowning at her curiously.

"Moscow City Police sent a spy here a year ago," she explains, earning a frown from Ciel and Sebastian, "I can give you his name if you want. Greshnev Tarasovich. He's a very good friend of mine. Indians and Chinese are not the only immigrants in England, you know."
"So, he's a spy?" Sebastian asks.

"Yes. I know it was disrespectful but we don't know the time when England will become a threat to Moscow or Russia in general. It's nothing personal against you or the queen, earl. It's just the matter of protecting our country."

"But why was Yakovich here in England?"

"We sent him to Indian to investigate the same events that are happening here now," she explains. "Englishmen are being assaulted in India as well. However, not just Englishmen but other noblemen from around the world as well. Russians. Americans. Australians."

"And Englishmen are being attacked here after returning from India," Ciel says, "I'm guessing you're here to find out who's responsible for Yakovich's death."

"Indeed."

"And how did you know the detective was attacked?"

"Detective Yakovich used to write and call every day to keep us informed of what happens in India," she explains, "He stopped writing two weeks ago and we were concerned. The we received the call from Tarasovich, informing us of his death. The moment I arrived to Scotland Yard, I knew that I'd be looking at a body and not a detective. I'm here, because I want to find out what happened to him that night."

"Well, Miss Makarova, as much as I would love for you to join our investigation, and I'm not being sarcastic, but unfortunately, Queen Victoria assigned the case to me and me alone. I've already solved Scotland Yard's problem with Jack the Ripper. I'm sure I'll be able to catch the highwayman and provide justice to Moscow's fellow detective without anyone else's assistance."

"I've heard of Jack the Ripper," she says and pulls out a letter from her coat, "Scotland Yard, specifically Inspector Frederick Abberline, wrote a letter to the Moscow City Police requiring our aid to capture Jack the Ripper. However, we go another letter stating that they no longer required our assistance. The commissioner in the Moscow City Police was not pleased by this. The Moscow City Police doesn't like their time being wasted."

"I see." He knew Inspector Abberline is stupid, but he really need to be that stupid? "But why send you specifically?" he asks. He doesn't mean to be offensive but he has never seen a woman work with the police, let alone a lieutenant. She must have worked hard to get where she is now.

"Because Detective Yakovich was my partner," she says. Ciel simply looks at her. So that's what it is?

"I wouldn't be here if it wasn't important."

He doesn't know what to think of it. He's been able to solve his cases on his own without the aid of Scotland Yard. He shouldn't accept the aid of a Russian lieutenant either. But so far, she has proven to be useful, proving him with more thorough information Commissioner Randall refused to give him. Also, rejecting her and the aid of Moscow City Police can result in all sort of problems, especially with the queen since Victoria is allied with the Russian royal family. If he can't get rid of Catherine Makarova, he might as well put her to good use. She seems more competent and professional than Commissioner Randall and Inspector Abberline put together.

Ciel sighs in defeat. "All right then. But you won't be very comfortable with our methods of investigation. They can be...dark."

Lieutenant Makarova smiles. "I've been in the dark before. Believe me. I'll help you with the
"Yes, you will. But you won't interfere when we finally confront the man responsible for the attacks. Do you understand?"

"It's your investigation. We have a deal," she says and extends her hand.

Ciel hesitates but eventually shakes it. This should be fun.

She immediately pulls her hand away, much to his surprise. He didn't expect for her to be so abrupt. "Another thing." She takes out something else from her coat. What else can she have in there? How much can she fit in that coat. She takes out a piece of white cloth and shows it to Ciel. "I took this from the station while Commissioner Randall was distracted. It was tangled in one of the victims' fingers."

Ciel's eye widens in surprise as he takes the cloth in his hand. "You stole it from Scotland Yard. Impressive."

Mey-Rin stares at the cloth carefully. "It's a gauze. They're used in hospitals."

"Yes," Ciel says, "But this gauze is thicker and rougher than the ones we have in England. Is this canvas?"

Lieutenant Makarova nods. "Yes."

"How old is it?" Sebastian asks. Ciel frowns, not understanding why the age of a fabric matters.

"How should I know? I'm not an expert on fabrics, except that canvases originate in the Middle East and China since 3,000 B.C."

"Says the lieutenant who's not an expert on fabrics," Sebastian says while frowning at her. She simply shrugs and continues drinking her tea. "Oh look, the rain is clearing up. I guess I should head back to my hotel."

"I'll have Sebastian drive you there," he offers.

"Um, no thank you," she says as she gets up from the armchair and puts on her damp coat. She takes the documents back and puts them away in her coat. "I think I can manage walking to the hotel by myself. But I appreciate the offer. I'll be seeing you all tomorrow, Lord Phantomhive and you as well, Mr. Michaelis." She smiles at the butler and bows her head. "Have a nice night."

She then leaves the townhouse and disappears into the night.

Ciel frowns and looks at Sebastian. "Is she an actual lieutenant or a muttering wise woman?"

"I made a copy of the documents while I was coming to fetch you," he says and gives the copy to Ciel, "She, indeed, is working with the Moscow City Police."

"Well, as they say, if you beat them, join them," Ciel says, "However, if we are to include her in our investigation, be sure she doesn't get in the way. The highwayman belongs to us. Not her or Scotland Yard. Are we clear? This is an order, Sebastian."

Sebastian smirks and his eyes turn red. "Yes, my lord."

"Hmm. This should be fun." Ciel inspects the cloth closer, wondering where the gauze came from.
A week before...

An astillero ship arrives at the docks in the morning, its purple sails flapping gently in the winter breezes.

An eighteen-year-old boy wearing a golden orange sherwani and white baggy trousers and a red scarf around his neck, looks down over the edge of the boat, admiring the sheets of ice forming over the surface of the water. He reaches his hand towards the water in an attempt to touch the cold water but its too far below.

"My prince," a man approaches him, wearing an emerald green sherwani, a beige turban wrapped around his head and his right hand wrapped in bandages. "We have arrived to England."

"What is all this?" he asks while looking at the pieces of ice in the water and raises his head to see white flakes lightly falling from the dark grey clouds.

"I think it is called snow, my prince," the man explains though he has never seen snow himself, "It falls during the winter in England."

The boy smiles. "It's beautiful, Agni. I should take some home to maan (mother). She would love it."

Agni puts a heavy brown coat over the young man's shoulders to keep him warm from the winter cold. "Come, Prince Soma. Let's go find a place to rest. It's getting cold out here."

Soma gives Agni a downhearted look. "I thought we were going to look for Meena."

Agni shakes his head. "It's too early, my prince. It's been a long journey. You need the rest. We'll search for Meena later on. Come."

Soma sighs. He thought of starting the search now. But he knows that Agni is right. It's been a long journey. His feet are aching and he's feeling a little nauseas from the ship rocking sideways during their journey through the Indian Ocean.

"Very well."

Once they have their belongings ready, Soma and Agni pay a mail coach to take them to the closest hotel they have in London and they disappear into the morning fog through the cobblestone streets.

End of Chapter 2
Soma's character will be very different from the anime and manga in many ways. For example, instead of being 17-18, he is 13 and 14 like Ciel. The rest is a mystery as well as Catherine's character.

The next part of the The Dark Angel. Sorry if the chapter is too long. Honestly, it's a bad habit.

Soma's character will be very different from the anime and manga in many ways. For example, instead of being 17-18, he is 13 and 14 like Ciel. The rest is a mystery as well as Catherine's character.

Let me know what you think of it in the comments.

Sebastian has Ciel ready to start the investigation, having him dressed as a local boy once more with a white shirt, dark green overalls and a brown pageboy hat. He replaces his black eyepatch with a white one and sets the cane aside. No one should know that the queen's guard dog is searching for the highwayman, not even the highwayman himself. Dressing Ciel as a local boy is the only way to keep a low profile, not matter how much the brat (as Sebastian thinks of him) dislikes it.

"Now," the young lord says, tapping his pageboy hat, "Let's get Mey-Rin and be off."

Sebastian protests about Mey-Rin being involved in the investigation as he did the day before. He states Mey-Rin will not contribute to anything during the investigation. Her presence will only be a nuisance with her lack of balance and bad habit of wandering off on her own. However, the young lord insisted, stating they'll need her guns and her sniper abilities just in case they run into trouble.

He goes to Mey-Rin's room and knocks on her door.

"I'm almost done," she says from behind the door. "Give me a few more minutes."

Sebastian sighs and knocks on the door again. "We don't have a few minutes."

"Why don't you grow breasts and try flattening them? See how you like it," she says.

Sebastian's eyes turn red at her snarky comment but tries to hold the desire to kick the door down and wring her neck. "Don't make come in there and bash you in the head. Now hurry up or we're leaving without you."

"All right, all right," she says.

A few minutes later, Mey-Rin opens the door, already dressed as a boy with tweeted trousers, white shirt, wingtip shoes and a brown jacket. She ties her hair back in a bun and puts a pageboy hat similar to the young master's, tucking the bun in the process. Despite being dressed as a boy, she still looks like a girl. A child, even. Probably looking Elizabeth Midford's age and is almost the same
height as the young master. It doesn't matter. She's still a nuisance. If she does anything to ruin the mission, it will be all the brat's fault and Mey-Rin will have to pay the price.

"Why must I dress as a boy again?" she asks as she steps into the corridor. "It's been uncomfortable the first time, now I must dress like this during the investigation?"

"Because the master says so," he says, "Now stop complaining and get moving."

Mey-Rin sighs and heads downstairs. Pluto runs past Sebastian and follows the maid downstairs. Sebastian's eyes glow red at the sight of the white wolf. *Damn that monstrosity.*

Ciel is already waiting impatiently. "What took you so long?"

"Sorry, my lord, but it seems that Mey-Rin was having women problems, you know what I am referring to," Sebastian says with a teasing smirk.

Ciel's cheeks turn pink. "We don't have time for games, Sebastian. Let's get moving."

Sebastian chuckles amusingly. "Very well, my lord."

The moment he opens the door, Catherine Makarova is already standing outside the townhouse wearing a red cloak and a warm smile on her pink lips.

Everyone stares in surprise, including Sebastian. "How long have you been waiting out here?" Ciel asks.

"Oh, I just arrived," Catherine explains.

"And you're coming with us?" Ciel asks, his eye wide.

"Yes, of course," she says, "I wouldn't want to miss an opportunity like this."

"Wearing that?" Sebastian asks, looking over her attire. A deep red cloak. For some reason, she's reminding him of the reaper Grell Sutcliff who tried to kill the young master and slaughtered the lady Angelina Bannett. Could Catherine be the next Grell Sutcliff? He needs to keep a closer eye on her. Or perhaps he shouldn't assume that every person is a Grell Sutcliffe.

"What? It's my winter outfit. You don't like it?" she asks, twirling around like a child and her skirt flying around like angel wings.

"It's red," Ciel says, "It brings too much attention."

"Even if I wanted to go back to change, I can't. My hotel is twenty minutes away and we don't have enough time. Come on, everyone. Let's get to work."

She walks ahead and Mey-Rin and Pluto follow, leaving Ciel and Sebastian dumbfounded.

"Hmm. Interesting woman," Sebastian says.

"She's going to jeopardize the mission dressed like that," Ciel says irritably, "She'll be drawing attention to us."

"Do not worry, my lord. I'll make sure the highwayman is caught. We will not fail."

"So, where are we going first?" she asks as she turns around to face them while walking backwards. Sebastian can see the spark in her eyes. She's eager to get started on the case. He admires her
enthusiasm. But perhaps she's a little too eager and she's quite strange and childish. It makes him wonder how this girl is even working with the police.

"To visit a colleague," Ciel says.

They arrive at a tall brown building near the docks. Mey-Rin sees a few drunken men lying unconscious on the ground with empty bottles in their hands. Pluto walks over to one and licks his face but Ciel calls him back. Some of these men are actually noblemen. She frowns in confusion. What is this place?

"We've arrived, my lord," Sebastian says.

"Are you sure this is the right place?" Catherine asks as they look down the steps that leads to a jade green door.

"Unfortunately yes," Sebastian says, "The master doesn't like this place very much but he has no other choice." He gives her a surgical paper mask. "I suggest you wear this."

She frowns at the surgical mask in her hands. "What for?"

"You'll see," he says and gives another mask to Ciel. However, he doesn't give one to Mey-Rin.

"Am I not going in as well?" Mey-Rin asks.

Ciel looks at her sternly. "No. You're staying right here. You'll keep an eye out for any signs of Scotland Yard trying to intervene."

"But master -.

"That's an order, Mey-Rin!" he snaps at her. "Stay here!"

She's taken aback, looking at him in complete shock but nods slightly

"Um, do you two need some time alone?" Catherine asks, "Because you two look like you need some privacy."


Catherine follows them last, putting on the paper mask over her nose and mouth and shrugs at Mey-Rin. "Sorry."

"...It's okay."

Sebastian helps Ciel down the steps to the jade door waiting at the bottom.

The butler holds the young master's hand to help him down the stairs since the boy can't walk down the steps by himself. He can trip and fall and break his neck in the process. "You were quite harsh on her, you know," he says, referring to Mey-Rin.

Ciel sighs and shakes his head. "This is no place for a girl."

"Yet, you're allowing Lieutenant Makarova join us."
"...She's a lieutenant. She works for the Moscow City Police. I think she's capable of handling herself quite well."

"And Mey-Rin is not?"

Ciel remains silent upon hearing that. Sebastian smiles, knowing that he hit a nerve again.

"I'd be careful if I were you, young master. She may be a Phantomhive maid but she's an assassin. If you continue to test her, she might end up turning her gun on you."

Ciel looks at Sebastian with a frown. "You really think she would do that?"

"I know humans more than you do. I've lived long enough to know how unpredictable they can be. And women are the most unpredictable."

"And you're right, Mr. Michaelis," Catherine gets between them as she walks ahead of him. She turns around to face them while walking backwards. How is she walking backwards so skillfully without tripping? "Women are always the most unpredictable creatures in the world. You'll never know when they're going to bite."

"How long have you been listening?" Ciel asks frowning at her.

"Well, you two are very loud whisperers so, long enough," she says with a smile, "So, are we going to keep talking about women's capacity or are we going to shut up and get this over with?"

The two look at her, surprised yet again.

They make it to the end of the steps and open the door. A faint cloud of smoke escapes whatever is behind that door. Catherine frowns and presses the masks harder to her face. Ciel does the same and coughs slightly. Sebastian pinches his nose. Such a revolting smell. He doesn't need a mask since it doesn't affect him but for this reason, he has Lieutenant Makarova and the young master wear the mask.

"Disgusting," Ciel says as he enters a large room full of white smoke.

Sebastian and Catherine following behind him. Sebastian closes the door to keep more smoke from escaping.

Golden Chinese lanterns hang from the vaulted ceiling, illuminating the room. Men are sitting on cushioned seats or booths with Chinese women on their laps and smoking opium through hookahs.

"Is this an opium den?" Catherine asks.

"You are correct, lieutenant," Sebastian says.

"Why would Lord Phantomhive come to a place like this?"

"This den is owned by a colleague of my lord's. He's a trader and owner of a grand Chinese company. So I suggest you be respectful and don't touch anything...or anyone."

"If he helps us catch the highwayman, I won't try bicker with this man."

"Oh no," Ciel says, "You'll probably change your mind once you meet him."

They walk further through the smoke until they find a Chinese man sitting on a red chaise longue, wearing a green robe with golden flowers and smoking opium through a glass hookah. On his lap
sits another Chinese girl with golden eyes and wearing a lavender cheongsam dress with butterflies embroidered on her skirt and a pink flower tucked in her short black hair. She gives them a warm smile and bats her eyelashes.

"I'm surprised you finally found this place," the Chinese man says, "I never thought we'd meet each other like this. But eventually, I knew this day would come."

Ciel frowns as he waves away the smoke in his face. "What the bloody hell you're talking about -?"

"Hello, Lord Phantomhive. It's been so long," Lau says with a smile. "Sorry if I missed your birthday but I did have other matters to attend to."

"Hmm, like screwing your sister-in-law," Ciel says and Lau chuckles as a response, "It doesn't matter. I could care less for birthday parties or any other party for that manner."

Ran-Mao is on his lap as usual, as well as four more girls surrounding him and dressed provocatively, having their pale breasts hanging out from their blouses. Ran Mao is the only one covered up. Sebastian would normally cover Ciel's eyes to keep him away from such perversions but this is a matter of business, despite how uncomfortable it will be for the boy.

Lau smiles and sits up from his red chaise lounge and shoos away the other four girls. "Go and entertain our other guests in the backroom, my flowers. This a matter of business. And Ran-Mao, my dear," he takes her face in his hand and kisses her cheek. "Bring us some tea afterwards."

Ran-Mao nods and slides off his lap before disappearing into the back with the other four girls.

"Judging by the way she's dressed, I'm guessing she's the only one in this den you don't allow men to touch," Ciel assumes.

"I don't like sharing her with other men," Lau chuckles, "She's too precious to me." He takes another puff from the hookah's pipes and exhales smoke from his mouth and nose. "So, what brings you here to Lóng de Cháoxué? I'm sure your aunt, Lady Midford, would be hysterical if she's ever to find out you've been wandering down here in an opium den. It's no place for a child, I can assure you."

Ciel's brow furrows, irritated of being called a child. "I'm here to ask you about the incident surrounding the attacks of British citizens that have returned from India."

"Ah. You're here for that incident."

Catherine walks closer to Sebastian and whispers in his ear. "Who is that man?"

"That man is Lau Honghui. The president of the British branch of the Chinese trading company, Kunlun. He is also the Shanghai mafia leader and Qingbang Executive. The young girl is his sister-in-law, Ran-Mao Jingfei."

"An informant of his?"

"My lord has two informants. One informs his of incidents that happen right here in England. Mr. Honghui informs incident that arrive to England overseas."

"It would make sense why he's allied with him then. And he owns an opium den with prostitutes?"

Lau immediately interrupts them. "Actually, my dear girl, my flowers are not prostitutes. They're yiji and sing-song girls. Entertainers and women of pleasure. They entertain my clients with their bodies, arts, poems and songs while they're drifting off into a sleeping state."
Catherine frowns. "But aren't those the same thi-.

"Ignore him," Ciel says with a raised hand, "Just ignore him. And you, Lau, I didn't think you would have gotten the news so soon. Scotland Yard has been trying to keep this incident quiet, especially after the issue of Jack the Ripper sending the city into panic."

Lau chuckles. "If it involves Orientals, the only way to find out is to ask you who has the strongest influence in here -.

"Lau, this is not funny."

He shrugs. "Perhaps I don't like how you address me. Too formal. I could always leave the East End to your care if that's what you want." He takes another puff of smoke.

"Lau-."

"The number of people who move in and out of East End are in your control, right?"

"Stop smoking and listen!" Ciel snaps at him.

Lau gives him a pointed look. "Don't interrupt me. Anyways, I've done as you asked. It's bribery that allows me to do my business in the underworld of this godforsaken country. Now..." He puts the smoking pipe down and sits up straight. "Before I can give you any information, I need to ask you one thing."

"And what's that?"

"What exactly is the incident?"

Ciel groans and smacks his own forehead with his gloved hand. Catherine simply rolls her eyes in annoyance and Sebastian sighs.

"Fucking bastard," Ciel mutters.

"All right then," Catherine steps in front of Ciel, "Can we please stop playing around? This is a serious matter and if we don't deal with it quickly, a lot of people in London are going to get hurt."

Lau looks up and down at her, eyebrow raised. "And who is this girl? I'm not sure if I've seen her around here."

"She's a lieutenant from the Moscow City Police," Ciel explains.

"My name is Catherine Makarova," she says.

"Ah, so you're Russian?" Lau says, smiling, "How interesting. And very pretty as well." He looks at Ciel. "Speaking of pretty girls, where's your maid? I missed her very much. Don't tell me you replaced her with the Russian girl."

Ciel rolls his eye. "She's outside. I asked her to wait there until I return."

Lau chuckles in amusement. "Pity. I would have enjoyed seeing her again. Tell her that if she ever considers quitting her job, she can find work here."

Ciel growls. "Not a chance."

"Mr. Honghui," Catherine interrupts them once more, "This is a matter of life and death. British
citizens that recently returned from India are being brutally attacked in the streets of London and we need to find out who it is and put a stop to it before someone else gets hurt -.

Lau raises his hand to silence her which she does. "Too many words to process, my dear. Has anyone ever told you that you talk really fast?"

"...Will you help us catch the highwayman or not?" Ciel asks more impatiently.

He sighs. "Oh very well. None of you are any fun. I may have something that might give you a lead on the highwayman." He holds out a piece of paper from his green robe. "I got this from the train conductor. He came here for relaxation and a few of my girls. While he was on opium, he gave the names of the passengers who were returning from India. They first took a train to Istanbul. The Orient Express, I believe it's called." Ran-Mao returns with a tray of with five delft teacups and a bowl of *dim sums* which small steamed buns stuffed with meat and vegetables. "He thought I was a caterpillar sitting on a mushroom. Can you believe it?"

"This contradicts everything," Ciel, "Our victims came to London by train, not by a ship?"

"That doesn't make any sense though," Catherine says, "Shinsky said he was travelling by ship, not by train. He was in India as well investigating similar attacks and was going to England to investigate the situation even further. Why would he lie?"

"Huh, that is interesting indeed," Lau says.

Sebastian watches Ran-Mao walk up to him with a pink glass hookah in her hands and offers him to smoke opium, to which he kindly declines. "No, thank you."

She smiles and walks back to Lau where she lies her head on his lap like a kitten.

"Drink some tea and have some *dim sums*," Lau says, "You're probably hungry."

"We don't have time for this," Ciel says but takes one of the *dim sums* anyways.

"Here's the list of the passengers that arrived from India via the Orient Express. I imagine they had to take another train to Istanbul." Lau gives Ciel a sheet of coarse paper.

Ciel reads it. There are at least twenty passengers (some of them already attacked by the highwayman) that states they took the Orient Express get to England: Erastus Jehu Parker, Quinby Lucius Silver, Josiah Elijah Champ, Archer Rufus Kipps, Franklin Joel Marsh, Alfred Paul Chambers, Silas Obadiah Sawyer, Phineas Vincent Lewis, Asahel Homer Steele, Lionel Emerson Fielding, Tim Byron Sterling, Hamilton Oswald Deering, Lawrence Levi Gold, Alexander Abe Redsmith, Eli Israel Cooper, Josephus Ambrose Bacon, Richard Todd Davenport, Gander Neil Palethorpe, Shinsky Christov Yakovich (Catherine's partner) and...

Ciel frowns at one of the last names on the list. "James Barnabas Norrington?"

"Are you familiar with the name, my lord?" Lau asks.

"Yes. The Phantomhives and the Norringtons have been allies for many years. They've invested in the Funtom Company and we invested in their tea trading company. Their earl grey tea are the best in London. Also...James Norrington was a friend of my brother's."

Sebastian can't decide whether to laugh in his face or feel pity for him. With such a bratty personality, it's hard for Sebastian to believe he had any friends.
"Has James been attacked by the highwayman as well?" Ciel asks, a hint of worry is showing in his voice.

"No. The lad is fine. I heard that his older brother, Andrew Norrington, passed away not too long ago," Lau says, "The funeral is being held at the St. Margaret's Church."

Ciel sighs in relief. "Even with the investigation, it would be a sin not to pay my respects to my family's dearest allies. Also, it will give us an opportunity to ask Lord Norrington about his time in India. If this person is targeting noblemen returning from India, he could be the next target."

"Where is St. Margaret's Church?" Catherine asks.

Ciel shrugs. "I've only been to St. Margaret's Church once with my father and brother. I don't remember where it is. It's been years. Lau, you've wandered through London more than I have. Surely you must know where St. Margaret is."

"Hmm. I think I might," Lau says, "After all, the police and politicians are not the only ones that come here. Priests as well when they need the relief."

"You shall take us to St. Margaret then. Perhaps I can talk to James Norrington about the incident. Hopefully, we can save his life before the highwayman thinks of attacking him."

"This should be fun." Lau stands up from his chaise lounge and puts on his sandals. He kisses Ran-Mao on the head. "You're in charge of the place while I'm gone, all right? I won't be long, sweet sister."

Ran-Mao nods and kisses his cheek.

Sebastian frowns at the odd gesture. It's off that Lau feels passionate for a person that's close to being a blood relative. Perhaps that is a custom for them in China.

Mey-Rin continues petting Pluto's head while waiting for Ciel, Sebastian and the lieutenant to come out of whatever that place is. She smelled opium when they opened the door so she's pretty sure they're visiting an opium den. She's sitting in on the cobblestone ground with her back against the wall and Pluto resting his head on her lap. She closes her eyes and leans her head back.

She knows that since Ciel kissed her for the first time, things have been very complicated. He's been colder and more isolated. He hasn't treated her the same way since that day. His treatment is a lot harsher and crueler than before. He grabbed her arm and pulled her when she tried to talk about the situation. She still has the bruises of his fingers marked on her upper arm. But she knows it wasn't his intention to hurt her physically. She saw the regret in his eyes. He didn't mean to hurt her.

But then, why is he so angry with her all of the sudden? Why treat her so coldly? What did she do? All she ever did was obey her orders without questioning?

Perhaps she'll never know. Perhaps, if she were inside his head, she could find out what's going on in that mind of his.

She opens her eyes again. *Oh god, not again. Where am I?*

For some reason, she no is longer sitting on the cobblestone ground at the docks with Pluto on her lap. In fact, Pluto is no longer here.

She is sitting in a dark corridor with white walls, golden beams, red-carpeted floor and flickering
walls. She looks to her left and gasps when she sees a dead man lying next to her. His neck is torn open, looking more like a bitemark. She quickly stands from the floor, staring at the dead body in complete shock. She looks at her hands and finds blood on them. What is this?

"Ciel!?" she calls the young master but there's no response, "Ciel! Sebastian!? Pluto!?!"

She feels herself swaying to the side, as if the hall were tilting, and a dreadful loud creak can be heard. She turns around and spots a man running right towards her, snarling his blood-stained mouth and a bandage covering his eyes. His bloodstained hands reach out for her, trying to grab her. Mey-Rin screams and falls back.

"MEY-RIN!"

The moment the hand grabs her by the wrist, her mind returns to reality and she finds herself face to face with Ciel and Sebastian. Ciel has her grabbed by the right sleeve of her arm and Sebastian has his gloved hand tightly wrapped around her wrist. They're both staring in complete shock. Mey-Rin looks over her shoulder and is surprised to find herself nearly close to falling off the edge of the dock and into the water. How did she get from nearly getting bitten by a madman to almost falling off the dock?

Sebastian pulls her back up to the ground.

"Mey-Rin, what happened!?!" Ciel shouts at her, his eye wide.

She tries answering him but can't find the words. They're stuck on her lips.

"Mey-Rin!" he snaps at her again.

"I...I..." She simply stands there, shaking. "M-master..."

"She's in shock," Catherine says while pushing Ciel and Sebastian aside. "Give her some space. Don't crowd her like that."

"Oh so you dressed your maid as a boy," Lau says, "Interesting."

"Shut it, Lau!" Ciel snaps at him.

"Hey," Catherine snaps her fingers in front of Mey-Rin's face. "Hey, stay with me."

Mey-Rin blinks and then looks at Catherine in confusion. She then looks Ciel and Sebastian. "What's going on? What happened?"

"You nearly fell off the docks!" Ciel snaps at her, "That's what happened! What the hell is wrong with you!?!"

"All right, that's enough!" Catherine snaps and carefully helps her back on her feet. "Don't yell at her. If she doesn't know what happened, she doesn't know. Come on. We're wasting time standing around here."

Ciel stares at Catherine in astonishment but doesn't say anything. Mey-Rin watches him and Sebastian walk ahead with Lau instead. She and Catherine follow behind them. Pluto barks and chases after them. Mey-Rin can't remember much of what happened but she prefers not to remember.

Undertaker watches the Norrington family mourning for the loss of Andrew Norrington. And by mourning, he means staring coldly at the coffin as if they were happy of getting rid of the poor
bastard. James Norrington, the youngest of Margaret Norrington's son, seems to be the only one mourning for the loss of his older brother with his head dropping down and his hands fidgeting. It could be that he's falling asleep. Who can blame him? The bloody priest is speaking in Latin. Of course the boy won't understand a thing he says. Undertaker is simply sitting in the corner watching with his arms folded and the usual smile on his face. He can't help but admit that James looks younger with his hair tied in a ponytail.

Getting back to the matter, he wonders if either of the Norrington family killed Andrew Norrington. After inspecting the black smudges around the man's mouth, he confirmed it to be the effect of poisoning. Andrew Norrington didn't die of a fever. He was murdered. The question is, who killed him and why?

Undertaker scoffs to himself in amusement. Pretty much everyone in the Norrington family is a suspect. Unlike the Phantomhives, the Norringtons seem to hate each other. He remembers Margaret's marriage with her husband when he prepared the lady's mother's funeral. It was a very destructive marriage. The two always fought and yelled each other so badly that Undertaker feared they would literally wake the dead from their eternal slumber. The hag of Margaret Norrington was only able to find peace when her husband died. Andrew Norrington was the oldest of the family and would inherit his father's wealth. But he spent most of his time in opium dens and pubs, drinking ale and fucking prostitutes in the East End and Whitechapel. He was a disastrous boy as well. He wouldn't be surprised if the young man's last ale was the thing that led him to his death in the first place. If they have an addiction, it will be easier to kill them through that very addiction, knowing that they can't resist it.

However, he knows nothing about James Norrington, Margaret's youngest son. He's never heard of him nor has he ever seen him before. He just met him recently, once at the pub and second time at the parlour. He could be the murderer of his own brother. Why not? He has the right motive for it. Andrew Norrington, the oldest son and heir to the Norrington estate and everything in it. And James Norrington, the youngest son and the undesirable one. It's not being insensitive or cruel. It's just cold facts, especially when it comes to noble families. The oldest sons inherit everything while the youngest get nothing and they have to put themselves out into the world and find work to fend for themselves. Perhaps, that's what happened to James Norrington. He was the undesirable one and was sent away so that his mother could focus on Andrew Norrington. And now James returned to kill his brother so he could inherit the Norrington estate and the fortune.

"So, how did you do it?" Undertaker asks James while walking beside him after the funeral. The boy simply looks at him in confusion, his brow furrowing.

"I don't know what you mean."

"Your brother," he says, "How did you kill him?"

"What?"

He snickers and continues the conversation. "While I was examining the body, I black smudges around your brother's lips and his tongue was black as well. He didn't have a fever. What did you use, eh? Whitebane berries? Arsenic?"

"Are you insane? I didn't kill my brother, Undertaker."

"Your brother inherited the Norrington estate," he points, "You were in India and now you've returned when your brother fell and now he's dead. You're the new heir."
James stares at him and sighs. "My brother and I never got along when we were young. We always fought over petty things and Andrew would put the blame on me. My mother would always believe him and whenever he started the fight and I told on him, she would blame me as well. She sent me to a boarding school in India where I was mocked for being the only English boy in school. Three months ago, Andrew wrote to me. He said he was sick and asked me to come home. And I did."

"Now why he would ask you to return home if you two never got along?"

"Just because we never got along, doesn't mean we hated each other. I loved my brother. And all the letters he wrote to me were his regrets of allowing Mother to send me to India in the first place."

Undertaker looks at him for a moment and sighs. "Do you mind if I take a look at the letters then?"

James reluctantly nods. "They're at home, in my room. Be my guest."

The mortician chuckles in amusement and pats the boy on the back. "It looks like I'll be taking your invitation to dinner after all."

James smiles slightly before going to join his haggard mother and the rest of his horrendous family.

Undertaker goes to get the coffin ready for burial, only to stop and take a look at the photograph with the supposed nuclear Norrington family. The photograph is old though. Eight years old, to be exact. Lady Norrington looks slightly younger in the photograph but still robust, broad-shouldered and looking like a younger version of that witch Queen Victoria. Lord Norrington was heavy-chested and had a black mustache above his lips. He was a very respectable noble but was also ill-tempered. The two small boys, Andrew and James, are also in the photograph, much to Undertaker's surprise. And to think Lady Norrington would hide James' existence in the pits of hell where no one can discover it. The two boys wore matching sailor suits. However, Andrew is fourteen in the photograph and slightly taller than James, with black hair and round-framed glasses. He looks more pleasant as a young boy than he did as a young man. And James, a small ten-year-old boy with red hair and freckles, was the only one smiling in the photograph. The only one happy to have his picture taken.

His smile falls again. For a moment, he wasn't seeing Andrew and James Norrington. For a moment, he was seeing Ciel Phantomhive and his brother.

"So, where's the church?" Ciel asks as Lau continues to lead them further into the empties part of the city. This idiot clearly doesn't know where he's going.

Lau looks around with his eyebrows raised. "Oh. Oooops. I got lost in the conversation that I got us lost."

"You've got to be bloody joking," Ciel growls. "You're wasting my time, Lau!"

"Are we not near the stronghold of the Indian people?" Sebastian asks.

Ciel looks around the area where they're at. Most of the streets are empty of English people. Sitting in alleyways are the poor and some of them have brown faces and tattered clothes.

"Hmm. It seems that we are in the East End," Ciel says and looks at Mey-Rin, "Stay close. Whatever you do, do not wander off. Do you understand?"

"Y-y-yes, my lord," she stutters nervously, nodding tiredly. She's still a little disoriented after the incident at the docks.
"And Sebastian." He looks over to the butler. "Make sure Lieutenant Makarova stays close as well."

The demon butler bows his head. "Yes, my lord."

The name East End has been coined by the press as the unemployment or unemployed. It's a dreadful otherworldly place of crime and immorality, a fearful place where danger lurks in every shadow and waited in every corner. The East End was the beating heart of London, full of factories, warehouses, markets, abattoirs, breweries and London docks. They serve the city, providing the necessities of life, the means of survival and the fuel where the great commercial heart depended. It's overcrowded and poverty-riven with grimy streets flanked by poorly made and decaying buildings.

The Indians were once workers, brought from the land of India with promise of work but once they fulfilled their jobs, they're dumped into the slums like garbage, as if they were worth less than bread. East End is the one of the only place they can reside since they're not welcomed in the public streets of London. The crimes spread here like the plague. Almost no one come here, only those with a death wish.

Sebastian walks behind Catherine, Ciel and Mey-Rin. He knows that he must stay ahead of them but the master gave strict orders to keep the ladies safe from any thugs.

"So, five years working with the Moscow City Police," Sebastian says while walking besides the blonde beauty. "That's impressive."

"I sometimes impress myself," she says, "To be honest, I never really thought I'd come this far."

"Women don't normally become involved with police so your reaction is understandable," he says.

She looks at Sebastian in confusion but then smiles. "Oh no, I mean England. I never thought I'd ever come to England. I spent twenty-five years in Moscow. I've never stepped foot here. I'll confess, it's not what I expected."

"What did you expect?"

"Less smell of smoke and piss water," she says with a joking smirk.

Sebastian chuckles as a response. "You're not off the mark. May I ask you a personal question?"

"If you wish."

"What was your relationship with Yakovich?"

"I thought I made it clear that Yakovich and I were work parents. Or...do you really believe that our relationship was romantic? Some people assume it was."

"I never really said."

"But you were thinking about it. Listen, my relationship with Yakovich, romantic or not, is none of anyone's business. You want to catch the highwayman? So do I. But I don't think prying into our personal lives is going to help catch him."

"All right. Calm down. It was just a question."

"You're right. Sorry," she apologizes, "I'm just tired. I've been travelling for a long time and Scotland Yard just...It's been driving me insane."
"Is everything all right, master?" Mey-Rin asks as she walks next to him. He hasn't said a word since they left the docks.

"You almost fell into the water. What do you think?" Ciel snarls.

"I'm sorry, my lord. I didn't mean to scare you all."

"What the bloody hell were you thinking?"

"Master, I swear, I don't know what happened. For a minute, I was on the docks and then, suddenly, I was standing somewhere different and someone tried to attack me. Next thing I knew, I was falling from the dock and Pluto grabbed me by the sleeve. I swear, I really don't know what happened."

"You went insane, that's what happened. This is the last time I'm leaving you alone."

Mey-Rin stops for a moment, glaring at the master in disbelief and anger. She really wishes to yell at him at this moment. He was the one who told her to wait outside. But she resists the urge of losing her temper towards him. Not because she's afraid of Sebastian snapping her neck in half if she snaps at Ciel but because she doesn't want to break the trust they're having between them, if he still trusts her.

She sighs and bows her head. "Forgive me, master. It will never happen again."

Ciel simply stares at her. She can't really tell what he's thinking. He probably thinks she's stupid.

As they continue walking down the empty roads of East End, an Indian man dressed in rags approaches the group, stopping right in front of Ciel. Mey-Rin automatically puts her arm in front of Ciel for protection and Sebastian steps in front of Mey-Rin.

The man bends over, holding his stomach and crying in out in pain. "Ahh! It hurts!"

Everyone looks in confusion.

"That little bastard broke my ribs!" he yells, pointing at Ciel.

"What? But he didn't do anything," Mey-Rin says. However, the man's yelling brings the attention of other homeless Indian men and women dressed in ragged and unpleasant expressions on their faces.

"You all saw it!" the man shouts angrily. "You all saw that fucking English boy punch me in the ribs. I only asked for a penny to eat and what do I get? A punch in the ribs!"

An entire crowd of Indians gather around, shouting angry curses at them. Either they're blind or they simply hate Englishmen and they'll believe anything the man says. Pluto growls at them, showing his sharp teeth. But that doesn't seem to stop them from surrounding them in a circle.

"Why can't you English bastards leave us alone!…"

"They brought us all the way to England and then dumped us here like trash!..."

"This is our territory now! You have no business here!..."

"We don't no English rats here!"
The man who had been crying out in pain, grabs Ciel by the collar of his blue cape and pulls him close, making the top hat fall from his head. "You're asking for a beating by showing up here! Judging by that nice dress of yours, I'm guessing you're a noble. Pay consolation money, boy, and strip off your clothes."

Mey-Rin pushes the man away roughly. "Oi! Back off!"

She gets slapped in the face and gets knocked to the ground by one of the other Indian, her hat falling off her head and hair coming loose.

"Oi! Look at this! This pageboy is a girl!" He grabs her by the arm and pulls her up, "And she's pretty too! She'll do well as payment!"

Ciel growls and yells out in rage as he strikes the man in the face with the cane's golden handle, breaking the man's nose into a bloody crack and forcing him to let go of Mey-Rin.

"Fuck! The kid broke my nose!"

"Sebastian, dispose of all these idiots!" Ciel yells out.

Sebastian smirks and his eyes turn blood red. "As you wish, my young lord."

The first Indian man who started it all, pulls out a knife on them. Mey-Rin immediately gets in front of Ciel to shield him once more, her face still marked red from the blow she received.

"Our country was walked all over by your shoes and because of you, we ended up living like street rat!"

"Everyone stop!" someone shouts and just like that, everyone stops and they turn to see a young Indian boy a few years older than Ciel dressed in clean blue sherwani with a white cape draped over his shoulders and with a red dot painted on his forehead. Next to him is a man dressed in a green tunic with a turban around his head and his right hand bandaged. This boy is not part of the homeless Indians of East End. "We're looking for someone. My nurse, Meena. She looks like this."

The boy pulls out a badly drawn picture of a woman (or at least, that's what it's supposed to look like) with stumpy arms, a large nose, a spot on her forehead and only a few strands of hair. Ciel looks at the picture and then at the Indian boy. Clearly this boy must be missing parts of his brain or lost his entire brain in general. "Have any of you seen her around here?" he asks.

The man with the knife pushes the boy back roughly, nearly knocking him to the ground if the man with the bandaged hand didn't catch him. "Fuck off, you stupid boy! Don't interfere!"

"How rude!" he says, "I was only asking a simple question. No need to shove me."

"Go back to your mother! Keep your nose out of this!"

The boy starts laughing as if it was all a joke. The man has a knife ready to stab someone. Clearly, not a joke. "Entering a fight, are we? With whom?"

"That's none of your business."

The boy looks at Ciel and the rest of the gang. "Are you all Englishmen?" he asks.

"So what if we are?" Ciel says harshly

"Actually, I'm Russian, not English," Catherine Makarova says in her defence. Ciel smacks himself
on the forehead as a response.

"And we're Chinese," Lau says while pointing at Mey-Rin. She looks at Lau in annoyance.

The Indian boy shakes his head. "It does not matter. If your presence is disturbing my people, then I must side with them." He looks over to the man with the bandaged hand. "Agni, dispose of these unwelcomed visitors."

The man named Agni bows his head and unwraps the bandages from his hand, clenching it into a fist. "Yes, my prince."

Ciel frowns. Did he just say prince? "Sebastian, get rid of these clowns at once."

Sebastian smirks while cracking his knuckles. "Yes, my lord."

He gets punched hard in the left cheekbone and falls to the ground on his knees. Mey-Rin and Catherin gasp in shock while Lau curses and Ciel simply stares down at his fallen butler in shock. This has never happened before. Pluto whimpers in fear and slowly backs away with his tail between his legs.

Sebastian looks up at Agni with wide eyes and wipes off fresh blood from his mouth with the back of his gloved hand. That's blood! Actual blood, Ciel realizes. The last time Ciel saw Sebastian bleed was when he had his arm chopped off by Grell Sutcliffe's death scythe. How can a simple man cause the demon butler to bleed. Unless the man is not human either.

Sebastian's eyes glow red and punches Agni back in the face as well, making him stagger back. Agni swings another punch but Sebastian ducks his head, the man with the knife getting punched in the face instead and knocked unconscious.

"Oops, sorry, friend," Agni says.

One of the other men pulls out another knife and tries to stab Ciel from the side but Mey-Rin grabs his wrist, twisting it, and kicks him hard in the crotch. Pluto bites him on the ankle and the man screams. "Ahh! Get it off! Get it off! Get it off!"

Another man tries to grab Catherine but Lau hits him in the head with a stick. She smiles at Lau gratefully.

"Thank you," she says.

"You're welcome," he says. Another Indian man sneaks up behind her but Catherine turns around, punches him in the face and kicks him in the stomach.

Sebastian continues to block Agni's violent punches while holding Ciel close and shielding him from any harm. Ciel is still surprised how this man actually caused injury to Sebastian. Good thing it's not enough to disable his butler. This Agni man keeps striking Sebastian's arm with the tip of his fingers.

"I've been hitting your vital nerves for awhile. Your arm should be numb by now," Agni says as he readies to strike Sebastian again. "How are you still fighting?"

"Someone kill that English boy!" one of the other men says.

"What? Wait a second, who said anything about killing?" the boy says.

"We weren't doing anything but passing through!" Ciel snaps at him. "Are you nothing more than a
reckless savage who attacks anyone indiscriminately for walking by."

"Huh?" The boy looks at the rest of the Indian men around him. "Is this true? Tell me, men, did you attack this child for no good reason at all." The men simply stare at him. The boy shakes his head. "You people disappoint me. You are a disgrace to India. Agni, we are in the Englishmen side now. Take care of the situation."

"Yes, my prince." Within less than ten seconds, Agni defeats the thugs and puts their limp bodies together in a pile with their wrists tied behind their backs. The others stare in complete amazement.

"Sorry for the trouble my countrymen caused you. I hope you are not in any harm," the boy says as he picks up the top hat and gives it back to Ciel. "There's someone I need to find. If we're done talking here, Agni and I shall be off now. Goodbye."

The Indian boy and Agni leave.

Ciel sighs and puts his hat back on his head. "Well, that was a complete waste of time."

"Well, not entirely," Sebastian says while looking down at the fallen men, "We can still deliver these scoundrels to Scotland Yard. Surely one of them must be the highwayman."

"I could have used my gun," Catherine says, "But I preferred not to have any casualties during the investigation. Just in case..." She lifts up her skirt slightly and takes out her gun from her boot. Mey-Rin does the same and pulls out her own gun from the inside of her coat. Catherine nearly laughs. "Oh wow, you have a gun as well. Are you a policewoman too?"

Ciel's eye widens. Oh no. He can't let anyone know that Mey-Rin is an assassin. "No, of course she's not a policewoman. The gun is fake. She uses it to scare people away. It only shoots blanks. But since we are no longer in danger, she has no need of using it so I suggest you put it back in your coat, Mey-Rin." he says to her in a snarky tone. Mey-Rin is taken aback by this but obeys and puts the gun back in her coat.

She suddenly gasps. "Mr. Honghui has a knife on his arm."

Lau frowns in confusion before looking down at his arm. A knife is jabbed on his right arm near his elbow and the long sleeve is getting stained with blood. "Oh, no wonder it started hurting two minutes ago."

"You idiot," Ciel says, "How did you not notice a knife in your arm!?"

"Well, I'm sorry, I was too busy trying not to get myself killed by Indian thugs,"

Ciel growls in annoyance but finds it a waste of time to argue with this man. "Mey-Rin, take him back to the townhouse and get that knife out of his arm. We'll take it from here. And take Pluto with you."

Mey-Rin nods and leaves with Lau and Pluto.

Scotland Yard apprehend the Indian men that attacked Ciel, Sebastian and the others. However, Commissioner Arthur Randall is not very pleased to see Lieutenant Catherine Makarova again.

"Didn't I tell you to stay out of our business," he says, "I already told you we do not need Russia's help, especially from a woman."
"Sorry, Sir Randall," Ciel steps in to defend her, "But I'm afraid Lieutenant Makarova has proven to be more competent than all of you put together. She will be assisting me in the investigation of the highwayman whether you like it or not. And if you wish to complain to the queen, go ahead. I've already spoken to her long ago and she agreed to allow the Moscow City Police to get involved. Whether you agree or not, you no longer have a say in the manner, commissioner. Now, either you cooperate with the investigation or we're going to have a serious problem on our hands. Do you understand?"

Commissioner Randall glares at Ciel but gives in. "Fine."

"Contact us if any of those men give you any clue about the highwayman," he says.

"Very well."

"Sebastian, I'm tired. Let's go home," Ciel says, pressing his finger to his temple.

Sebastian bows his head. "Yes, my lord." And they continue their way back to the townhouse.

"That went well," Catherine sighs tiredly, "I guess I should be going back to the hotel. It's getting late. The streets are not safe at night."

Ciel and Sebastian stare at her and she looks at them confused.

"What?" she asks, "Was it my fault that we almost got killed? Was it the red cloak? Was the cloak too much? Did it bring too much attention -.

"Will you please shut up for a second?" Ciel says.

"Oh right, right. Sorry," she laughs nervously.

"I was thinking that, perhaps, you should stay with us at the townhouse for awhile," he suggests, "You'll be safer there."

Catherine frowns at them. "But I can take care of myself or do you not trust me?"

"Well, Miss Makarova," Sebastian says, "We do have to remind you that this not Russia. This is England. You don't know the streets of London like my master and I do. They can be quite eerie and unpredictable at night, and we wouldn't want anything happening to you."

"And it's not that we don't trust you though you have proven to be just as unpredictable as the streets of London," Ciel says, "But it's Scotland Yard I don't trust, especially Commissioner Randall. He finds it distasteful having a woman from the Moscow City Police investigating a man's case. Who knows if he'll try to get rid of you. Or send someone else to do the job. My best suggestion is to stay with us where Scotland Yard won't try to disturb you."

Catherine remains silent for a moment before sighing in defeat. "Very well then. I'll go back to the hotel and get my bag then."

Sebastian lifts up his hand and shows her a brown suitcase. Catherine's eyes widen in surprise.

"Is that my suitcase?" she asks.

"Why yes. I thought you might be needing it so I decided to fetch it for you," he says with a smile. Catherine stares in shock but takes the suitcase from him anyways.

"Um, thank you. I appreciate it very much," she says.
"All right then," Ciel says, "Let us be off."

They head off to the townhouse. They'll leave the highwayman investigation for tomorrow.

Mey-Rin takes off her coat and unbuttons her shirt, taking it off as well, now standing in only her trousers and bandages around her chest. She hisses in pain when she presses a hot wet cloth against her bruised cheek. This is the second time she's been struck in the face, the first time being hit by Alois Trancy for accidentally spilling the wine on his trousers. Why is it that every time men hit women, they have the necessity to strike her in the face? She literally felt her eye sockets nearly popping out of her skull.

She sighs and looks at herself in the bathroom mirror. The mark on her cheek has grown from red to purple. She's surprised Sebastian didn't suffer from any bruises from that Agni's constant blows. Well, he is a demon, after all. It seems that demons tend to heal quicker and grow back limbs.

"This is what I get for protecting the master," she says to her own reflection but she can't complain. Ciel did strike a man in the face with his cane for trying to touch her. She has never seen Ciel that angry before, except when his aunt died. But striking a man was definitely something new to her. She prays it doesn't happen again, especially if he does it unintentionally.

"Are you decent?" She recognizes the master's voice but he's standing outside the bathroom behind the door. He probably thinks she's naked. She didn't hear him enter the room though.

She nods her head but forgets that he's hidden behind the door and can't see her. "Almost."

"Listen, I'm sorry for yelling at you earlier," he says, "I got worried."

"I understand, master."

"Now you see why I need you dressed as a boy when we're out in the streets?" he says. She nods, recalling recent events.

"But what of the lieutenant? She's a woman as well -.

"Catherine Makarova is not my concern, Mey-Rin. It's you. First, you got shot and nearly killed. Second, you get kidnapped and nearly killed by Grell Sutcliff. Third, you nearly fell off the docks after going insane. And lastly, you almost got assaulted by those Indian men from East End. You're a valuable asset in the Phantomhive Manor but also a living target."

"I am only following orders and protecting you, my lord," she says, "Getting hurt is the price I'm willing to pay -.

"Protecting me is Sebastian's job, not yours. Your job is to obey instructions," he says sternly. "If you can't do that, then you have no business here. So either you do as you're told and stop getting yourself hurt or stay out. Do you understand me?"

Mey-Rin looks down and sighs. "Yes, my lord. I promise it won't happen again."

"Good. Attend to your bruises. They look ghastly," he says and leaves the room.

She nods and smiles to herself in the mirror before attending to the bruises on her cheek and the faint purple fingerprints on her upper arm. She prefers if the young master doesn't seem them. They'll wear off eventually.
She hears noises coming from outside and looks out the window. One of the master's carriages is stopping at the front door of the townhouse and Baldroy and Finnian jump out of the carriage excitedly.

"We're here!"

Mey-Rin smiles and waves hello from her window.

"All right, Tanaka, might as well hold on tight," Baldroy says as he lifts the wheelchair upward and pushes it over the townhouse's doorstep. The wheelchair nearly sways sideways but Sebastian pushes it upright.

"Careful, Bard," he says, "Otherwise, you'll injure him."

Baldroy laughs nervously and scratches the back of his head. "Sorry, Sebastian. Sorry Tanaka."

Tanaka simply chuckles in response. "Hohoho."

They finally manage to get Tanaka into the townhouse. The rest of the servants continue to unload the rest of their luggage out of the carriage. Ciel watches from a window as Finnian drops his suitcase and the clothing spilling onto the gravel. Finny starts bawling but Baldroy snaps at him and tells him to just pick them up. Ciel simply rolls his eye and steps away from the window. Ciel has made himself kind enough to invite the rest of the servants to London. It would have been unfair to simply bring Mey-Rin along. Plus he doesn't want Baldroy to continue thinking he's mistreating Mey-Rin. He's already seen how Baldroy glares at him and Sebastian, continues asking questions to Mey-Rin and has confronted Sebastian more than once. If this continues any longer, Sebastian can end up tearing Baldroy in half. Ciel can't have that in his household.

He hears footsteps coming up the stairs. He sees Tanaka slowly walking up the stairs, supporting himself on a walking cane instead of sitting on the wheelchair.

"Are you insane?" Ciel snaps at him. "You'll hurt yourself."

Tanaka huffs. "I'm not invalid."

Ciel looks down the stairs and glares at Sebastian who's holding the wheelchair in his hands. Sebastian shrugs and climbs up the stairs with the wheelchair.

"You're a stubborn old man, as always," Ciel says to Tanaka sternly. "You'll end up dying because of your stubbornness."

"Hohoho," he laughs, "The only reason I'm alive is because I am so stubborn."

Sebastian sets the wheelchair on the hallway floor and Tanaka slowly sits back down. Ciel sighs in frustration. Damn you, old man.

"Take Tanaka to one of the guests room," he says, "Make sure everything is well-accommodated for him."

Sebastian bows his head. "Yes, my lord." And pushes the wheelchair (with Tanaka in it) down the hall to one of the bigger guests room. The more room, the better.

After filling the tub with hot water, Catherine ties her blonde hair in a bun, wipes the red lipstick
from her lips and strips down from her clothes. Sebastian Michaelis left her some towels early so she
could dry up afterwards. That was nice of him. She turns her head around, craning her neck and
hearing it crack and pop. It's been an exhausting day. Her feet are sore. She curls her toes inwards,
hearing them crack as well.

She gets in the bathtub and lets out a relieved breath. She finds the bathroom of the townhouse a lot
nicer than the one from the hotel room she rented out.

She suddenly feels an uncomfortable sensation on the back of her shoulders. She rolls her eyes and
sits up. "Not this again," she mumbles to herself and takes a back scratcher she kept in her suitcase
for the journey. Her back has been suffering an unbearable itch for over a week and it's driving her
insane. She scratches her back and sighs in relief. "Ah, that's better."

Ciel continues entertaining Lau downstairs in the parlour with Pluto curled up by the fireplace. It's
the least he can do, despite finding the man an annoyance. He might look incompetent but the man
does have his uses. Mey-Rin brings them hot chai tea and a plate of chocolate chip scones, and
returns to the kitchen to attend the rest of her duties.

"I called Ran-Mao after your maid healed me," Lau says to Ciel after taking a sip of tea. "I told her
I'd be staying for the night. I didn't want her to worry about me."

"It's natural for siblings to be concerned for each other," Ciel says while he sips his own tea.

"Why bring the rest of the servants to London?" Lau asks. "Aren't your butler and maid enough?"

"I can't leave them alone in the house," Ciel says, "They'll destroy the house. Baldroy has a knack of
blowing up the kitchen and Finnian will kill the garden with anti-pestilence. Also, Tanaka needs
special care. He was stabbed in the back the night my parents died. He can barely walk and has
difficulty breathing when he stands and talks. He needs medication and only Sebastian and I know
which ones to give him."

"Oh! Makes sense. So, what shall be done about the highwayman once you catch him?"

"Hmm. The most reasonable aftermath will be present him to the queen. In order to do so, he needs
to be captured alive," he says as he sips his tea, "Perhaps I'll allow Scotland Yard handle it from
there. Whether they'll execute him or not, it's not my problem."

They both hear a crashing noise coming from the kitchen. Ciel rolls his eye in annoyance.

"I'm sorry for interrupting, Master," she says, agitated, "But you really must come see this."

Ciel sighs and gets up from his armchair. "What is it this time?"

"They're in the kitchen," she says, "And they're wrecking everything."

Ciel frowns. He has no idea what she's talking about. He assumes that it's probably Baldroy and
Finny again. Or it could be the rats. Rats have been plaguing London for awhile. But Sebastian made
sure the townhouse is clean from mice and rats. He'll just have to go to the kitchen himself and see what she's talking about.

He follows her to the kitchen and his eye nearly bursts out of his skull. He sees the Indian boy from the East End as well as the man named Agni. They're rummaging through kitchen drawers and opening cabinets.

"Have you found any cookies, Agni?"

"Sorry, my prince. No cookies."

"Urgh. But I'm starving -.

"Oi!" Ciel snaps at them and the two turn face them. The Indian boy drops one of the jars and it shatters on the floor, causing Mey-Rin to yelp. "What the bloody hell are you two doing here!?"

"Well, I saved your life, didn't I? You are in debt with me now," the boy says, "In India, it's tradition to welcome and entertain benefactors. We even have a saying. Entertain the guests even if you must sell your treasures. Where is your bed, by the way?"

"Why the bloody hell do you need a bed?"

"In my country, we sit together with the guests on a bed," he says.

Ciel's face turns red with anger and irritation. "Beds are upstairs. We don't have them down here. Now would you please get out of my house?"

"Perfect," the boy says excitedly, "I should make myself at home then. Agni, have my things brought upstairs, please."

Agni smiles and bows his head. "Yes, prince." He leaves the kitchen.

The boy runs past Ciel out the kitchen. What the bloody fuck!? Ciel quickly runs after the boy who's already running up the stairs, rambling about how narrow the staircase is and how dull the colours of the walls are. Sebastian comes out from one of the bedrooms, carrying from towels, when the boy snatches one of them. Sebastian simply stares in surprise and confusion as the boy continues opening doors and entering rooms as if it were his house.

Ciel runs upstairs, panting in exhaustion, and continues chasing the boy down the hall. "Oi! Stop right there! Sebastian!"

"Um," Sebastian says, "What do you want me to do?"

Ciel growls in irritation but he has a point. What can Sebastian do? Kill them? Toss them out the window? Bury them alive? Toss them out like trash as those other Indian men claim how the English treat them?

He sees the Indian boy open up the door to Tanaka's room and quickly runs to stop him. "Oi! Leave him alone!"

"He has the biggest guest room in the house," the boy says in astonishment.

Ciel closes the door shut. "He needs the room so don't bother him."

"All right, I'll just take the master bedroom then," he says and walks away. "That has more room than the others."
"You're not getting any room because you're not staying in this house - Oi!" He follows him into the master bedroom where the Agni man is bringing the luggage. The boy jumps onto the bed and starts feeling the sheets with glitter of excitement in his eyes as if he never touched velvet before. Ciel growls in annoyance. "Are you deaf or stupid!? Get out of my house!"

The boy smiles and laughs. "I didn't consider staying at an inn. They're dull to me. Is it common in England for people to rid benefactors out into the cold -?"

"Who the hell do you think you are?" Ciel snaps at him.

"Oh." The boy hops off the bed and walks over to Ciel with an outstretched hand. "Allow me to introduce myself. Agni usually does it but I'm guessing England does this custom differently. I am Prince Soma Asman Kadar, the 26th child to the king of the Bengal State."

Sebastian, who standing behind Ciel, frowns curiously. "A prince?"

"Yes," Agni says, "And I am Prince Soma's loyal servant, Arshad Satyendra Iyer. But I am known as Agni."

"Now that we know each other, let us celebrate our newfound friendship," Prince Soma says while hugging Ciel tightly. Ciel tenses up and tries to push him away. He does not like being hugged, especially by strangers. "Agni, prepare tea for us all."

Agni smiles and nods. "Chai tea with ginger will be good for the cold. I shall be in the kitchen."

Sebastian's eyes widen and turn red when he hears this. Ciel can tell he is not happy about this either. "Excuse me, but serving tea is sort of my job."

"Oh good! You can help me then!" he says. Before Sebastian can protest, Agni grabs him by the wrist and drags him downstairs.

Prince Soma gasps and lets go of Ciel when he sees Pluto in the room. "You have a dog! Come here, boy!" He runs over to Pluto and hugs him. Much to Ciel's surprise, Pluto doesn't bark or growl at the prince as he scratches his ears and back. "I love dogs. I've never seen one in person! He's so cute!"

Ciel sighs and pinches the bridge of his nose. _This is not good._

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End chapter...I forgot what chapter this was
I just noticed something interest in the manga and anime. The India Arc doesn't exactly have a theme, per say. A good point was given to me by 7th Maniac "I do wonder how you'll change this ark. While I still liked it, it's not exactly one of my favourite. I end up frequently skipping it when rereading the manga or the anime so it should be interesting to see how this will differ." That's an interesting question because the India Arc doesn't exactly have a theme except Ciel and Sebastian finding their opposites Soma and Agni, who almost reflections of them. Soma and Agni are basically reminders of what Ciel and Sebastian are not. It's a good theme but it's mainly overlooked by the Curry Contest. It's not a bad thing but it doesn't really have a point except giving us a moment to breathe from the Ripper Arc. It looked like it was mainly filler arc. So, I might make a theme in this arc that might be a little controversial.

Aside from Ciel and Sebastian finding their opposites, one of the themes I'll be talking about in the India Arc is womenhood, the dangers of women and the dangers of being a woman in the 19th century. BRING ON THE HATE! XD

Now, I'm not going to start with the whole "feminism" thing because I know that "feminism" and "feminists" have gone to extreme. And yes, I AM a woman. But I do like to address that women were treated as lesser beings in the 19th century, mostly seen as fragile creatures who obligated themselves (or were obligated by others) to live with expectations and mostly used to breed the next generation and were only allowed to work domestic jobs, and they were considered unworthy and not deemed for marriage once they reach the age of 40 or 30, though I believe this is mostly happens to the higher class rather than the middle and working class. In the Book of Circus, Baron Kelvin (an upper class bloke) called his wife "haggard" and it has also been reflective in a few nineteenth century-themed novels and series. In the season 3 of Penny Dreadful, a group of women protesting for equal rights were brutally attacked by policemen. By the way, watch Penny Dreadful. It's awesome and it helped me make my Black Butler fanfiction a little more realistic. While I've read stories of 19th century themed novels where the reality of this is trying to be thrown out the window to make it more female-powered, it's better to show the ugly truth of women from the past centuries than to hide it. I also want to show the different between "feminism" and "feminazi" as feminism has lost its meaning over the years. So that's a theme that will be shown in the changes to the India Arc and hopefully it will be interesting...Hopefully. Don't kill me.
8:53 p.m.

Dinner at the Norrington Manor has always been distasteful, as long as Undertaker remembers. He has only been invited here once and that time, he was served bland turbot fish with broccoli. This is the reason why he didn't want to come but he couldn't deny such invitation from James, after everything the boy did to him at the pub. Tonight, the entrees consists of beef galantine, sauté of veal and curried veal. Spinach and eggs, and stuffed tomatoes, kidney soup, devilled kidneys, an entire hare garnished and lastly Christmas plum pudding for dessert. He feels like this is a waste of food, too much for so little people.

"Um, Mother," James speaks up after long minutes of silence. "Is it all right if I show Undertaker around the house?"

"Undertaker has already been here when he buried my mother," she says bitterly.

"Yes, but he's never had a tour through the house, now has he?" he asks, glancing awkwardly at Undertaker every now and then.

Lady Norrington sighs in defeat. "Hmm. Very well."

Once Undertaker finishes his curried veal and devilled kidneys (and James with his beef galantine and Christmas plum pudding), they excuse themselves and head out of the dining room. The walls in the house are mostly red and the wood is brown, making the house look like a sea of blood with only candelabras on the walls illuminating the place. For some reason, the sight of the red walls are making Undertaker's stomach turn uneasily. He despises this place.

At the end of a hall, he sees one of the Phantomhive boys standing there, wearing a white shirt with his eyes black and mouth completely bloody. The boy grins and giggles, showing yellow teeth and more blood gushing out of his mouth.

"Are you all right?" James' voice brings Undertaker out of his thoughts. He turns to look at him. He returns to look at the hall. No one is there. Undertaker sighs and presses a hand to his temple.

"I'm fine."

The two enter the walk-in closet. On one of the shelves, there lies a small red wooden chest. Undertaker sits on the chaise lounge while James fetches the chest.

"Here. I keep the letters in this chest," he says, "My brother wrote to me every day. You can see I didn't kill my brother."

"Hehehehe. We'll just have to see about that."

Undertaker takes the wooden chest and puts it on his lap. He opens it, showing many yellowing envelopes crammed inside. All of them have the same lion stamp and they were all send by Andrew Norrington. "Hmm." He takes out one of the envelopes that returns to the date when James was first
sent to India. It's already ripped open so it makes it easier for Undertaker to take out the letter to read it. "Dear James, I'm writing to see how you're doing? I'm sorry Mother and Father sent you away. It's my fault, really. I shouldn't have accused you for breaking the vase. I didn't think Mother and Father would go so far. I was just scared so I had to lie. I miss you. The Phantomhives miss you. Ciel, Elizabeth and Sirius miss you. I really hope you can forgive me and hopefully, we'll see each other again. With all my love, Andrew." Undertaker stares at the names of the two boys. Why must they keep mocking him? "Your brother is terrible at writing."

"Read the last letter he sent me," James says, sitting next to him.

Undertaker nods and takes out one of the other envelopes. This one dates back to the month Jack the Ripper ended. He unfolds the letter and reads it "Dear Brother, I know this is a bad time. I know that you're busy with your job. But I need you to return home. Please. I am ill and I have no one. I am trapped in a death bed with Mother waiting for me to die. I'm scared and I need to see your face before God or the Devil takes me away. You're the only family I ever truly loved. I know I apologized in many of my letters but I still wish to beg for forgiveness. I am sorry. For everything. For being a horrendous brother and friend. And for not being by your side when you needed me. If you find it in your heart to forgive me, please come back home so I may see your face before I die. If you do not wish to forgive me, then may this be my last letter. Goodbye, my brother. - Andrew."

Undertaker sighs and folds the letter once more before putting it back in the envelope and box. He looks at James. The young man's eyes are pooled with tears.

"I already forgave him the first time he apologized," James sniffles and wipes his tears away. "But he still thought I was angry with him. He sent me that box along with one of the other letters. That box had chocolates. They were stale by the time they got to India. I still ate them though. Every single one of them. Then I threw up in the washroom afterwards. How silly of me to do so."

Undertaker looks at the wooden box. A fine craftsmanship. Dark red mahogany with the carving of a vicious lion on the top lid. Andrew Norrington must have truly loved his brother if he sent James something so valuable. He lets out a deep sigh and shuts the box, locking it in place. He gives it back to James. "Sorry," he says, a genuine apology this time, not in a mocking manner as he usually does to many people.

James smiles slightly. "I mean, sure, Andrew and I weren't always thick as thieves but we never hated each other. I swear by my mother's life, Mr. Undertaker, I didn't kill my brother."

The mortician nods. "I believe you."

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't be crying like this. You probably think I'm pathetic," he says.

"Yes, you are, but..." Undertaker pulls James into a heated kiss. James hesitates before kissing back. "That doesn't make you any less attractive."

He knows he shouldn't messing around with this boy anymore. What they did at the pub was a one night thing. And the fact that he's the son of Lord and Lady Norrington makes it even more forbidding. But he can't seem to help it. He hates admitting it but he really does like James and the thought of seeing him alone or with someone else makes his blood boil.

James cups his face and continues kissing him softly. "I thought you said once."

"Hehehe. It seems that once is not enough for me," he says with a sly grin, "Lock the door, will you?"
James hesitates but does so and locks the door tightly. Once he does, Undertaker gestures him to come closer. He walks closer to the mortician and sits on his lap.

"I believe it's my turn to return the favour, Lord Norrington," he says and kisses James on the lips. James kisses back and then kisses his neck softly. Undertaker chuckles and slips his hand into James' trousers, grasping his arousal in a gentle squeeze. James moans softly and nuzzles his face into his neck. Undertaker removes his top hat and places it aside. James removes his jacket and unbuttons his shirt.

When he tries to push away the silver bangs from Undertaker's face, his wrist is quickly grabbed.

"I rather if you didn't do that," he says.

"Why not? What do you have to hide?"

"I just prefer to keep my personal things private for the moment. All right?"

"...All right."

The two continue kissing passionately. Undertaker slips off his robe and unbuttons his cassock, slipping it down to his elbows and exposing his pale scarred chest. He unbuttons the rest of James' shirt and kisses down his freckled neck and chest, causing the young man to moan softly. Undertaker gently pushes him to lie down on the chaise lounge and unbuttons his trousers while still kissing his neck and then peppers kisses down his chest and stomach while tugging down his trousers. He then nibbles his hips, making James shudder and bite his finger to silence his moaning.

"You don't want your mother to know what we're doing, do you?" Undertaker ask with a chuckle.

James chuckles as a response. "She would kill me."

"Then let us try to be quiet for awhile." Undertaker plants a kiss on his stomach and continues pleasuring him.

Words cease for the next two hours as the locked room is filled with nothing but passionate silent panting and moaning when Undertaker takes James's hardened member in his mouth and sucks gently. They're lucky the closet door is locked or Lady Norrington (or anyone in the house) would have a heart attack if they're found like this.

9: 35 p.m.

"I still can't believe those two are staying," Ciel says as he removes his eyepatch and he gets ready for bed. He puts on his light blue pajamas and Sebastian buttons the shirt before hopping into bed, "I was lucky to get my room back and offer them one of the larger guest rooms."

"You could always give me an order and I'll get rid of them for you," Sebastian says with a smirk.

Ciel glares at him. "By what? What will you do? Kill them? Toss them out into the streets? If we do, we'd be proving those Indian thugs right and they'll think we are a bunch of selfish arrogant Englishmen. I won't take the risk. As much as I do not like having strangers staying here, I have no other choice. But make sure they don't get in the way, especially that Soma boy. Do you understand me?"

Sebastian nods in agreement. "Yes, my lord. What should be done about Lieutenant Makarova? Are you not afraid that she will be in the way by allowing her into our investigation?"
Ciel has been thinking about it lately. So far, Lieutenant Makarova hasn't done anything to jeopardize the investigation. In fact, she's been quite helpful by providing information on her partner Detective Shinsky Yakovich. So he took the Orient Express to England instead of a ship. That makes Detective Shinsky a liar. Or perhaps, Scotland Yard is the one lying and is trying to mislead them. Still, they need to remain vigilant of her. They can't be sure to trust her. There's no telling what she'll do if she ever finds out their secret.

"Perhaps," he says, "But hopefully, she'll be useful to us. Still, I need you to keep an eye on her as well. I don't trust anyone."

"When I asked her about her relationship with Detective Yakovich, she became very defensive," Sebastian points out.

"Hmm. Find whatever information you can get out of her, by any means you find necessary. But I do not want her harmed. Do you understand?"

Sebastian smirks, his eyes turning red again, and he bows. "Yes, my lord. Get some rest, now. We have a lot of work to do tomorrow." He places a blanket over Ciel and turns down the oil lamp before leaving the room.

Ciel sighs and turns to side, getting into a better position to sleep. He nearly just when he comes face to face with Pluto staring at him with those crimson red eyes of his and whimpering. Ciel sighs and sits up from the bed, patting the pillow behind him. "Hé hé."

Pluto wags his tail happily and jumps into bed, curling up behind Ciel and lying down. Ciel rests his head on Pluto's ribcage area, snuggling against white fur. Pluto uses his jaw to drape the blankets over Ciel.

Ciel smiles and closes his eyes. "Thanks Pluto," he mumbles before falling asleep. Pluto closes his eyes and falls asleep as well.

Undertaker and James lie on the floor next to each other with a red throw blanket covering their lower halves, panting in exhausting. The mortician curls up close to the eighteen-year-old boy's warmth, brushing his long silver hair over his right shoulder and lying his head on the boy's heaving chest. James responds by kissing his head and chuckling, his orange-red curls splayed around his head like a fan.

"Well then," James breathes out. Undertaker chuckles and kisses his neck while his pale scarred around wraps around the boy's freckled waist.

"So, who's a better fuck? You or me?" the mortician asks with a devious grin.

"Definitely you," James says.

"Don't feel bad. I enjoy you cock still. Hehehe." Undertaker kisses him and James kisses back.

A knock on the closet door nearly startles them both. James quickly sits up and looks over his shoulder. Lucky he locked the door. Undertaker simply lies back on the floor with his hand covering his mouth, trying not to burst into laughter.

"James!"

It's his mother.
"Shit," James whispers and looks at Undertaker. "What do we do?"

The mortician folds his arms behind his head and grins at him. "I'm not leaving this spot."

"She'll want me to open the door. " The knocking keeps on going, more impatient than the last knock.

"Figure something out then. You're a smart boy. I'm sure you can think of something."

James rolls his eyes in annoyance and gets up, still naked. He walks to the door but doesn't open it. "Yes, mother?"

"It's time for bed," she says, "Did the undertaker leave?"

James looks over at Undertaker who bites onto the blanket hard to avoid giggling. James tries very hard not to laugh as well. "Y-yes, mother. Mr. Undertaker left about an hour ago."

"Well, good riddance," she says, "I don't want that freakish bastard in my house." Undertaker gets up from the floor and walks over to him, nuzzling his face into his neck. James shudders quietly, trying to hold back a moan as his mother continues to rant about how horrible and terrifying Undertaker is while the mortician continues to kiss, lick and nibble down his chest and stomach. "You stay away from that man from now on. No good will come from him."

James bites his lower lip, keeping himself from moaning as Undertaker takes his member into his mouth again. "Y-yes, Mother. Goodnight."

The moment her footsteps die away when she leaves the room, Undertaker pulls his member out of his mouth, stand up and pulls James into a deep kiss, pressing him against the wood of the door. "I'll sneak out the window once we're done," he says.

James chuckles in response. "I figured you'd say that."

Undertaker laughs and pulls James down to the floor where they continue their heated passion for this rest of the night.

10:13 p.m.

"Come on, Finny, just drink it." Sebastian stops by the room where Baldroy and Finnian are staying at. He hears all the fussing of Baldroy trying to give Finnian lemon balm tea but he's refusing. The butler sighs. The nightmares again.

"If you don't drink, you won't be able to sleep," Baldroy tries his best to make Finnian drink. "I added honey so it would taste better so will you just drink it already."

Finnian keeps shaking his head in refusal, holding the pillow tightly.

"You're acting like a five-year-old," Baldroy says, "You're sixteen. Grow the fuck up."

"What's going on here?" Sebastian enters the room with his arms crossed.

"Finny doesn't want to drink the tea," Baldroy tells him.

Sebastian sighs. This is not the first time Finnian refused to drink the tea. "Bard, go to the kitchen for a few minutes and make sure the dishes are ready for tomorrow's breakfast."

Bard reluctantly nods and leaves the room.

Sebastian sits besides Finnian and tries to give him the tea but he keeps shaking his head. "Come now, Finnian. The tea will help you sleep. You know how you are at night."

"I don't want to sleep."

"Why not?"

"I keep having nightmares," he says, "Every time I drink that tea, I keep having the same nightmares I can't wake up from."

"Are they same ones from Germany."

Finnian nods and closes his eyes tight. "I don't want to go back there. I don't want to see that lab ever again."

"Finny," Sebastian pats him on the head. "You're no longer in the lab. You're safe here with us, remember? Whatever you see in your dreams is not real. They're just bad memories manifesting in your mind. Nothing can hurt you there. Now..." He gives him the cup of tea. "Drink this. Lemon balm tea is excellent for sleep and reduces anxiety. If you don't sleep, you'll be disturbing everyone else's sleep. And you don't want to disturb the young master's sleep, now do you?"

Finnian shakes his head but for a different reason and takes the teacup in his hands. Sebastian refuses to leave his side until he drinks the entire cup which he does. Once Finnian is done with the cup of teeth, he sets it down on the nightstand and lies on the bed, the tea having an immediate effect. Sebastian smiles slightly and puts blankets over him, tucking him in.

"Now, you just rest. Do you understand?"

"Yes. Goodnight, Sebastian," Finnian says before closing his eyes and falling deep asleep.

Sebastian quietly walks out of the bedroom and quietly shuts the door behind him. Baldroy returns upstairs, yawning and stretching his arms over his back. Sebastian simply glares at him.

"How long has he been having nightmares?"

"Over a week. Honestly, I thought he'd be over it after three years."

"And you didn't even bother to tell me? Honestly, Bard, even Mey-Rin isn't this neglectful and careless."

"Hey, hey, hey. Since you're always busy tending to the master and doing everything around the house, I didn't think of wanting to bother you."

Sebastian sighs and pinches the bridge of his nose. He's really tempted into ripping Baldroy tongue out but he resists. It wouldn't be of good use to do so. "Listen, if this happens again, just inform me no matter what. Right now, try to get some sleep. If he starts screaming, call me."

"Yes, sir," he nods and returns to his room, shutting the door.

Sebastian sighs once more before retiring to his room now that he has everything done for the night. Tanaka has already taken his medication and is now asleep. He made sure of it. The young master would be displeased if Tanaka wakes up in the middle of the night and starts wandering around the townhouse by himself with the risk of falling. The servants are asleep. The guests are well
accommodated and asleep as well. He made sure Lieutenant Makarova has enough clean towels and sheets and placed her clothing in the wardrobe. However, she refused to have him fold her undergarments in the drawers. It would have been interesting to see her reaction if he takes a gander at her bodice and bloomers. The same thing happened with Prince Soma when he offered to put away his clothes. That butler Agni said he would put Prince Soma's clothing away himself since that bratty prince trusts no one else. Sebastian doesn't see the purpose of the prince being so private. They're male. Sebastian swears that if the prince proves to be as difficult as earlier, there will be dire consequences. The master is asleep as well, which is good. As long as he doesn't have another nightmare like Finnian, everything will be fine. The only thing he dreads is having to allow him to sleep with that disgusting monster of hell he has for a dog. He still can't believe Mey-Rin brought it into the house. No, he can't believe the young master decided to keep it in the first place. There's nothing else for it though. Might as well leave it be.

Sebastian gets ready for bed. Demons hardly need any sleep. They find it unnecessary. They only sleep for recreational purposes. Sebastian hasn't slept in weeks because he has a lot of work around the house. Now that all the work is done for the day, he might as well try to get some sleep.

He removes his black tailcoat and unbuttons his dark grey vest and white shirt, and pulls down his black trousers. Since he doesn't have actual nightwear, he managed to snatch one of Baldroy's clothes. Being taller than Baldroy, the trousers' legs feel a little short. He gets into bed and lies straight as a board, not used to sleeping on a bed as humans do.

3:00 a.m.

Mey-Rin wakes up startled after having another nightmare. She was in those corridors again with the torn up body and her hands covered in blood. Again, the other man was trying to grab her. Trying to bite her. This time he brought friends. They all had their eyes bandaged and their mouths snarling. She wakes up shaking and breathing heavily, her body burning up. It was just another dream. It's not real. She takes a deep shaky breath and lies back down on the bed, looking up at the ceiling. It's just a nightmare. She closes her eyes and tries to go back to sleep.

That's when a piercing scream makes her sit up from her bed, almost making her scream herself.

A shrill piercing scream of a woman fills the house, startling Sebastian from his sleep. He quickly sits up from the bed, swinging his legs over the edge and grabbing the lantern, before running out of his room. He sees Mey-Rin bursting out of her room agitated and eyes wide.

"What happened this time?" he asks Mey-Rin irritably, assuming that it was her screams.

"I don't know," she says, looking shaken. "I was asleep when I heard the screams. I was so scared, I thought my heart would climb out of my throat."

"So it wasn't you who screamed?" he asks and she shakes her head. Odd. He then sees Lieutenant Catherine walk down the hall towards them wearing a satin blue robe over her nightgown and looking just as alarmed as Mey-Rin. Perhaps Catherine was the one who screamed.

"Who the bloody hell screamed?" she asks and Sebastian frowns at her in surprise.

"It wasn't you then?" he asks.

Catherine shakes her head, her eyes wide. "Of course not! I was asleep when it happened. I almost fell off the bed." She then turns to Mey-Rin. "You didn't scream?"
"No, I was awoken by it like you," Mey-Rin says.

"If it wasn't neither of the two, then who was it?"

Baldroy suddenly appears holding a rifle in his hands. "I heard someone screaming. Did someone break into the house?"

"Not that we know of," Sebastian says, "Apparently, none of the girls were responsible for the screaming. Did you check if it was Finnian?"

Baldroy nods. "I checked. He's still sleeping. It wasn't him -.

"Who screamed?" Ciel appears in the hallway as well, along with Lau and the disgusting mutt.

"It wasn't me or Lady Catherine, my lord," Mey-Rin says. "We heard it as well."

"Well, someone screamed and it was a woman," Lau says, "What a frightful scream it was. It sounded like someone was being murdered."

"Maybe it was a ghost," Mey-Rin says.

"Honestly, Mey-Rin, this is not one of those ghost stories you read," Ciel says sternly.

"Well, it's possible."

"Where are Prince Soma and Agni?" Sebastian asks, noticing that neither of them are around. Tanaka is not here either but that's for an entirely different reasons.

"Here." Agni suddenly appears along with Prince Soma. The little Indian prince seems just as startled as everyone else, his chest heaving and his breath heavy. "What happened?"

"Did you hear the screams?" Ciel asks.

"Y-yes," Agni stutters, "It startled my young prince from his slumber. What was that?"

"I don't know," Ciel says, "I'm going to check on Tanaka. He must be awake as well. Sebastian, search the house. If neither of the girls were responsible for the screaming, then someone broke into the house. Everyone else, return to your rooms. Immediately."

"Yes, my lord," Sebastian bows his head and goes to search the house. Ciel goes to check on Tanaka and the rest head for bed.

The moment Ciel enters Tanaka's room, he is immediately aimed at with a gun. Ciel gets flashbacks of his parents getting shot, forcing him to freeze on the spot with his hands raised in the air and shaking.

"Tanaka, it's...it's me," he stutters nervously. Tanaka lowers his handgun and puts it away in the nightstand's drawer. "You heard the screams as well?"

He nods silently. Ciel sighs, his heart still pounding hard in his chest from seeing the gun. He walks over to Tanaka and helps him get back into bed.

"I'm sorry about the noise. No one broke in so far," he says, "You can rest easy."

Tanaka stares at Ciel without saying a word. He places a blanket over the old man but he still hasn't
said a word. "What?" he asks.

The long silence makes Ciel sigh. "Try to get some rest. All right?...Goodnight, Tanaka."

He leaves the room and shuts the door behind him, tears filling his eye.

"Are you all right, Soma?" Agni asks while tucking the prince back into bed. Soma nods though he still looks shaken up, his face practically draining from colour. "I'm sorry if you were frightening. Do not worry. You're safe now."

Soma gulps and looks under the bed. "Are there any rats under here?"

"Don't worry," Agni straightens him up and tucks him back into bed. "There are no rats under the bed. I checked."

"Could you at least sleep next to me for the night?" Soma asks, almost beggingly. Agni looks at him, frowning. Soma pouts and gives him pleading eyes. "Please?"

Agni sighs but nods in defeat. "Very well, my pri-prince. Just give me a few moments." Agni goes to the other side of the room and grabs a few pillows from the chaise lounge. He returns to the bed and lies down next to Soma but without going under the covers. He then puts the pillows between him and the prince. "There we go. Now go back to sleep. We have a long day tomorrow."

"Thank you, Agni," he yawns. "Goodnight"

Soma closes his eyes and quickly falls asleep. Agni smiles softly and brushes the boy's short black hair away from his face. He vowed himself to protect the prince no matter what happens and no matter how extreme his methods are. Soma will always be his top priority.

With the oil lamp glowing brightly, Sebastian searches the guests rooms, the bathrooms, the closets, under the beds, outside the balconies. There doesn't seem to be anyone upstairs. So, he checks downstairs. He checks the parlour, the drawing room, the kitchen, every nook and cranny of the house. No one seems to be down here on the main floor either. He then goes downstairs to the wine cellar below the house. He looks behind the shelves, between every crack and every hole. Just like the rest of the house, there is no one to be found. No signs of any girl or woman wandering the house and no signs of a break-in. Perhaps Mey-Rin is right and it was some sort of ghost. There have been history of deaths in the townhouse. Sebastian chuckles to himself. What nonsense.

He returns upstairs to the main floor. That's when he notices a presence lurking around on the main floor.

His eyes turn blood red and his pupils turn slit as he heads his way to the kitchen as he hears the clattering noise of dishes. He steps into the kitchen with the kitchen knife slipping from the inside of his sleeve to his hand, ready to stab the intruder. However, his eyes turn brown again when he finds Lieutenant Catherine in the kitchen instead.

Catherine immediately turns around at the sound of his footsteps and yelps at the sight of Sebastian entering the kitchen.

Sebastian chuckles in amusement. "Am I really that repulsive to look at?"

"It's only you. Good. For a moment, I thought you were a ghost," she says.
If only she knew that he's much worse. "I'm guessing you're just as superstitious as Mey-Rin."

"Well, you'll never know what really lurks around this house," she says, "I'm guessing it's old enough to hold up a few past spirits that could not find their way to heaven."

Or hell, he thinks. "This house is only forty-five years old. The Phantomhives had this house built in London whenever they needed to take their time away from the mansion."

"Oh, so I'm guessing no ghosts then," she says, "My mistake."

"What are you doing down here? If I dare ask. Are you not supposed to be sleeping like the others?"

"Aren't you supposed to be asleep as well." She comes back strong. "I came here to make some tea. I know Lord Phantomhive strictly told us to stay in our rooms but I honestly can't sleep after all that. I thought drinking hot tea might help me."

"Would you like me to make it for you?"

"That would be nice thank you."

Sebastian makes the same tea he made for Finnian to help him sleep through the night. Lemon palm tea. Good for the stress and the anxiety and helps with sleep deprivation. However, he uses less of the tea leaves so that Miss Makarova doesn't oversleep.

He suddenly remembers what the young master told him. Find whatever information you can get out of her. His eyes almost turn red again and a smirk softly displays on his face. He knows exactly how to extract information out of her. It always works with every woman he meets. The nun at the church. The librarian. One of the maids at the Midford Estate. He's glad he didn't get in trouble with Lady Midford.

The smirk is replaced by his usual soft smile as he pours the tea into the cup and places it on the table in front of her. She smiles kindly at him. Her face looks pale and fresh with excess colour on her lips a lot of women wear on their faces. Well, it is three o' clock in the morning. Who is going to be wearing make-up at this hour?

"So, lieutenant, how long will you be staying here in England?" he asks as he sits down across her with his own cup of tea.

"Hmm." She purses her lips tightly. "Until the investigation is done, which I will admit it could take a while. Afterwards, I will be taking Shinsky's body back to Russia and give him a proper funeral. His family will be mourning. But at least, he's at peace."

"I can never understand the obsession of heaven and peace," he says while stirring his tea, "In history, religion has always been used to keep the people in control. Did you know that the Bible was mistranslated when printed in different language yet they never bother to fix the problem? Not to mention that priests and nuns only read the verses that were convenient to them in order to force their control on the believers and non-believers."

"Hmm. And only the priests were allowed to read the Bible," she says, "The locals were only allowed to listen and obey the Bible's words even if the texts are manipulated to the convenience of the authorities. Are you an atheist?"

"Something like that. And you?" he asks. "You seem to be a free thinker as well. You don't seem to follow expectations of other people and I can't seem to imagine someone like you following the rules of an ancient book written by men who claimed to have seen God and were instructed to write the
testaments for him."

Catherine smiles slightly and puts two cubes of sugar into the lemon palm tea. "I'm a Catholic. I'm simply not an extremist fanatic like many. I don't condemn others for having different beliefs. Like you. I'm guessing you believe in logic as well as I do."

Sebastian chuckles in amusement. "I'll believe in anything that doesn't involve God or other holy religions."


"I supposed that's true. I guess he seems to love the evil as well."

Catherine stares at Sebastian, her brow furrowing a little. "What do you mean?"

"Well, don't take offense but God seems to be the fault of not taking responsibility for what happens to the people he created."

"It is said that only God is perfect. He created us humans. I also believe that he answers our prayers daily even if the answers are done by action instead of actual words. However, it is said that God has no control in the human's decision to commit inhumane acts. It's like…Adam and Eve. He could have made Eve not eat the fruit from the tree, which by the way is a pomegranate and not an apple like a lot of people thought. But it was her decision to make to whether fall into temptation or not. She made her choice and decided to fall into the snake's trap."

Sebastian nods in agreement but he can't help but find it amusing contradicting her. "Yes but men and women around the world are tempted into corruption and they commit unspeakable acts because God doesn't take his time to correct them. If he had, there wouldn't be so many deaths around the world. The Black Plague. The War of the Roses. The wars in Rome. The female infanticides in China. Jack the Ripper. Detective Yakovich. A lot of deaths could have been prevented if God would step in and put a stop to it. But it seems he enjoys sitting in his throne, watching the world fall apart. Again, no offense. I am only expressing a fact."

"But your fact can't be proven valid if you haven't heard his side of the story," she says.

"And I probably never will."

Catherine starts laughing, more like a giggle. "When did a pleasant late-night tea become a debate on religion?"

"Perhaps I wanted to start a conversation with you," he says with a warm smile.

"You could have chosen a topic that is less…controversial."

"And what would you like to talk about?"

"Hmm. I can't really come up with a topic at the moment."

"How about we talk about Detective Yakovich?" he asks and that pretty smile of hers disappears. "Is it the first time someone has claimed for you to be having an affair with him?"

She sighs and shakes her head. "Not really no...A few colleagues at the Moscow City Police assumed the same thing since Shinsky and I were always working together in private. One day, the rumours spread to his wife's ears. Guess how that turned out?"
"Do I really wish to know?" he asks with a playful chuckle.

"She came to our station and slapped me in the face. She then demanded a divorce from Shinsky to which he refused. He kept telling her there was nothing going on between me and him. I don't think she believed him. And I still don't think she believes. Before I came here to England, she accused me of hiding him. She said we were planning on running away together."

"Oh how disappointing she will be when her husband's body is brought back to Russia," he chuckles, imagining a haggard wife weeping over the rotting corpse of her husband.

"You're grotesque," she says.

"Am I? How so?" Sebastian asks with an intrigued smile.

"You seem to find amusement in the misery of others. You seem to laugh at the thought of Mrs. Yakovich weeping for her husband's death. It makes you look cruel and grotesque."

"Hmm…Perhaps I enjoy being grotesque. It's better than being boring."

She smiles and finishes drinking her tea. "This was delicious. Thank you, Mr. Michaelis."

Sebastian smiles, pleased that he was actually to get some information out of her even if it wasn't very helpful. There's still much he needs to get out of her. Coaxing her will be the best method. He watches her get up from the chair and put the teacup in the sink.

"I should get to bed. It's late. I have work to do tomorrow," she says.

"Are you sure you don't wish to stay a little longer?" he asks as he stands close behind her, his eyes turning red with desire, "Perhaps we can talk in my room in private. It's such a beautiful night. And letting it waste away would be such a pity, don't you agree?"

"Mr. Michaelis, are you trying to seduce me?" she asks coolly. Sebastian snakes his arms around her waist. He senses her tense up in his arms. They all become tense in his arms. It takes time for them to relax and give in to his embrace. Eventually, they always give in to their carnal desires.

Sebastian suddenly has his arms slowly pushed away from Catherine's waist. He frowns in confusion. Catherine turns to face him and smiles. The red in his eyes die back to brown.

"…Goodnight, Mr. Michaelis," she says before exiting the kitchen, leaving him standing there dumbfounded and his red eyes wide in shock.

What just happened?

Lol. As I said before, this chapter is pretty much pointless but I'm glad I wrote it. It was writing Sebastian getting cockblocked for the first time. I hope you enjoyed.
I'm terrible at writing fighting scenes so writing the dual between Sebastian and Agni was horrible. I still hope you enjoy the rest of the chapter. Sorry it took longer than I thought.

Also, I'll be introducing another character to the story who may not be special to many but will be special to Ciel.

Ciel stirs from his sleep as he hears the window curtains being drawn open, the bright morning light hitting his face. He makes a face and hides his face in the pillow. *Darn it, Sebastian. Can't you wake for me to actually wake up?*

"It's time to wake up, Lord Phantomhive."

Ciel jumps and quickly sits up when he recognizes that the voice doesn't belong to Sebastian, but to that darn Indian butler Agni. He bows his head in greeting with that darn smile on his face. "Namaste ji. Good morning."

Ciel quickly puts his eyepatch over his eye to cover his contract and jumps out of his bed. "Why on earth are you in my room!?!" he snaps demandingly. Pluto wakes up and jumps out of bed as well.

Soma suddenly enters the room, already dressed in a white shirt, khaki trousers and an orange-red sash draped over his shoulders with his short black hair neatly brushed. He giggles as he scratches Pluto behind the ears before letting him go. "Because we're going out. You must show us around," he says.

"And why should I do that!?"

"Because I saved your life so you owe me," he says and grabs Ciel's wrist, dragging him out of the room. "I command you to show us around London."

"Oi!" Ciel tugs his wrist from his grasp. "You really expect me to go out into the streets dressed like this?"

"Then go change-."

"Ahem." Sebastian suddenly enters the room, interrupting the ruckus. "Pardon, prince. I am terribly sorry, but my master's day is full. I'm afraid there's a great deal of work and studies he must attend to. So, if you wish, feel free to have breakfast in the dining room."


Sebastian goes to check on Finnian, already finding him awake and sitting on the bed. He's sort of glad Finnian was asleep for the entire night, especially after that dreadful scream from last night. Otherwise, it would have been difficult to get to fall asleep again.

"Let me see," he says while pressing his hand against the lad's forehead, checking his temperature. He's a little warm but he's not burning up like last time. "Better than last time."

"Last time, he was burning up like a stove," Baldroy says while observing from the doorframe with his arms crossed over his chest.
"Well, it seems that he's feeling better now," he says and looks at Finnian. "You think you can work today without collapsing?"

Finnian nods vigorously. "Yes, sir."

"Very well," Sebastian stands up, "The two of you get dressed and take charge of today's breakfast while I take charge of the master's lessons today. Remember, do this quietly and don't make a mess of things. Bard, make sure you give him a cup of coffee so he remains awake" He gives Baldroy the menu for today's breakfast before leaving the room.

He then attends to Tanaka who is as stubborn as always. It doesn't take much effort for him to put the old man on the wheelchair though. He's a heavy old man but not that heavy. He wonders why did the young master made him do all these tasks: wake Tanaka up, get him cleaned, get him dressed, give him his medication, bring his breakfast; etc. Sebastian already finds it aggravating enough to take care of a bratty thirteen-year-old boy, now he has to take care of an old stubborn man.

Despite trying to stop him to get out of the chair, Tanaka grabs his walking cane and struggles to get back on his two feet until he's finally standing straight.

"You shouldn't be standing like this," Sebastian says, "The young master is worried you'll fall down the stairs. At least, let me help you -.

"No, I can do it myself, thank you," Tanaka says gruffly. "How is the young lord, by the way?"

"Why don't you ask him yourself?" Sebastian says.

"Urgh. I'm not in the mood for his games today."

"You say that almost every day of the week. I don't understand what's gotten you in a bad mood these days. You've never shown any harsh behaviour towards the young master."

"That's my business to take care of, not yours," he says. Sebastian rolls his eyes. He's just as stubborn as the young master.

Soma and Agni sit around the table by themselves while Sebastian helps Ciel get dressed for his lessons. Soma sits there, tapping on the white-clothed table and sighing in boredom.

"Chinta mat karo (Do not worry, Soma)," Agni says. "Ek baar Lord Phaintomiv apane sabak khatm kar lete hain, to ham shahar ke chaaron or dikhae jaenge. Aap dekhenge (Once Lord Phantomhive finishes his lessons, we'll be shown around the city. You shall see)."

"Main bas meena dhoondhana chaahata hoon (I simply wish to find Meena)," he says, "Kya yah poochhane ke lie bahut kuchh hai? Jaahir hai, ham ise apane aap nahn kar sakate hain. Yahaan sadakon bhoobalabhulaiya kee tarah hain. Yahee kaaran hai ki hamen hamen dikhaane ke lie Siel Phaintomiv kee aavashyakata hai (Is it that too much to ask? Obviously, we can't do it by ourselves. The streets here are like labyrinths. That's why we need the Ciel Phantomhive to show us around)."

"Mujhe pata hai. Lekin hamen dheeraj rakhana chaahie. Kya aap samajhe? (I know. But we must be patient. Do you understand?)"

Soma sighs once more but nods in agreement. The growling in his stomach is annoying him.

"Naukaron ko itanee der kyon le raha hai? (What is taking the servants so long?)"

"Ladake ke batalar, Sebestiyan ne mujhe chetaavanee dee thee ki yahaan ke naukar thoda dheeme
hain isalie hamen dheeraj rakhana chaahie chaahie koe phark nahin padata (The boy's butler, Sebastian, did warn me that the servants here are a little slow so we must be patient no matter what)," he says and sees Mey-Rin enter the dining room with two plates. "Oh dekho, hamaara khaana bhojan hai (Oh look, there's our food)." He stands up and walks over to Mey-Rin. "I'll take them off your hands, my lady."

"Yes, please take them," she says, "I am most likely to drop them before they can make it to the table."

Agni nods and takes the plates from her.

Soma frowns at the plate after it was placed in front of him. "What is this phallic-looking food?" he asks while poking at the sausage with a fork.

"Um," Mey-Rin tries to explain, ignoring the fact that he compared the sausage with a phallus. Clearly, he's never had them back in India, "The dish is called Bangers and Mash, my prince. It's a common dish here in England. What you have there is sausage with mash potatoes served with onion gravy. And on the side, you have Brie cheese from France."

"This is not a cow, is it?" Soma asks while stabbing the sausage with a fork. "The cows are very sacred in my country. We cannot eat them."

"Oh no, my prince," she says, "It's made of lamb. Don't worry."

"Pray that your word is true, Miss," he says, "Or I would have to spend my years praying to Kali for forgiveness." He takes a bite of the Brie cheese. His eyes widen and he hums. "Hmm. It's really good."

Mey-Rin frowns in confusion. Cheese is made from cows. "Didn't he just say that cow is sacred in your country?" she asks Agni.

"We do not eat their meat," he explains, "But we drink their milk. They're gifts from the gods."

"I see. I hope you don't mind me asking, Prince Soma, but what is India like?" she asks, "I've never been here before."

"I live in Bengal. It's a holy country blessed by our goddess Kali and the Ganges River," he explains while chewing on the piece of cheese.

Agni clears his throat. "Prince Soma, remember what we said about talking with your mouth full."

Soma swallows hard and nods. "Sorry."

Mey-Rin frowns while watching Soma unfold the napkin in his hands and gently place it on his lap. He's supposed to tuck it in the collar of his shirt like a gentleman, not place it on his lap.

"Well, if you'll excuse me, I shall bring your tea and be on my way," she says, "You don't mind if I clean the prince's clothes, do you?"

Agni turns to look at Soma and then looks at Mey-Rin. "Actually, Miss, I think I'll be taking care of that. It's nothing personal. It's just the fabrics in India are different from yours."

"Oh. Um, no. I understand. Of course. I'll bring your tea then." Mey-Rin bows her head and leaves the dining room.
Soma remains staring at Agni with an expressionless face and then continues to eat silently. Agni sighs and sits next to him. "I know, Soma, I know," he says as he pats his head and continues to eat his breakfast.

Lieutenant Catherine Makarova suddenly appears in the dining room dressed in a bathrobe and drying her blonde hair with a towel. "Oh." She smiles at the two men. "Good morning."

Ciel finds violin lessons to be too complicated. He prefers playing the piano. But it seems that the violin is more appropriate for high-class society so it's his obligation as a Phantomhive to learn these lessons no matter how much he dislikes it.

"You will need a tutor while we're in London," Sebastian says, "I shall fill that role."

Ciel frowns at the sheet of paper with numerous music notes scattered over it like raging ants.

"Bach's Chaconne in D minor? I can't play something this complex," Ciel says.

Sebastian lifts up Ciel's chin with the violin's bow. "As your tutor, I make the rules. Surely you have no objections to my teaching methods, master."

Ciel pushes the bow away from his chin in annoyance. Oh, fuck off. How many times must he tell him that he doesn't like being touched like that? Many times. But it seems that this demon doesn't care. Ciel then sighs in defeat. There is no point arguing with him. He might as well do as told and get the lessons over with. He starts playing Bach's Chaconne. He realizes that he's getting better at the violin. Before this, he was terrible at the violin, making the instrument sound like someone was dying. Even Baldroy asked if there was a pig being pulled by the tail in the manor.

However, his lessons are interrupted by muttering and chanting coming from the other room. What the hell is going on in there? Growling in irritation, Ciel puts the violin and bow down. He and Sebastian walk into the room, finding Prince Soma and the butler Agni kneeled in front of a large bronze statue standing on the piano. It's the statue of a woman having four arms and sticking her tongue out. Two of her hands are holding two blades while the other two hands carried a trident spear and a severed head. She's also wearing a necklace of severed heads and seems to be standing on a man's chest. The man is holding a cup in one hand and has a snake around his body. Ciel frowns at it curiously. Who is that? And how and when did they get a statue into the house...and on the piano!?

"Oi! Put that thing down. You'll break the piano." However, they're too busy mumbling and chanting to listen to them. He sees Lau enter the room. Perhaps he knows what is going on. "What are they doing?"

"If I had to guess, I'd say they're praying," he says, "Quite an odd idol, is it?"

"Looks to me like the statue of a woman carrying a severed head. She's wearing a necklace of severed heads as well and standing on a man's stomach," Sebastian says.

Agni stops praying to look at Sebastian with his usual smile. "It depicts one of the sacred beings of Hinduism. She is the goddess, Kali."

Ciel looks at the statue, irritation replaced with curiosity. "A goddess of India?"

Agni nods. "Yes. Kali is the wife of the god Shiva. She is also the goddess of power. According to our faith, a demon foolishly challenged her. Naturally, she was victorious. However, her destructive urges were not quelled. She gave herself to destruction and carnage. But then, in order to protect the
earth, her husband Shiva threw himself at his wife's feet. Treading upon her husband brought Kali back to her senses and peace was restored to the world. The statue shows her story, the goddess Kali walking upon her husband and in her hand, the vile demon she slew."

"And there you have it," Ciel looks at Sebastian, whose eyes are wide in surprise.

"I've never heard of a goddess with such power," he says, "I shall keep that in mind if I ever go back to India."

Mey-Rin enters the room, already dressed in her tweed coat. "Master, I must be going. I have my classes today."

"Oh yes, I almost forgot about that," Ciel nods, "Be back here by six o' clock. Don't stay out too late. Understand?"

Mey-Rin nods before leaving the room.

Soma stops praying and hops to his feet. "We couldn't find an altar to place the statue on, so we had to use this piano. Now that I'm done praying, let us go out." He grabs Ciel by the wrist and starts dragging him across the room.

Ciel pulls away from his grip. "I'm too busy to go out! I already told you that!"

Mey-Rin hurries into the theatre, already fifteen minutes late for class. She would have been faster if a cart full of apples hadn't gone in her way. She nearly trips on her way up the stairs to the stage. The other girls see her and whisper to each other, giggling. The instructor, however, isn't laughing. She glares at Mey-Rin with her arms folded.

"You're late," the dancing instructor says, "I honestly don't care if Lord Phantomhive is paying, I will not tolerate tardiness."

Mey-Rin bows her head. "Forgive me, it won't happen again."

"It better not. Go and get changed. The class is about to start."

Mey-Rin nods and runs to the backstage to get changed. She removes her coat and glasses, setting them aside. She changes into her pink dancing uniform Miss Nina provided for her after having her fitting. She then puts on her dancing flats. The instructor said that pointe shoes are only used by professional dancers. Mey-Rin is only allowed to wear flats since it's her first time.

Once she is dressed, she runs to the stage to meet with the instructor and the other dancers. She's surprised to see Lady Elizabeth standing on the stage along with the other dancers. Mey-Rin did not notice her presence when she entered the theatre. Perhaps she did see Lady Elizabeth but didn't recognize her. Instead of wearing those frilling and glamorous dress, she's wearing one of those pink uniforms. Her blonde hair is tied back in a bun instead of curly pigtails. Unlike Mey-Rin, Elizabeth is wearing pointe shoes instead of flats. It seems that she has more experience in ballet.

The instructor claps to get everyone's attention. "All right girls," she says, "Since the art director as passed away a week age, the owner of the theatre decided to hire a new one. This man will also be your dancing instructor so you will be following his orders for now on. Ladies, meet your new art director, Lord Aleister Chambers."

Mey-Rin frowns, knowing she's heard of that name before. Then her eyes widen when a familiar man with golden blonde hair and dressed in white climb up the stage and bows politely before the
dancers. Viscount Druitt? But he was just arrested a few months ago for human trafficking. How is he free right now?

"I look forward to meeting each and every one of you," he says with a smile. "Please, for the sake of the company, do not treat me like a lord. Treat me like your teacher. I will be guiding you to be the greatest dancers England will ever see. This month, you will be performing a more risque type of dance. Some will praise it and some will find it too daring and repulsive. All of you will be exposing the story of Pamela by Samuel Richardson. Just in case you have not heard of it, Pamela is the story of poor housemaid being constantly pursued by the rich aristocrat Mr B. She is constantly thwarting his aggressive sexual advances. Mr B, however, will not accept her resistance and remains undeterred in making her his mistress. So much so, in fact, that he disguises himself as a female servant and enters Pamela's bed to seduce her but he is unsuccessful. In the end, Pamela is convinced of Mr B's genuine attachment to her and yields to him, but on her terms. Mr B satisfies his obsession with Pamela as his wife, not as his mistress. What I want to see is your darker side. Do not be afraid of making provocative movements. Pamela may be an innocent housemaid but this is eroticism. I want to see the sensual side in all of you."

Mey-Rin can see the uncomfortable expressions on the other girls' face, including Lady Elizabeth's. Even the dancing instructor looks uncomfortable allowing Viscount Druitt to direct this sort of performance. What will the English society think of this? He is the new art director though. They must obey whatever he instructs them to do.

"First, you will stretch before dancing," he says, "I wouldn't want to see you girls injuring yourselves by pulling a muscle. Chop-chop."

As the music starts, the dancers begin to stretch. Something is not right. Mey-Rin can feel it. Ciel is not going to like this.

Soma sighs while sitting upside down on the armchair, watching Ciel and Sebastian spar with two thing swords while wearing white jackets and mesh masks. Agni is on the floor pouring tea. "Honestly, when are you going to be done with this? I'm bored. Urgh, and what are you even doing? You look like an idiot."

"Be quiet!" Ciel snaps at him. "You're distracting me!"

"Are all Englishmen this short-tempered?"

Ciel growls angrily and snatches Sebastian's sword when he aims for the ribs. He turns to face Soma and abruptly removes his mask, strands of hair already damp with sweat. "You're never going to shut up, are you!? If you need attention so badly, why not give fencing a try!?"

Soma grins and flips off the armchair. Ciel tosses the fencing sword at him. However, Soma misses and the sword falls to the floor which he immediately picks up. "And if I win, you will go out into the town with me."

"If you can beat me."

Soma laughs and stands in front of Ciel with the sword in hand, ready to fight him. This should be fun, Ciel thinks as he places the mask over his head once more.

Ciel is ready to wipe the grin off that stupid obnoxious prince. Perhaps this will teach him a lesson. Sebastian is between them. Only he can say when they can go.

"Now, let the fight begin!" Sebastian shouts.
Soma charges at Ciel with the sword. Ciel's eye widens. He's faster than he thought. When the Indian prince aims to strike his ankle, the blade bends. Soma stares in complete surprise. "What the hell?"

Taking advantage of Soma's bewilderment, Ciel makes his move and charges at the young prince.

When Soma sees this, he gasps and jumps back to avoid getting struck by the blade. "Hey, wait a second, I don't know the rules of fencing!"

"Heh. A fight is a fight. It's not my fault that you don't know." He aims to strike Soma once more, only to have the tip of his blade blocked by a teacup and feels his arm go numb after a sharp jab at the crook of his elbow. Ciel cries out and falls onto his knees, holding his arm. He can't move it.

He looks up, his face full of pain, and sees Soma standing over him.

"Sir, are you all right? I'm so sorry. When I saw the prince losing, my reflexes took over."

"Are you all right?" Soma asks.

"My arm is fucking numb, what do you think!?" Ciel snaps angrily at the young prince.

Soma chuckles in amusement. "Agni does well to protect me. He is my servant and an extension of myself, which means this fight goes to me."

"Wait, that's not fair!" Ciel shouts at him angrily as he ripped off the mask from his head. *That's cheating, you stupid brat!*

Lau picks up the blade from the floor and gives it to Sebastian. "Here you go. It looks like you'll have to avenge your master."

Sebastian sighs, shaking his head in disappointment. "For goodness' sake, master, why did you have to provoke the bratty little prince?" Ciel simply glares at him. "However, as the Phantomhive butler, I cannot sit idly by while my young master is being harmed. It would be a disgrace to my position. Besides, we're already behind schedule."

Ciel scoffs irritably. "That's the only thing you care about."

Catherine enters the room silently with a hot cup of tea in her hands and watches the events from the doorframe, interested of what will happen next. Sebastian spots her and bows his head in greeting. Catherine does the same.

"I am curious about how your butler fights." Soma gives the sword to Agni. "Fight him and in the name of Kali, make sure you win."

"Sebastian, I order you to win this match!" Ciel snaps. "Shut the brat's mouth now."

The two servants stand facing each other and with a smirk displayed on their faces.

Sebastian bows his head. "As you wish, my lord."

"*Haan, raajakumaaree,*" Agni says and he charges.

Sebastian charges as well and the fight begins. The two servants move gracefully and clash sword against sword. To Sebastian's surprise, Agni is an excellent fighter. Very skilled, cautious, fast and strong. Agni thrusts the sword, aiming for Sebastian's chest but the demon butler immediately blocks...
it. No matter how many times he tries to strike Agni, the Indian butler seems to be a lot faster than he anticipated, blocking and dodging every strike, and nearly striking him more than twice. He's not a demon but he is no ordinary human, Sebastian can tell. Demon strength and speed are almost impossible to conceal. Not to mention the red eyes. Demons find it hard to conceal their blood red eyes. That's why they change their eye colour to brown rather than any other colour like blue, green or hazel. Agni's eyes are more hazel than brown. He is no demon.

The two aim the swords to their face but they both lean back at the same time. Everyone gasps in amazement. However, this seems to irritate Sebastian even more. He promised the young master that he would win this fight but has proven to be difficult. If Sebastian had a real sword right now, he would stab Agni bloody. But there's no doubt in his mind that the young master will be furious if he loses this match.

They continue to fight until the tips of the blades connect together. With such great force, the two blades suddenly snap in half like a twig, and the two pieces fall to the floor with a clattering sound. Sebastian simply stares in complete shock. *How one earth can this be happening?*

Everyone stares in complete shock upon seeing the two swords break in half. Even Sebastian is surprised by this. Sebastian takes the broken half in his hand and gulps a little before speaking in his usual calm tone. "Well, how lovely. The swords have broken."

"It's a draw then," Lau says.

"Wow!" Soma exclaims in amazement. "Agni is the best fighter in my palace. I have never seen anyone keep up with him before. Your butler really is impressive."

Ciel's heart races rapidly. *How is it a draw? He was fighting Sebastian. He was a match for a demon. What the bloody hell is going on?*

Once Agni returns to his master, Ciel immediately walks over to Sebastian. Something is clearly wrong.

"What happened?" Ciel asks in a whisper to avoid prying ears, "Agni is no ordinary human, is he? Don't tell me he's another grim reaper like that bloody Grell Sutcliffe."

Sebastian shakes his head. "No, my lord. He's deadly but he's human enough. However, with a superior strength like his, he can effortlessly hang me upside down. It will be an easy task for him."

"It's best if you keep an eye on him then. Both of them."

"And have you noticed something odd about the prince?"

"What do you mean?"

"Don't tell me you haven't noticed it. That smell. The smell that the young prince is carrying. A sickly sweet but rotten smell."

Ciel looks over at Soma. Come to think of it, he has noticed something strange about Soma. He did notice the smell coming from the young prince since this morning. It's a strong scent. But he tried to not pay attention to it. He didn't want to think much of it. He thought that it was his own imagination. But now that Sebastian can also smell it, he realizes it's not in his head. "Like I said, keep an eye on both of them."

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Baldroy rummages through the cupboards, tossing out pots, spoons and cauldrons until he finds the frying pan. *There we go.*

"All right, tonight I'm going to make something *really* special," Baldroy says but the frying pan is immediately snatched from his hand by Sebastian. "Hey, what the fuck?"

Sebastian aims the frying pan at the cook, giving him a stern look as if threatening to hit him with it. "Watch your language, Bard. There are children here. Dealing with the master's foul tongue is tiring enough. We do not need foul language coming out of the bratty prince as well," Sebastian says, "Besides, I'm taking care of the cooking tonight. You just stay out of the way."

"But I was planning on making something tasty for our guests." Sebastian never lets him cook. It makes him wonder why Sebastian hired him in the first place if he won't even let him near the stove or the oven.

"Like you did on the day we were receiving Lord Damiano when the rest of the food was burned to a crisp? I don't think so."

"Oi, that only happened once!...Twice!...Okay, maybe three times." Come to think about it, he burned the food many times before. He even blew up the kitchen at one time. But still, he's trying his best to be a good cook, if only Sebastian lets him.

"Sebastian," Agni walks into the kitchen and bows his head. "I was wondering if I could be of any assistance."

"I have it under control, thank you," he says.

"Four hands can work much more quickly than two. Please feel free to ask me for anything."

The butler sighs. "Well, in that case, I wouldn't mind a bit of help. A cottage pie and some gooseberry sauce are needed for tonight's dinner."

"Indeed."

"Oh sure, let him help. It's not like I'm the cook here or anything," Baldroy huffs in annoyance. Sebastian ignores him and walks out of the kitchen. Rolling his eyes, Baldroy sits in the corner of the kitchen with a lit cigarette between his teeth and his arms folded behind his head.

Agni approaches Baldroy with a kind smile on his face. "Excuse me. Are you the chef?"

Baldroy looks up and takes out the cigarette from his mouth. "Well, I'm supposed to be."

"Could I ask for your assistance? I'm afraid I am not accustomed to English cooking."

Baldroy frowns, surprised. "You really want my help?" he asks and Agni nods. Baldroy smiles and stands up from his chair and puts on his goggles. "It's about time. I'm Baldroy Gibbons, by the way."

"My name is Agni," he says and the two shake hands.

Finnian watches shyly through the crack of the door as Baldroy and Agni are cooking tonight's dinner. It smells delicious. He would like to help but is afraid they won't let him. Sebastian doesn't let him, afraid that he might break something.

He quickly hides behind the door when Agni spots him.
"Young man, you're just in time. Perhaps you can help us in preparing the evening meal," he says. Finnian doesn't respond though.

"Finnian is a little shy around strangers. That's why you don't see him much," Baldroy says, "Oi, Finny, come out of there and get in here. He's not going to bite."

Finnian nods and enters the kitchen. "Sebastian says I still don't know my own strength, so I'm not allowed to touch anything in the kitchen because I'll break them."

"You're strong. That's good." He puts a bowl of peeled potatoes in front of him. "We need these potatoes mashed and pureed but that will require a lot of manual labour. Do you think you can handle it?"

Finnian nods and takes the bowl of potatoes in his hands.

Sebastian is about to enter the kitchen but stops when he hears Agni and Baldroy talking in the kitchen. He can smell the food cooking and is surprised that it's not burning.

"By the way, where is the maid?" Agni asks Baldroy, "I'm sure she would be of great help."

"Mey-Rin is at some theatre, taking a few dancing lessons to help her stop tripping all over the place," Baldroy explains, "I, for one, think it's a waste of time. Mey-Rin doesn't need to dance to stay in balance. She needs to change her glasses."

"And perhaps a doctor?" Agni says and Baldroy frowns at him strangely. "For her feet, I mean. Last night, I noticed her bare feet. They're rather crooked, are they not? If I must guess, it was due to foot binding."

"I don't know really. Yeah, I've seen her feet before. They're in a bad shape but I never bothered asking her. I honestly don't think she likes talking about it. But no, I don't know anything about foot binding."

"Well, it's a common practice in China. They call it lotus feet. It's apparently a symbol of beauty."

"What's beautiful about deforming and incapacitating a woman?"

"I honestly don't find it beautiful. As I said before, it's a common practice in China. But it is not something I would find appealing. In fact, it is rather repulsing. Like you said, it incapacitates a woman from walking and deforms the feet. However, I see that your maid's feet are not completely crooked. She must have stopped when she came here to England."

"Heh, Prince Soma must be lucky he is not a girl," Baldroy finishes chopping the peppers and continues chopping the onions.

Agni remains silent for a few seconds before responding. "Indeed. He is a lucky young boy."

"Oi, question, how did you know she was Chinese?"

"Her name says it all. The eyes can be a deceiving thing. The eyes of the Chinese, Japanese and other Asian countries look too similar. I once saw a woman and thought she was Korean but she was actually Vietnamese. Her name is Mey-Rin, is it not? What's her last name?"

"Lijaun," Baldroy says, "Mey-Rin Lijaun."

"She seems like a good girl."
Baldroy smiles a little. "She is. Which is why I get upset when Sebastian and the young master put her life at risk by making her do dangerous tasks. She may be...talented, in many ways. But she's still a young girl. And girls these days are more vulnerable than men. I'm not saying that Sebastian doesn't care what happens to her. Well, maybe he doesn't. But I'm saying that he should at least consider that she's not as replaceable as he thinks. A girl like Mey-Rin shouldn't be placed into danger like that."

"She's must be very special to all of you."

Baldroy nods and continues chopping the onions. "Maybe not to Mr Sebastian but to us, she is one of a kind."

Sebastian's eyes turn red slightly upon hearing this. It seems that Ciel is not the only one being influenced by Mey-Rin's presence. He fears that this might be a problem. He enters the kitchen and is a little surprised how well the cooking is doing. This is the first time he's seen Baldroy not set the food on fire. And Finnian is mashing potatoes with his hands without breaking anything.

"Bard, don't worry about Mey-Rin," Sebastian, causing Baldroy to gulp nervously. He smirks at the reaction. He likes having his presence known. "She'll be back before six o'clock."

On his way to Lieutenant Catherine Makarova's room, Sebastian can hear some distant chatter. It was the lieutenant talking to herself which he finds a little odd. On the other hand, everything else she does is odd. She walked downstairs to the opium backwards. Who on earth does that without falling? She is a strange woman but he can't help but admire her.

He then notices something that's beyond off. She's not speaking Russian or English. She's speaking another language, one that he finds eerily familiar. It was Latin. "Quod homo post multa pati cerebrum damnum ictu ad caput. Ordinarius nulla humana vi ius tale. Tantum homo cuius fortitudo similis est creare non potest ferre damnum ut (The man suffered brain damage after multiple blows to the head. No ordinary human can possess such strength. Only a man with the strength of a bear can create such damage)."

Sebastian frowns upon hearing her. How can she speak Latin so fluently?

He knocks on the door and the talking ceases. A minute passes and the door soon opens. She has been in her nightgown and satin robe all day instead of wearing proper attire out of consideration for the people of the house. It seems that she has no consideration. But he will not let that bother him.

She smiles and steps aside, allowing him to enter the room. Sebastian bows his head and enters the bedroom. He's about to shut the door but the lieutenant immediately grabs the edge of the door, stopping the door from closing, much to Sebastian's surprise.

"Tonight's dinner we'll be having scallops au gratin as well as curried veal, stuffed tomatoes, spinach tortellini, chicken curry, champagne and for dessert, we'll be having gooseberry pie," Sebastian informs, "Will you be joining us for this evening's dinner?"

Catherine nods. "Of course. I'm just trying to finish work up here. Finding clues on the highwayman has proven to be rather difficult, especially with very little resource that I have."

"You know, if you wish, I'd be happy to help you with the investigation. If you don't remember, we did agree to work together and it seems that we're not actually working -."

"Together, I know. I'm sorry. It's just that when there's a crime that needs to be solved, I become buried in work and I'm incapable of stopping unless someone pulls me out of it. But I do appreciate
your assistance. Yours and Lord Phantomhive's."

"May I ask a question?"

Catherine's smile falls a little. "Of course."

"I know that this is rather invasive and would be considered as a eavesdropping but I overheard you speaking Latin. And I find it odd, considering that you're Russian."

She stares at him. Her eyes blink a little faster than usual and she looks like she gulped. Is she nervous? "O-Oh. Um, I took Latin course at the university and I've been a little rusty on it lately so I'm trying to keep practicing before become awful at it again."

"Of course. I understand," he says though he is not entirely convinced. He can tell that she's lying but he will not persist for the time-being. "Spero video vidi te nocte."

"Tum Latine loqueris? (You speak Latin?)" she asks, surprised.

"Sane (Of course). I also speak French, German, Russian. Chinese and Japanese."

"That's good to know," she says, "Well, I should probably finish here and get ready for dinner. I shall see you soon, Mr Michaelis."

Once he's gone, Catherine sighs in frustration and pinches the bridge of her nose, mumbling to herself. "Fortuna (Fuck)."

Before dinner is prepared, Ciel decides to do his own clean-up. It's been years since he's done anything aside paperwork and investigating murders. For once, he wants to do something for himself. After having his bath and getting dressed, he sits on the bed with Pluto curled up next to him.

"Do you want to see what I used to do when I was younger, Pluto?" he asks. Pluto simply stares at him, tilting his head. "When I couldn't go outside, all I did was take photographs around the house and pasted them in this book."

Ciel leaves through the pages, showing pictures of all the people lived in the manor, including the servants of the house. "Back then, we used to have a lot of servants in the manor. They were friends of mine. Well, mine and my brother's." She points at the photograph of a man wearing a tuxedo and having black slick hair. "This is Roderick Chambers. He used to be my father's valet. And his wife Edna Chambers used to be my mother's lady's maid," he says while pointing at a woman with a thin body and grey braid. He then points at a few young maids that are posing in the kitchen where Baldroy is working, wearing the same style of uniform Mey-Rin now wears. "These are Rosanna, Naomi, Georgia, Gwendolyn, Audrey and Betsy. Rosanna was the main housemaid. She made sure everything was nice and tidy around the house. Tanaka double-checked everything to make sure Rosanna didn't make any mistakes. Georgia was the under-housemaid. Always following Rosanna around. Always. Audrey was the kitchen maid and she and Verne used to make the best cookies in the manor. Now, Naomi was the dairymaid. She oversaw milking the cow and making the cheese. The cheese she made were always soft and salty, but they were still good. Gwendolyn was the laundry maid and Betsy was the scullery maid. I always called Gwendolyn by Gwen because I could barely remember her name."

Pluto starts sniffing a photograph of Tanaka looking healthy and not sitting in a wheelchair like he is now. Next to him stands a lovely elderly woman in her late fifties with thin eyes, and wearing a glamorous dress made of silk and her hair tied in a bun. In the photograph, her hair looks black, but
she used to have mousy brown hair and the dress was pink. Ciel's smile slowly fades away and his
thumb gently brushes over the woman's face, trying to take in every moment of it.

He looks at Pluto who stares back. Ciel sighs and pets his head. "Her name is Harumi Shino. She
was Tanaka's wife," he smiles softly at her photograph. "She was also my nurse. She was lucky
enough to not have been killed in the fire. She died two years before that day. You could say she
was my second mother..."

---

7 years ago....

"Oh look, Undertaker is here," Madam Red pointed as Ciel and his brother were playing in the
garden.

Ciel looked in the direction she was pointing at and smiled before getting up from the grass and
running across the garden where the mortician is waiting. Ciel jumped into the mortician's arms,
embracing him. He used to be afraid of him...very much afraid. But now, he just found him silly.

"Hello there, Lord Phantomhive," he said joyfully, "Has your aunt been taking good care of you?"

"Yes, she is a good aunt," Ciel said.

"And I'm not a good nurse?" A Japanese woman appeared in the garden, dressed in the pretty blue-
and-white dress and her mousy brown hair stylized in a lovely chignon bun. "Give him here, Mr
Undertaker. He's mine."

Undertaker simply chuckled in amusement. "Jealous now, are you?"

She smiled. "Well, of course, I'm jealous. I've been taking care of him since he was a new-born. Now
give him to me, Mr. Undertaker."

"Hehehe. Oh well, little one, I was going to keep holding onto you until the cows come home but it
seems that the cow came home too early," he laughed before giving Ciel to the nurse, Harumi
Shino.

"Nana!" Ciel exclaimed, putting his arms around her neck and hugging her tightly. Harumi gave
Undertaker a stern look, feeling insulted by the mortician's comment.

"And you're an insufferable goat, Mr Undertaker." She said and Ciel laughed. Undertaker simply
grinned before picking up Ciel's brother who ran up to him as well and wouldn't stop tugging on his
robe. Harumi returned her attention to Ciel. "Did you almost get an asthma attack again?"

"I'm all right. I promise."

"All right, if you say so," she said before putting him down. Undertaker put Ciel's brother down as
well. "Come along, you two, you have to clean up your room. You left your toys on the floor again
and your aunt is not happy about it."

Ciel's brother huffs in annoyance. "Aunt Francis is always unhappy."

"Well, if you two kept your rooms clean, she wouldn't be unhappy. But that's why you have me,"
Harumi said, "Now, tell me, who does Nana love more?"

"Me," Ciel said.
"No, me!" His brother shouted.

"No, me!"

"Me!"

Harumi chuckles in amusement. "All right, all right. You two are right. Because Nana loves the both of you."

Ciel immediately slams the book shut, startling Pluto and causing him to yelp. Ciel embraces the dog and pets his head in comfort. "Oh, Pluto, I'm so sorry," he says as he kisses the dog's furry head. "I didn't mean to scare you like that. Did I hurt you, boy? I'm sorry." Pluto responds by whimpering and licking the boy's tear-stained cheeks.

Michelle Yeoh as Harumi Shino
Feeling Trapped

Next chapter was supposed to be part of the previous chapter but was too long so I had to divide it in two parts. I'll be soon getting back to Mey-Rin since she's supposed to be the main character of the story. I simply wanted to give the other characters more screentime.

Baldroy continues peeling the carrots while Finnian is mashing the potatoes with his gloved hands. Sebastian cuts the bloody raw lamb meat into square cubes with a butcher's knife. Agni cuts the onions and coriander leaves to small pieces.

"I'm surprised you were able to have them help dinner without breaking or setting things on fire," Sebastian says.

"Every one of us has a set of skill," Agni explains. "We all have our own paths and duties set by the gods. As children of the Divine Mother, we only listen and perform our tasks."

"You seem to be a man of impeccable character."

Agni simply shook his head. "No, I am not. Before I met the prince, I was a foolish and hopeless man. What I owe him can never be repaid in this lifetime."

"How so?" Sebastian asks, looking at him curiously.

"My family were Brahmans, and in the caste system, we belonged to the highest possible caste that is said to serve God. However, seeing my father swarmed by material goods and carnal desires, I lost my faith to the gods. I took advantage of my social status and committed sins everyday. I kept hurting people, killing them even. All to appease my anger and hatred against the gods. I even killed one of my father's wives out of rage, one that I couldn't control."

"So you're saying is that you killed one of your father's wives by accident?"

"It is hard to believe but yes. I had no intentions of killing her."

Baldroy looks at Agni pitifully and shrugs his shoulders. "We've all done bad things in our time. I know from experience. Before I was a cook, I was in a war and I killed a few people myself. I wasn't too proud of it though. I was half dead when Sebastian and the young master found me. So you're not the only one with a past."

"I was going to be hanged for my crimes," Agni points out. Baldroy's eyes widen.

"Okay, well that sucks."

"When I was about to pay for my crimes, I was called the Son of Arshad. The no longer cared for my name. I was dead to my father and he was dead to me. That's when I saw my prince. My saviour...

..."Ruchen! Main use hoon! (Stop! I want to buy him from you!)") Soma shouted while waving around a bag of golden coins in his hand. He was disguised as a peasant. He was small but he had a lot of courage and surprisingly, a big heart. He climbed down the roof and crowd carried him over to the gallows with care, as if they already knew he was a prince. "This should be enough for the deaths of your people."
He gave the bag of coins to the executioner who took it without question. Being a small child, Soma had to use the stool I was meant to stand on to cut the rope from around my neck. He cut away half of my hair away but I did not care. It felt like all the weight fell from my shoulders. I was surprised how a small boy would care so much for the life of a criminal. His actions brought tears to my eyes and his smile brought me joy.

"Vah jo the ab mar hai (The man you were is dead now)," he said, "Aapako Agni (You shall be called Agni and you shall serve and protect me until the day I die)."

"That day I saw a god emitting holy light inside the prince's body," Agni says, finishing the story of how he met the prince who saved him. Sebastian always thought that the gods are a bunch of good for nothing that should be left behind. It's sort of the same way he feels about Ciel but he makes no comment about it. He is a little surprised on how the boy who saved Agni's life is the same boy who won't stop bothering the young master. He's more hyperactive than a hopping rabbit.

"A little bit of an exaggeration, don't you think?" Baldroy asks but soon runs over to the stove when he hears bubbles. "Shit! The pot is boiling! It's going to blow up."

"Wow, that's some story," Finnian says, his eyes glimmering with intrigue upon hearing the fascinating story.

Sebastian frowns. "It doesn't sound like the same boy interacting with my young master."

Agni sighs and nods in agreement. "He's never been around other children before, Sebastian. He doesn't know how to behave around people outside the palace. He assumes that many will obey him because he is a prince and he becomes confused and shocked when things don't go his way."

"How long has he been trapped in that palace of his?"

"Since his birth. Exactly fourteen years. He has never been allowed to leave the palace. When he returned home with me as his new servant, his parents were furious and forbade him to leave the palace on his own ever again. He spends most of his time shut in his room and is barely allowed to be outside in the gardens."

"Hmm. Now I see why he behaves the way he does now."

"Indeed. He may be a bit difficult but he has is a good boy. He really is. He came here to England with the best intentions and I've noticed that he might be causing you and Lord Phantomhive some grief."

"The young master has never socialized with other children his age before," Sebastian explains, "So being around someone as energetic as Prince Soma is unusual and aggravating for him. And yes, it has proven to be difficult for me as well since I am not used to seeing another boy with such hyperactive energy. He is the complete opposite of my young master."

"I promise that my prince will not be any trouble for you or your master. We will only be here for a few weeks and then we shall be on our way."

"I'm sure Prince Soma will be delighted to return to India."

"Actually, we won't be going back to India."

"What do you mean?"
"Well, since this is the first time my prince has ever been allowed to leave the palace, he wants to explore other places before returning home. After we're done with our search, the prince and I will be going to the American land. I think we will be going to the city called New York."

For some reason, Sebastian finds this a little suspicious. The young bratty prince never mentioned anything about going to New York. Did Agni suddenly make last-minute plans with the prince?

Many dancers are allowed to dance freely to show the viscount what they're capable of in hopes one of them will be picked for the role of Pamela. With all honesty, Mey-Rin has no desires to play Pamela to be touched by another man. But she supposes she should put her best efforts. She watches the other girls twirl, arabesque, sissonne attitude, grand jete and other graceful movements. But it seems that none of these movements are satisfying the Viscount Druitt. He remains staring at the girls while his thumb touches his lower lip, his eyes showing disappointment. Mey-Rin watches Lady Elizabeth trying to dance freely, twirling around fast with her arms flailing and contorting her torso around. However, she looks too terrified to go even further. Mey-Rin, for one, tries her best to dance freely even though she barely knows how to dance.

Mey-Rin twirls as fast as Lady Elizabeth did but she then stops and swings her arms in front of her, moving them back and forth while leaning her head as if she were a bird flapping its wings. For some reason, Mey-Rin feels like she's being possessed while dancing. In this version of the story, Pamela is supposed to express suffering and fear as she avoids the lord trying to seduce her. For some reason, she feels the same way. But not because she's being seduced but because she's watching a young boy being seduced by the darkness and she's unable to do anything to stop it. Now that she knows his secret, she may end up watching him die.

"Remember, students," Viscount Druitt says, "Dancing is not just about being visually appealing to the audience. It's not about following the music or coordination. It's about letting go of everything and giving in to your passions. You must not only give in your body, but you must also give in your heart and mind. You must give in your soul."

Mey-Rin falls to the ground, banging her right knee against the wooden board. The music stops playing and the dancers look at her in shock. Mey-Rin looks down and finds her knee scraped and red. It's not bleeding, however. Just like the time she cut her hand.

"Mey-Rin?"

She turns around and sees Elizabeth Midford standing behind her, looking worried. Mey-Rin immediately bows her head in greeting. It's something she does as a habit now with every noble she meets. She didn't have intentions to bow to Elizabeth in class but it's something she can't control.

"Hello, my lady."

"Mey-Rin, please, it's Lizzie. You don't have to call me Lady here," she insists.

"Sorry, my lad...I mean, Lizzie."
"...Are you all right? That was quite a fall."

"I'm...fine. I'm fine," I lie to her. And she can clearly see through that lie.

"No. You're not. Do you want to talk about it?"

_She can't know. If I tell her, there's no telling what Sebastian will do. "Sorry, my lady. Good day."_ Mey-Rin collects her bag and puts on her coat before hurrying out of the theatre.

She makes her way to the cemetery. Mey-Rin wanted to go to the park but it's too crowded with bystanders and their stupid smiling faces. She wants to be alone and not look at them right now. She cannot tolerate their faces full of ignorance while a little boy she cares for is being devoured by a demon little by little.

She walks down the gravel pathways with her hands in her coat's pockets, feeling the icy cold air kissing her cheeks and white mist coming out of her nose and mouth as she breathes. Mey-Rin in front of Mary Jane Kelly's grave after searching for it for almost an hour. Snow is already covering the ground and stone cross.

She still recalls sitting there on the chair and watching Grell run his death scythe through her heart, splattering blood everywhere. It's an image that still marks her brain today. She'll probably never forget nor will she forget the look on Ciel's face when Madam Red was murdered. The look of anger, terror and despair. Despite everything she did, Madam Red was still Ciel's aunt. Mey-Rin thinks to herself, if she wasn't so weak, she would have stopped Grell from killing them both. If she had untied herself quickly enough, she would have saved Mary.

"What am I doing wrong?" she asks the gravestone with Mary's name engraved on it, "Why couldn't I have saved you? Why did I let him kill you?"

"Hehehe. You're giving yourself too much credit." Mey-Rin jumps and turns around to see the Undertaker digging a grave behind her. She didn't even hear him. _I was probably too lost in thought to even notice him._ "We all know who was responsible for her death, dearie."

She frowns at him. "You want me to blame Lord Phantomhive for her death?"

"Well," Undertaker puts down his shovel and climbs out of the freshly dug grave, his robes already covered in damp dirt. "His job was to assure the safety of the other women in Whitechapel. But instead, he was obsessed with catching him rather than saving the poor girl from getting slaughtered."

"Don't say that!" she snaps at him and marches off angrily. _How dare he speaks about the master that way?_

His hand grips her arm tightly, stopping her from moving any further. _Okay, ow ow ow._ He grins at her and tightens his grip on her arm, his nails digging into her skin. "You know that I'm right, girl."

"No, you're wrong," she says as she tries to tug her arm away. "It's not his fault. It's mine. It was my idea to use myself as bait for Jack the Ripper. I was the one who warned Mary Kelly about Jack the Ripper. I was the one who had to watch the poor woman get slaughtered by a madman while tied to a chair even though I knew how to get out of those ropes."

"Why didn't you then? You could have saved her life if you broke free earlier," he says. _Is he playing with me right now?_

"Because I was waiting for Sebastian and the master to save us," she confesses. He lets go of her arm
with an annoyed scoff.

"And that's where everything went to hell," he sneers, "You rely on Lord Phantomhive too much. He can't even save himself. You allow yourself to be dependent on him, you'll end up in a grave, right next to Miss Kelly. You wouldn't have been able to save that girl either way. Even if you did free yourself, Madam Red and his butler would have cut you to pieces. So don't be a fucking idiot."

Mey-Rin looks over at Mary Kelly's grave. Maybe he's right. She probably couldn't have saved Mary Kelly even if she tried. Grell would have probably gutted her as well if she broke free to save her.

"Now, come to my shop," Undertaker puts his arm around her shoulders. She tries pushing his arm away but he holds her tightly. "You've been out here long enough."

"I've only been here for an hour."

"Exactly. You've already been exposed to the cold long enough. Now come, this is no place for a young lady, especially a girl with a vulnerable mind such as yours. Some tea will warm you up before you head home."

Mey-Rin hesitates but she eventually follows him back to his shop. Once there, he serves her a beaker full of tea. Will he ever buy proper chinaware?

"You should try to forget that Mary Kelly girl," he tells her as he puts two sugar cubes in her beaker. He puts more than five in his. "She's dead. You're not. It will do you no good thinking about a body that's been buried for three months. She is nothing but bones now."

"I feel like it's been yesterday though," she says as she sips her hot tea, "I still have nightmares of her being slaughtered. Gutted like a pig."

He sighs and sips his own tea. "You're letting your guilt get the best of you. If you continue this, you'll probably end up like Lord Phantomhive."

"Why must you criticize him?" I ask. "He did everything he could to stop the killings and yet everyone seems to treat him like dirt."

"I have no intentions of being cruel. I'm just being honest. If I tell you that it wasn't the lord's fault that he failed to save the girl, I would be lying. And I am never a liar."

Mey-Rin shakes her head. "You weren't there. You weren't there to see the look on his face when...Jack...killed his aunt right in front of him. He was horrified."

"Indeed. But as always, he tries to put on a mask and push people away, pretending like nothing can affect him while we all know that they are all lies. He's been making you wear a mask as well and makes you pretend that nothing happened. You have nightmares. You're letting it consume you like a termite eating wood."

"I don't know what to do though," she says, "I'm terrified."

"Of what?"

"I failed to save Miss Kelly. What if I fail to save my master as well?"

He remains staring at her, his mouth a straight line instead of a smile. "So that's what this is all about. You're worried about Lord Phantomhive's life."
"He..." Tears fall down her cheeks. "He can die at any moment now and I can't do anything to stop it. I'll fail just like I failed Miss Kelly."

Undertaker sighs and sits next to her, giving her a tissue. "Oh, I can't stand woman crying. It's annoying. But I'm surprised. You're the first person I met that actually cares for the young lord in years."

She sniffs and wipes her tears. "What are you talking about? His family loved him."

"No. Not really. You shouldn't be fooled by what those upper class folks tell you. They're compulsive liars, just like the young lord. The only people that loved him were Madam Red and his nurse Harumi."

She's confused. "W-why?"

She flinches when his thumb brushes against her cheek, wiping her tears away.

"They loved his brother more." She looks at him in surprise. *That can't be true. Can it? How can Ciel's family prefer one over the other?* "Listen, if you really think that the young lord can be saved from the clutches of evil, start by not being an idiot. You're smart but not wise. If you jump in too soon, there will be no third chance this time." He says this while brushing his finger against the scar on her neck where the bullet nearly killed her.

Mey-Rin arrives at the townhouse at eight after having a long conversation with Undertaker. She thought his way of conversation was somewhat strange. He kept asking for a lock of her hair (to which she refused to give him) and he even took her pulse at one point as if he were examining her. He even asked if she was having urges after her recovery at the hospital three months ago. She told him no. She found it strange. The last time the doctor had Mey-Rin checked, she was completely fine and she's still fine now. *At least, I think I am.*

When she enters the house's foyer, she finds the young master glaring down at her from the top of the staircase. She gulps nervously and shuts the door behind her. *I'm dead.*

"Mey-Rin," he says as he climbs down the stairs to meet with her. "Where the hell have you been? I told you to be here at 6pm. It's 8pm. You're two hours late."

Mey-Rin bows her head and apologizes. "Forgive me, my lord. I wasn't feeling well so I went for a walk."

"If you weren't feeling well, you were supposed to come here. Not wander off on your own," he says sternly.

"I'm sorry, my lord. I won't happen again," she says, even though she has a very strong desire to slap or punch him in the face right now.

"Pray that it doesn't," he says. He then sighs tiredly. "Go and get cleaned up. It's almost time for dinner and I need you to set the plate and silverware. Go now."

She bows her head again. "Yes, my lord." She then returns upstairs to her bedroom where she shuts the door and starts removing her coat and ballet uniform, tears falling down her cheeks. She places her hand over her mouth, stifling her tearful cries. *Mother of God, help me. Please, God and Jesus, save me.*
Sebastian serves him a plate of what looks like orange soup. Today's special is mutton curry from Oriya, one of the areas of India. Also known as lamb curry, made with lamb meat, turmeric powder, salt, ginger garlic paste, onion, coriander leaves, chili and dahi. According to Agni, dahi is fermented yoghurt, which to Ciel sounds revolting. However, he can't help but admit that the smell is delightful.

Soma has his plate served as well. He smiles and claps his hands, eager as a puppy. "Thank you, Agni, mutton is my favourite. It smells delicious."

Agni smiles and bows his head before departing from the dining room.

Ciel looks at his own plate. He's never eaten much Indian food before. He doesn't care much for spicy food but it does taste very good. Ciel watches Lieutenant Catherine unfold her napkin and place it on her lap so she doesn't get her red gown dirty with curry. Ciel is actually glad she decided to wear a more proper attire for dinner. He was already getting irritated seeing her wander around the townhouse in her bathrobe without proper underclothing. It's like she thinks no man is watching her while she has her back turned. However, seeing the lieutenant in a red gown makes him feel a little uneasy. The scarlet red silk with black veiling and white pearls decorating the black veil sleeves makes him think of Madam Red and the lavish clothing she used to wear.

To Ciel's surprise, Prince Soma does the same thing. He unfolds his napkin and places it on his lap. Ciel frowns. Only women were allowed to do that. Men usually tuck their napkins in the collars of their shirts. It seems that the prince doesn't know much about table etiquette in England either.

"It certainly does taste wonderful," Lau says before eating. Ciel almost forgot he's still here. Shouldn't he be going home to Ran-Mao? She must be worried sick about him.

"I thought you'd be going home, Lau," Ciel says.

Lau simply chuckles. "Getting rid of me so soon, eh? I called Ran-Mao and told her I'll be returning home once I finish helping you with the investigation."

Ciel scoffs. "You're going to help us?"

"Of course, that's what friends are for."

"We're acquaintances, Lau, not friends," Ciel always reminds him. Just because he helped him and Ran-Mao out of their situation, that doesn't make them friends but Lau keeps insisting that they are.

"So you two work together?" Catherine asks.

"Indeed," Lau says, "I mostly Lord Phantomhive's informant though."

"Shut it you," Ciel says in irritation before looking at Soma, "And you. How long do you two plan to stay here?"

"As soon as we're finished with our search," Soma says after swallowing a bite of curried lamb.

"I think I remember these two were looking for someone important," Lau says, "A woman, believe."

"A woman?" Ciel asks.

"My nursemaid, Meena Chawla. This is her." Soma shows him the same poorly drawn image of a woman he showed to the thugs in East End earlier. The more Ciel looks at it, the more it looks like a ragdoll. "She was a maidservant before my parents put her in charge of me. I drew her. Isn't she a lovely thing?"
"Well, Sebastian, do you think you can find her?" Ciel asks while giving him the image.

"Even I can't do much with that but I will try," Sebastian says as he takes the drawing in his hand.

"I can tell by your faces that you do not like my drawing," Soma says. "I'm still learning how to draw. I don't have many teachers at the palace to help me. Agni is the only one who's ever taught me how to draw."

"And I'm not exactly an artist myself," Agni confesses.

"Well, at least you are honest," Ciel says, "So, tell me, what is this Meena doing in England and why are you causing so much trouble over a servant?"

Soma frowns as if insulted. "Meena isn't just a servant. She's like my second mother. My father had no real interest in me since I'm the youngest. My real mother was too busy trying to get the attention of my father. I don't blame her. Father has ten wives, after all, and Mother isn't exactly his favourite. But she barely pays any attention to me so I was left in the care of Meena. She breastfed me as a baby when my mother refused to do so. Meena was the only one who ever truly loved me. We've been together for many years and never left my side. I was never allowed outside with my siblings. I was always in my room, learning domestic tasks from her." Ciel simply stares at him as if he were getting bored by him, as if he already heard this sort of story before. "But then, one day, an Englishman came. He was a noble."

"And what exactly happened, if I dare ask?" Ciel says.

Soma simply sighs. "Queen Victoria knows that Bengal enjoys political autonomy. But political matters are actually managed by consultants from England. To her, we're just another colony ruled by the British. Apparently, the Englishman was a political consultant. He showed interest in Meena upon seeing her in the caste. My parents took advantage of my absence and sold Meena to the Englishman. I know she's here in England being held against her will."

"So you're here to get her back?" Ciel asks and Soma nods. Ciel sighs and dabs his mouth with a napkin passively. "And you think I can help you?"

"I am told you are the queen's guard dog and you have solved many mysteries, including the case of Jack the Ripper," Soma says, "If anyone can help me and Agni find Meena, it's you."

"Sorry. But I can't help you." If she's still alive, she's probably being used as a plaything for men to do as they please. Ciel has met noblemen and many of their secret desires of having a foreign woman in their beds, either from India, China or Africa. If she's still alive and is being held against her will as Soma said, she's probably a slave with her mind too far gone to even recognize the prince's face. If she's been abused for months now, she's probably nothing more than a mangled up body beneath the sheets. It's probably too late for her which is why Ciel prefers not to waste his time looking for her. Being a woman can be a curse for many.

"What? Why not?"

Ciel considers telling him the harsh truth of what happens to slave women once they are taken from their own country against their will but he can tell that Soma's mind and soul is too childish to handle such things. "If you haven't noticed, and clearly you haven't, I'm in the middle of an investigation. English noblemen returning from India are being assaulted and hung upside down by a highwayman and Scotland Yard suspects that it's one of your kind. I'm not going to put the investigation to a halt just to find a mere servant of yours."
Soma slams his fist against the table, his face turning red with anger. "You do not understand! Meena is the only real family I have! I cannot live in that palace without her! I have no one else!"

"No, I don't understand," Ciel says as he stands from the table, "And I don't plan to understand...Unfortunately, there are some things you can never get back no matter how much you try. You're just going to have to accept it. So do yourself a favour. Stop wasting your time looking for a woman you'll never find and go home." With that, Ciel stands up and exits the dining hall, leaving everyone shocked and confused, minus Sebastian.

Prince Soma pushes the chair back and storms out of the dining hall with Agni going after him.

Ciel continues to work in his study, writing down notes involving the highwayman; Pluto is curled up at his feet. He considers going to visit James Norrington and ask him if he knows anything about the incident. Then he'll visit the Undertaker and ask if he has anything from one of the bodies that can lead them to the criminal. He hates having to visit that madman all the time but it is necessary.

He looks over at the picture of his family. His father, mother, brother and him. Tanaka and Harumi stand behind the four. All of them with smiling faces. Ciel smiles a little. He wishes he can have those happy faces back. But he can't. No matter how much he tries.

He hears a creaking sound and immediately turns his head to see Catherine at the door. His instincts immediately tell him to grab a gun and shoot her in the face but he remains still in his seat, his heart racing slightly.

"What do you want?" he asks.

Catherine frowns at him slightly, confused. "Are you all right?"

"Um, y-yes. Forgive me, lieutenant, for the scandal that occurred earlier," he says.

"I've seen worse scandals, trust me. But I am curious to what was all that about."

"You heard it all."

"Yes, but I heard it from a professional standpoint. But I prefer to hear it from a personal standpoint. Why are you refusing to help Prince Soma recover his nurse."

He sighs. "None of you would understand, especially Prince Soma. He is just a bratty child."

"May I offer you a word of advice without you giving me murderous glance?" she asks as she sits down next to him.

He sighs and puts down his pen, looking at her. "What?"

"...Try taking it easy with Prince Soma. I will admit that he can be a little intolerant sometimes. But is still a child, just like you. And not all children think the same way. If Meena Chawla is alive, I think it wouldn't hurt trying to find her to give the prince some closure, whether she's alive or not." With that, she leaves the room just as Sebastian enters.

"Did I miss anything?" he asks while watching the lady disappear into her guest room.

"...No." Ciel sighs. Catherine is right though. He's being a selfish idiot. He hasn't even tried to find out whether this Meena is still alive or not. Whether alive or dead, it's better to give the prince some closure.
"Will you be needing anything else, sir?" Sebastian asks.

"The deck of cards in the library and a big-ass piece of cake," he says with a sigh.

"Main jaana chaahata hoon (I want to leave now!)" Soma snaps angrily at Agni while treading back and forth impatiently across the room.

"Lekin mere raajkumaar, ham pahale se hee aa chuke hain (But my prince, we've already come so far)," Agni says, "Aap ab sambhavatah haar nahin sakate hain (You can't possibly give up now)."

"Main is ghar mein nahin rahana chaahata hoon. Aapane kaha ki yah ladaka meena khojane mein hamaaree madad kar sakata hai. Vah yojana thee. Lekin ab, mujhe lagata hai ki use hamaaree madad karane mein koe roochi nahin hai. Vah keval haeveemain kamabakht chaahata hai (I don't want to stay in this house. You said that this boy could help us find Meena. That was the plan. But now, I see he has no interest in helping us. He only wants that fucking highwayman)."

"Bhaasha (Language)."

"Main dar gaya hoon, Agni. Mujhe dar hai ki usake saath kuchh bura hua (I'm scared, Agni. I'm scared that something bad happened to her. And he doesn't care).

"But I care. If he doesn't want to help, I will. I promised to be your servant to the very end. You're the reason why I came to England."

Some sighs and nods. "Yes. I know. Thank you, Agni. You are the only one who understands my desperation."

He hears a knock on the door and Ciel enters the room.

"Leave us," he says. Agni bows his head and exits the room, shutting the door behind him and leaving Ciel alone with Soma.

Ciel sits at the opposite side of the table. He takes out a deck of cards and sets them down on the table. "I assume you don't know how to play chess but you can play poker, right?"

Soma stares at him for a few moments before shaking his head. "I don't want to play games right now. I'm tired. Besides, I don't think I want to play with you anymore."

Ciel sighs and stops mixing the cards. All right. No bullshit then. "We're going to make a deal and you will listen. If your answer is no, this will be the end of your search, do you understand?" Soma nods. "If you help me find the highwayman, I'll help you find Meena."

"You mean that?"

"I'm not doing this for you though. I'm doing this because it's the right thing to do," he says, "But heed my warning, if you interfere in the investigation. If you do anything to prioritize your search for Meena, the deal is off. Understood?"

Soma nods in agreement. "Yes. Yes, it's a deal."

"We'll start tomorrow," Ciel says, "Lieutenant will accompany me and Sebastian to visit the Undertaker. He's going to show me one of the bodies. If you wish, you can come with us but you will not touch anything there. Do you understand? Your job there will be to shut up and not move. Are we clear?"
Some nods. "Yes. I'm sorry if I've annoyed you today. I never been around other children before so I got a little too excited."

"You have your siblings back at the palace," Ciel says, frowning.

"Yes, but my parents almost never let me play with them," Soma says with a sigh, "I spent most of my life shut in my room, looking at the outside world through a window. I watched my siblings running around the gardens, chasing each other and laughing. The only time I was able to leave the palace was when I met Agni and even then, my parents were angry that I did so."

Ciel somewhat feels pity for the bratty little prince. Being kept in isolation half your life certainly sounds dreadful. It makes Ciel the times he spent in the Phantomhive Manor and not being able to go outside because he was always sick and had to watch his family play in the gardens. Of course, he had Harumi, Tanaka and the other servants to hang around but it was never the same. Despite not wanting to hang around this bratty child, it would be rude to deny his desire for fun while he's in England.

"There will come a time when the investigation ends and when that time comes, perhaps I will consider showing you around London. Does that sound all right to you?" Ciel asks.

Soma smiles a little and nods.

"All right then. So the game here is simple. You just have to -.

"SNOOOW!" Soma suddenly shouts, making Ciel jump in his seat and drop the deck of cards. What the fuck! He watches Soma run to the window. "It's snowing!" He then bolts out of the room in the blink of an eye, leaving Ciel dumbfounded. Once Ciel's brains connects knowledge to what just happened, he gets up and runs after Soma. "Agni, it's snowing!"

"Prince Soma, wait! Your coat!" Agni shouts while running after him with a white coat in his arms.

Soma runs outside and starts jumping up and down and the snowy ground while spinning around with his head tilted upwards. Ciel stands in the middle of the doorstep, watching Soma giggling like a small child. He has never seen snow before.

I'm guessing they don't have snow in India. Agni squeezes past Ciel and makes Soma put on his coat.

"You'll catch cold, my prince," he says.

Snowflakes fall into the young prince's long eyelashes and he blinks them away, giggling. He reaches out his hands to catch the white flakes gently falling from the night sky. He catches a flake in his hand, like capturing a firefly. Ciel almost laughs, remembering how he and his brother used to try to catch fireflies but they always escaped from our grasp.

The moment Soma catches the snowflake, it melts in his palm, leaving him confused and shocked. "It's gone! It just disappeared! I swear, I had it right in my hand."

Ciel tries not to burst out laughing. Sebastian stands behind him and whispers in his ear. "Should we tell him?"

He simply chuckles. "He'll figure it out eventually."

Ciel somewhats envy Prince Soma. Not knowing the horrors of the real world, he gets to be happy in his own little world. Ciel sometimes wishes he had that. He used to be in his own little world but he was everything but happy. The prince is everything Ciel and Sirius used to be and everything that Ciel is not.
Sebastian finds Catherine in the back of the garden, lying on the snow without a coat to keep her warm. She can get sick like this, exposed to the chilly air. But she doesn't look like she care. I walk up to her and check if she's still alive. She's simply lying there with her arms extended to the side and her leg folded over the other, looking like the crucified Messiah.

"Are you all right?" he asks.

She opens her eyes and looks at me. "I'm just enjoying the snow. I sometimes forget that this has been one of the most beautiful creations ever done."

Sebastian chuckles in amusement. "Beautiful and deadly." He then extends his hand. "Come, you'll catch cold."

She smiles slightly. "I don't get cold."

She grabs his hand. To Sebastian's surprise, her hand is not cold. It's as warm as the summer days. He doesn't understand this. She should be chilled to the bone, not warm. It's like she's been near the fire and the heat permanently implanted into her skin.

"What is it?" she asks, tilting her head while staring at him with those blue-green eyes of hers.

"...Nothing," he smiles. It's probably nothing. "Nothing at all. Come, I'll make you some hot tea."

"Can you make some hot chocolate instead?" she asks while pouting. "I get tired of tea."

"As you wish," he says before leading her back inside the house. He tries to ignore this strange new discovery but even so, he knows that something is not right about their new ally. She's not human. He needs to find out what she is, even if he has to pry the information out of her through seduction.
Hey guys. My writing is a little sloppy than usual since it's been a while. Keeping ups with writing has been chaotic for me. But now I'm back so I hope you don't hate this chapter. Heheh

The carriage is set at the townhouse on a cold early morning. Baldroy climbs down the carriage and slips on a thin sheet of ice, falling to the ground on his hide. "Fuck!"

A second carriage arrives.

The purple window curtains are pulled aside, letting beams of morning sunlight bathe into the room. Chai tea is poured into a delft teacup and placed on the nightstand.

"Yah jagane ka samay hai, meree raajakumaaree (It's time to wake up)," Agni says.

Soma pulls the covers over his head as Agni shakes him awake. "Aur paanch minat (Five more minutes)," he mumbles.

"Lord Phantomhive says we are to get up early in order to proceed with our search."

He groans and sits up from the bed, his short black hair already frizzy and messy. "But it's too early."

Agni helps him out of bed. "Come, let's get you dressed." He dresses Soma in a white sherwani and makes him put on a beige ulster coat which is dull in colour and itchy to the skin. He proceeds to brush the prince's messy black hair until it's neat and straight again.

"Why must I wear this coat? It's scratchy," Soma complains, "Even I can make better coats than this. Why can't I wear my other coat? It's more suitable for a prince"

"Lord Phantomhive says that you would bring too much unwanted attention by wearing that coat."

The coat is too glamorous with its fine golden threads and crystal cuffs. What makes it worse is that the threads are genuine gold and very expensive for that manor. Anyone who sees the coat might try to rip it from Soma's small body and perhaps hurt the little prince in the process. Realizing this, Agni has to do as Lord Phantomhive requested even if Soma doesn't like the idea.

"But I have you to defend me."

"Yes. But I agreed with Lord Phantomhive already. I rather have you wearing a dull coat than getting beaten bloody by thieves. Besides, you won't be alone." He shows that he is wearing a black trench coat rather than his green-and-beige sherwani. Soma giggles in response. He's never seen Agni dressed in such fashion and seeing him dressed in ugly English clothes is absolutely hilarious.
Mey-Rin helps tighten Ciel's blue tie while Sebastian brushes his hair. She then proceeds to help him put on his blue coat and darker blue cloak before tying his black-and-white dickersons. Mey-Rin is wearing a pink ulster coat with fur lining and a bow in the middle of the torso as well as brown leather boots. Sebastian simply wears his usual black trench coat and black leather gloves.

"Make sure you wear a hat," Ciel says to her, "It's cold and you wouldn't want to freeze your ears off, do you?"

"No, sir," she says meekly while tying his other shoe. "Of course, I'll wear a hat."

They'll be off to visit an old friend of Ciel Phantomhive's. She doesn't ask who it is, mainly because she might ask the wrong questions and she doesn't want to offend the young master. She didn't know the master has friends in London.

"Do you mind telling me where you were last night?" he asks, and Mey-Rin looks up, staring at him a little confused. "You arrived late. You said you went for a walk. Where did you go?"

Mey-Rin sighs. She can never lie to him. "I went to the cemetery to see Mary Kelly's grave."

He frowns. "Why would you do that?"

"I wanted to pay my respect and I also felt guilty for her death. Then Mr. Undertaker found me and took me to his parlour for tea."

"You had no purpose to go there. We already know who Mary Kelly's real murderer was. Stop wasting your time drowning yourself in self-pity. It's pathetic. And don't ever wander off on your own without my permission again. Do you understand me?"

She nods in agreement. "Yes sir."

"Finish tying my shoe and have Pluto ready," he says, "You'll be riding on the coach box with Baldroy and Finny."

She bows her head. "As you wish, my lord."

Once she finishes tying his shoes, Mey-Rin goes to attend Pluto who's been begging to be fed since this morning. Sebastian refuses to feed him even after Ciel asked him too. So, Mey-Rin is ordered to do it. She doesn't mind feeding Pluto. She doesn't see any reason to hate Pluto. He's still a puppy. A big puppy. It's only been three months and he's almost as big as the young master. But still a puppy. Mey-Rin opens a can of beef and puts it on his plate.

"Breakfast, Pluto."

Pluto wags his tail happily and chows down on his breakfast.

Sebastian knocks on Catherine's door. "We will be leaving in less than twenty minutes." He still can't explain her strange behavior from last night but doesn't want to jump into the topic so soon. They're on a tight schedule.

Catherine comes out of her room, putting on a pair of black gloves over her hands. Sebastian notices she's not wearing her usual red-coloured coats. Instead, she wears a black velvet cape heavily embroidered with gold, and her soft curly hair is tied back in a soft bun.

Sebastian chuckles in amusement. "No longer wearing red, I see."
"Lord Phantomhive believes that wearing red brings too much attention to myself," she says, "I would stand out from everyone else."

Sebastian raises an eyebrow. She still stands out in that cape and doesn't embrace the concept of blending in with the crowd. Even Prince Soma is more subtle than this. "I wouldn't mind seeing you stand out. But we are on a mission, as you must know. And this is not exactly how you 'not' draw attention. You're doing the complete opposite."

Catherine smirks a little. "Perhaps I don't like taking orders from those who are not my peers. I think you've forgotten that I'm a lieutenant, not a servant, Mr Michaelis." She walks over to the window and looks out to see the carriages, "I noticed that there are two carriages outside the house. Will there be more coming with us?"

"Actually, one of the carriages will be returning Mr Honghui home with his sister-in-law. He's still injured. With an injured arm, he won't be able to help us with the investigation."

In actuality, the young master simply wants to get rid of him. He's already becoming an annoyance in this house.

"Will he not be participating in our investigation then?" Catherine asks.

"Not really. To be honest, I find him to be quite the nuisance to our investigation. He will not be contributing anything to us for the moment."

"Well, that is a little unfair. He did sort of save me during the street brawl at East End," she says while putting on a black furry hat and tying the strings beneath her chin.

"You may have a point, but he still won't contribute to anything with an injured arm, now will he?"

She rolls her eyes and shakes her head while smiling slightly. "All right, all right. You have a point. I suppose we can continue the investigation without his help."

"Would you like me to escort you to the carriage?" he asks.

"No, thank you. I think I can handle this one. I'll wait in the carriage." She then heads downstairs. Sebastian frowns. *Then they say* chivalry *is dead.*

Ciel leaves the medicine on the old man's nightstand as well as a pitcher of water. He doesn't want Tanaka dying of thirst while they're gone, and he doesn't want to leave him unattended. Coca-Cola for the headaches, tobacco for disinfecting, a bottle of French wine coca for the nerves, a bar of chocolate, Dr. Pepper for the brain and morphine for the coughs. Ciel makes sure Tanaka has every medicine on the list.

*(Yes, believe it or not, these were considered to be medicine)*

"Are you sure you're not coming with us, Tanaka?" Ciel asks the old man who's sitting at his desk writing. "There is still some space left in the carriage. I can have another carriage brought for Prince Soma and his butler. You don't have to stay here by yourself."

"No thank you, Lord Phantomhive," Tanaka says, "It's too cold out there. I rather stay up here and continue writing my novellas."

"When are you ever going to let me read your novellas?"
"When I'm done with them," he says a little harshly.

Ciel scoffs. "You've been writing those novellas since I was six years old and you never showed me a single page of your novella."

"I want it to be perfect," Tanaka says with a chuckle, "Besides, at six, you and your brother would have torn my pages apart."

"And Harumi would have grounded us for sure." The old man gives the boy a stern look. Ciel sighs and slumps his shoulders. "I'm sorry. I know you don't like me mentioning her so soon."

"It's not that."

"Then what is it?"


Ciel rolls his eyes and puts on his top hat. "And what's that? Killing people?"

"Helping people."

Ciel sighs. *I don't I've helped anyone. In fact, all I do is make them suffer more.* He pats Tanaka's shoulder and heads downstairs.

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Bard takes out one of his cigarettes and lights up a match. "So, the master got mad at you for wandering through London on your own? How old does he think you are? Nine? You're a grown-ass woman. And he's thirteen. You have the right to go wherever you want in London. And he has no right to tell you what to do or where to go."

"Well, he is our master, so he does have the right to tell me what to do or where to go. And he can also fire you for using unnecessary comments." She doesn't like the way the master is treating her either. But she forces herself to play it cool. Not that she's afraid of the master but is more afraid of Sebastian. "I do understand his fear though. A pretty young Chinese girl like me wandering the city alone sends all kinds of unwanted attention. It's difficult to have any rights as a man. Don't laugh Bard. You may think that women not having the same equal rights as men is funny but it's not."

"Women are not allowed to vote. Okay, I see that's a little unfair, seeing that there are women out there smart enough to vote for the next President of America. But so what? I can't vote because I have a criminal record back in New Orleans. If you see my record, oh boy, I wouldn't be allowed forty feet from the voting booth."

Mey-Rin climbs onto the carriage and sits next to him. Pluto licks Finnian happily before jumping into the carriage. "It's not just about voting. Marriage as well. You see a lot of women being married off to men they don't even like. Some very young girls being given to older men when they haven't even passed the master's age."

"Is that even still happening?"

"Yes. I know a couple of girls in my home-country who were younger and were married off to older men. My mother says that it happens a lot in the Middle East. Some girls even end up killing themselves because of the mistreatment brought upon them by their male partners."

"I'm sure not all men are like that, Mey. You can see that Finny is the sweetest pup you ever met. He would never hurt a fly."
She smiles a little. "That's because he was raised by us, with kindness instead of cruelty. Imagine if he was raised in the opposite manner. A woman's gender is not as easy as it looks. We're not just about pretty dresses or flowers in our hair. We have a mind of our own, you know. And we feel things very deeply."

Catherine steps out of the house and joins them in the carriage. "She's right, you know. Women these days can barely step foot out of their homes without an escort, especially women of upper class. And they don't really care of our emotions or intelligence. We are only brought here for one reason. To breed." She giggles. "Not that it's a bad thing. I love babies."

"Hey, hey, I have feelings too," Baldroy says, "I'm not that tough. Like last month, when Finnian through a watermelon at my face and broke my nose. Remember that? I cried a lot that day."

"That's because you told us onions were the only things that made you cry," Mey-Rin says, "Implicating that you were so manly that nothing else made you cry."

"Good point. But one of these days, I'm going to prove you wrong," he says and the two women giggle.

"Does Lady Elizabeth need an escort then when visiting the Phantomhive Manor?" Finnian asks.

"We don't know much about Lady Elizabeth to know if she has an escort or a chaperone. Or whatever the hell it's called," Baldroy says.

"She has Paula Pennington. Her maid," Mey-Rin says.

"Yeah, she's a good woman while the ladyship is a bitch. Anyways, you didn't do anything wrong, Mey-Rin. You were only paying your respects. Lord Phantomhive is simply being an insensitive hypocrite."

"Watch your tongue, Bard. Remember what the master did for us. If it weren't for him, you'd still be in the pits of war and Finny would still be strapped to a table with needles being stuck to his arm."

"But Sebastian was the one who found you and me and brought us to the master."

"But the master did find me," Finnian says, feeling a little sad of being reminded of his past. "He and Sebastian were there together when they found me climbing out of the hole."

"We can't be ungrateful, Bard," Mey-Rin says, "After everything we went through, we are lucky to be working at the Phantomhive Manor."

Bard sighs. "I guess you're right. I still don't like this." He lights up the cigarette and proceeds smoking.

They leave the townhouse once the master and the others get into the carriage.

Ciel sits there, his hand pressed to his temple, thinking of what to do after this.

"Where are we going?" Soma asks. He spares no time to open his big blabbering mouth. Even a simple hello is making Ciel want to punch him.

"To interview one of the potential targets of the highwayman," he says, "Or the highwayman himself. Either of them works."

"My lord, who will we be interviewing?" Sebastian asks.
"The only person I know who will never lie to me. James Norrington."

They arrive at the Norrington Estate. From the outside this estate looked gorgeous. It had been built with fir wood and brown brick decorations. Small, octagon windows were added to the house in a mostly symmetric way and let in light. The house was equipped with a huge kitchen and ten modern bathrooms, it also has a cozy living room, sixteen bedrooms, a modest dining area and a large basement. The extension expands into stylish gardens circling around half the house. The second floor is smaller than the first, which allowed for several balconies on the sides of the house. The roof is flat and covered with grey roof tiles. Two large chimneys poke out the center of the roof. A few large windows lets in just enough light to the rooms below the roof. The house itself is surrounded by a gorgeous garden, including grape vines, a pagoda, a pond and many different flowers.

Ciel and Sebastian climb out of the carriage with Lieutenant Makarova. However, Prince Soma and Agni are obligated to stay inside. They are not to enter the house, nor are they allowed to wander off. Ciel doesn't want any distractions getting in the way. And of course, Soma is the most distracting with his hyperactive nature.

"Make sure they stay in the carriage," he says to Mey-Rin and Baldroy.

"Yes, my lord," they say.

The young lord and the butler enter the house where they're met with Lady Norrington. Ciel almost sighs out loud, remember how much of a bitter bitch she used to be when he and his brother were young.

"Lord Phantomhive?" she says, her small eyes widening in surprise. "I didn't expect you to visit us."

"It has been a few years so forgive me if I have bothered to visit you, Lady Norrington," Ciel says, "I also apologize for the unexpected arrival. I should have notified you before coming here. I offer you my condolences for Andrew. It's terrible to what happened to him."

"He was very ill. His death was inevitable. Condolences are not needed," she says in her always bitter tone. This makes Ciel frown. What the hell? He knew Lady Norrington is bitter but how can she speak about her own son's death that way.

"I'm here on urgent matters. It was important for this visit to happen."

She nods slightly. "Yes, of course. May I offer you some tea while you're here?"

"I'm actually here to see James," he says.

Lady Norrington gives Ciel a bewildered look. "You're here for my son?"

"Yes, my lady. Is he here?"

"...Yes, he's in the drawing room. Matilda will take you there. I have pressing matters to attend myself. It's good to see you again, my lord. I'm sure my son will be happy to see you as well."

Ciel and Sebastian are led down the hall by the estate's housekeeper named Matilda, another elderly woman dressed in charcoal grey. They are taken to the drawing room where a young man with pale freckled face and orange red hair is playing Beethoven's Fur Elise on the piano. Ciel's heart almost stops, recalling a smaller boy with shorter hair playing with him and his brother, giggling and chasing each other around.

"James Norrington."
The young man with orange red hair stops playing *Fur Elise* and whips his head around to stare at Ciel, his eyes wide in surprise. He smiles broadly and stands up from the seat.

Ciel smirks and decides to tease him. "You've gotten thin."

James raises his eyebrows and examines Ciel from head to toe. "Excuse me? I got thin?"

A grin slowly appears across Ciel's face and he chuckles before walking over to James, embracing him. James smiles and hugs back.

"It's good to see you again, Ciel."

"It's good to see you too, Jimmy."

Sebastian stands in the corner of the drawing room while Ciel and Catherine speak to James. Ciel and James have not seen each for many years and Ciel is curious to what he has been up to. However, Ciel won’t shy away from the topic of the highwayman attacking the Englishmen. He doesn’t want to suspect James of anything but he needs to follow all possible leads, just like in the Jack the Ripper case. He's still trying to keep that memory pushed back in the farthest corner of his mind. He needs to move on with this next case.

"James, this is Lieutenant Catherine Makarova of Moscow," Ciel says, "She's here assisting me with a case."

"She's Russian then?" James asks.

Catherine nods her head. "Yes, my lord."

"And you worked at the city police?"

"Yes, sir. Is there a problem?"

James smiles slightly. "I find it interesting. This is the first time I have seen a female police woman. The commissioner of Scotland Yard must be fuming with rage."

This makes Catherine giggle in amusement. "Indeed. But at least I have Inspector Abberline as an ally. He was the one who led me to Lord Phantomhive."

"So, your mother sent you to a school in India. Is that where you were all these years?" Ciel asks James. The maids of the house enter the drawing room and serve them cups of mint tea as well as slices of bagels covered in cream cheese.

"Yes, at a culinary school," James says.

Ciel frowns. "A culinary school?"

"Yes, it's where you study to be a professional chef. I learned how to cook there. Curry. Tandoori chicken. Kheer. You should try it. It's delicious."

"I don't really care much for spices. You know that. It makes my tongue go numb."

"Yes, I know. You and your brother hated spices. I remember that your brother ate one of the raw chili peppers from the kitchen and he ended up vomiting in the washroom," he chuckles in amusement.
Ciel laughs in return. "Yes, I remember as well. Then he got sick and Madam Red had to stay at his bedside all day giving him remedies to clean up his stomach. I wasn't allowed to see him because Mother was afraid that it was a contagious disease or something of the sort."

James's smile fades away and his face becomes a sad expression. "I'm sorry about your parents. And your brother. Before Andrew died, he wrote to me, telling me the bad news. I wish I had been at the funeral."

Ciel nods. "Me too. I was missing for a few months so I didn't get to see them either. Apparently, there was nothing left but their ashes. So the funeral was just two jars full of ash. Though no one can tell if the ashes belonged to my parents or the house that burned down with them. I am also sorry about your brother. I just heard of his death recently. I should have been there to support you as well."

"It's all right. It's not your fault. Mother wanted to keep his illness a secret from the public. I'm still glad that you're here. I needed the company of a friend."

"Forgive me but there are other matters I need to discuss with you. It's important. Your life might be at risk."

"You're here for the highwayman case?"

Ciel frowns at James. "How did you know that?"

"A lot of people in London talk, Ciel. They say it's some deranged Indian man. They also say that the queen's guard dog is taking over the case for Scotland Yard. I'm guessing the guard dog is you. To be completely honest, I didn't think you'd take your father's place at this early age."

"Someone has to do it. And who better to replace the previous guard dog than his own son. Since I'm the earl of the estate now, it is my obligation to continue family tradition. So, becoming the next queen's guard dog is not exactly a choice. It's my duty. Anyways, I was hoping you would be kind enough to cooperate on the investigation so we can capture whoever is doing this."

"My partner was one of the victims of the attack," Catherine says after remaining silent for awhile.

James nods. "Of course. Ciel and I have been friends for many years. If there is anything you need, anything at all, you let me know. I will help you anyway I can."

"Good. I appreciate your cooperation, Jimmy. Can you tell me if you recognize any of these men?" Ciel says as he takes out three photographs of the injured men found in London. These photographs were taken at the hospital by Pitt and he sent them to Ciel in secret. Pitt is not allowed to give classified information to anyone. Doing something like this can get him fired. But Ciel always has his ways to keep Pitt out of trouble.

James looks over at the black-and-white photographs. A bald man with a mustache and bruises all over his face. An elderly man. And another young man with jet black hair. "Yes. I know them. Archer Rufus Kipps, Franklin Joel Marsh and Silas Obadiah Sawyer. They're my rivals."

"Rivals?"

"For the Curry Contest," he explains, "There's going to be one this Saturday. It's a cooking competition. This year, the competition involves curry and other spices from India."

Ciel frowns as he looks over at the photographs himself. All of these are cooks? "Why would the highwayman target cooks for a curry competition?"
"I honestly wouldn't know. I'm surprised an Indian man would even try to attack someone who is trying to represent their country with their curry. I think this fellow finds the curry contest insulting rather than helpful."

Ciel shakes his head. "It's not really confirmed if it's an Indian man or not. It's just rumours and assumptions done by Scotland Yard. Commissioner Randall has never been fond of foreigners so it makes it easier for him to accuse an Indian man. They will start arresting and interrogating every Indian located in the East End until they find someone to blame for the attacks."

"You can never trust Scotland Yard. They couldn't even catch Jack the Ripper. So if it's not an Indian, then who is it?"

"That's what I'm going to find out. But as a friend, I do advise you to be cautious when walking through the streets of London. Perhaps, stay in the company of a servant or two. And definitely do not wander London alone at night. It's very likely that the highwayman takes advantage of that hour to attack."

James chuckles as a response. "You don't need to worry about that. I don't plan on going out tonight. I need to stay here and keep practicing for the competition."

"Very well then."

Lau arrives back at the opium den. Ran-Mau is standing outside the opium den, her brow furrowed and her face showing expressions of anger. Lau gulps, knowing that he's completely fucked. He strides over to her with open arms to hug her, only for her hand to smack him across the face.

His head turns to the side. His eyes closes and twitches at the stinging sensation on his cheek. "All right. I think I deserve that."

Ran-Mau then puts her arms around him in a tight embrace. "If you get hurt again, I'll kill you."

Lau hugs back and kisses her head. "Forgive me for frightening you, sister. It will never happen again."

He lifts her pale round face and wipes the tears from beneath her eyes. He kisses her head once more before going back to the opium den where she runs him a hot bath full of tea leaves to help him relax. She smiles at Lau slightly and kisses his head.

The carriage continues its way through London. Ciel notices Soma looking a little green in the face. Of course, it's almost lunch time and they haven't eaten a bite since breakfast. Ciel opens a basket beneath his seat and takes out one of the marbled eggs Sebastian made for the trip.

"Here," he says, giving it to Soma, "You'll faint if you don't eat something."

Soma takes the egg in his hand and blinks. "What's this? An egg?"

Ciel nods. "Marbled eggs. They're made of gelatine with cream, vanilla and chocolate. They're really good. Try it."

Soma takes a bite out of the marbled egg and smiles. "It's delicious."

Ciel smiles a little. "We used to make them a lot on Easter. However, I had Sebastian make them last night because I felt like it. Would you like some, lieutenant?"
Catherine smiles and nods. "Thank you, Lord Phantomhive."

Another marbled egg is given to Agni but he doesn't look hungry. He looks a little wary and concerned. Pluto almost takes one from the basket but Ciel pushes his face away. Pluto can't have chocolate. It will make him sick.

"Why is the highwayman attacking culinary competitors?" Prince Soma asks.

"I was hoping to ask you," Ciel says, "What do you know about the Curry Contest?"

"Not much really. I didn't even know England did any Curry competitions."

"Culinary competitions are getting popular each year. Are you sure you don't know anything about it?"

Soma shrugs. "I wouldn't know really. But I'm certain neither will win the curry competition. Do not be offended, but only India knows how to make the best curry."

"I'm not really offended. I don't care much for spices," Ciel says.

"I just don't understand why someone would attack cooks. I'm confused."

"So am I. But we're going to find out soon."

"What is our next stop, Lord Phantomhive?" Agni asks.

"We're going to visit a colleague of mine," Ciel says. "Have you met an undertaker before?"

Soma shakes his head. "Not really. No."

"Well, we'll be heading for his shop. He has one of the victims of the highwayman. Perhaps, he can tell us something Scotland Yard found. But I have to warn you, he can be quite unconventional, to say the least."

"Does he have my partner?" Catherine asks, her voice sounding worried at the thought of her police partner being held by a mortician for a long time. There's no telling if the body is rotting by now. Or if he is buried in a cemetery without permission of the family.

"I'm certain that he does," Ciel says, "Undertaker takes his time examining the bodies and preparing them for funerals. But he can also be a little unreasonable when it comes to payment."

"What sort of payment?" Soma asks.

Ciel sighs. "You'll see soon enough."

When they arrive at the Undertaker's parlour, they find the window shutters bolted tightly and the door shut with a board blocking it. Ciel sighs in frustration. *Bastard is not here. Where is he?*

"Is this where the Undertaker works?" Catherine asks.

"Yes, but it seems that he's not here," Ciel says.

"I see a note attached to the door," Sebastian says.

Ciel can see it as well. He gets off the carriage and walks over to the door. He snatches the note that's been wedged between the door and the board. 'GONE TO THE FROST FAIR. EITHER VISIT
Ciel growls in annoyance, nearly crushing the note in his gloved hand. *For god's sake, Undertaker.* The fact that Undertaker left the shop made everything more difficult. The body of the Russian detective is probably in there and he can't get in without a key. He can ask Sebastian to break down the door but knows that Undertaker won't appreciate intruders in his property.

"Why is this man telling you to fuck off?" Soma asks as he looks over Ciel's shoulder to read the letter.

Elizabeth and Paula climb out of the carriage after arriving to the Frost Fair. Paula has Elizabeth put on her gloves to keep her warm from the cold. She helps him into the snow boots before putting on her own. She was hesitant on accompanying her. She's been given orders to take Elizabeth straight home after her lessons. She knows that Lady Midford will be very unhappy if she arrives late with Elizabeth.

"My lady, I don't think we're supposed to be here," she says. "We should be getting you home. Your mother will be very angry with me if I bring you home late."

"I already told you, Paula," Elizabeth says as they step into the frozen river. "I'm not going anywhere until I buy Ciel a Christmas present. I want to make him happy. He deserves the best."

Paula pauses for a moment, afraid of stepping onto the frozen water for the fear of it cracking. She looks at Elizabeth who rolls her eyes in annoyance. Paula is a bit of a coward, she's not denying it. However, she's been told to keep Elizabeth safe. "I know that you want to make him to happy. But I'm afraid of getting in trouble with your mother. You know how she gets when she's angry."

"I know how my mother gets. For that reason, you're not going to tell her where we've been. This will be our little secret."

"But once your mother sees the purchases, it will no longer be a secret. She'll know you've wandered off."

"Don't worry, I know how to keep my packages hidden from Mother. I promise you that we won't get into trouble."

"My lady -.

"Must you only think of yourself, Paula!?" she snaps at her. "If you're not going to help me, then go back to the carriage on your own. You can deal with my mother by yourself."

With that, Elizabeth storms off into the Frost Fair by herself. Overcome with guilt and worry, Paula wraps the brown cape around herself and hurriedly follows after Elizabeth. "My lady, wait!"

The River Thames frost fairs are events held every few years at the tideway of the River Thames in London. It's sometimes called the Little Ice Age. Ciel has never been to the Frost Fair before and neither has his brother or their father and mother but he's heard of it and used to be very excited to see one. Now that he's at the Frost Fair, he feels very underwhelmed instead of excited. The stalls are small and more tent-like. They only sell sweets, clothing, carved artifacts and used books. Soma, however, is amazed by the sight of the Frost Fair. He looks around, his eyes wide and his mouth agape.
"Do they really hold this fair every year?" he asks as they step into the ice.

"Not every year," Ciel says, "The River Thames rarely freezes over. It's not as frequent as many believe. The last frost fair was held in 1814. It was said that the ice was so thick that they were able to cross an African elephant over it without the ice cracking or breaking."

"How thick is the ice?"

"To what I've read on the papers, more than twenty seven inches. However, this year, Scotland Yard has blocked an area beyond the river for the ice was thinner. You can see the wooden fence from over here," Ciel points at the seven-foot wooden fence thirty feet away from them. "London has enough space for the Frost Fair but it is advised for the parents to keep their young ones close. Once we speak to Undertaker, we can find a souvenir for you to take back to India."

Soma smiles. "That would be wonderful."

Mey-Rin, Finnian and Baldroy follows them to the Frost Fair, given permission by the master. Ciel watches Mey-Rin nearly slip on the ice and take hold of Baldroy's arm, nearly dragging him with her. This almost makes Ciel laugh but he maintains his serious expression in order to not show any weakness.

He knows he's grown a little distance from Mey-Rin these days. He's been too harsh on her. She doesn't deserve the way he's treating her. Maybe he can find something to make her feel better. To apologize for his actions. But first, he needs to deal with the highwayman business. This man is targeting culinary competitors for God-knows what reason. There's no telling when this bastard will strike again. And there's no telling if James Norrington will become the next victim. Or worse. The next Jack the Ripper.

His thoughts are interrupted as Ciel takes notice of a lovely burgundy scarf hanging from a hook along with other colourful scarves. There are scarves imported from Czechia. Hand-made. However, this particular scarf is delicate, luscious and covered in ruffles. It's a beautiful colour.

He walks over to the stand. The seller is obviously Czech. It will be difficult to speak the language since he only took a few lessons. He's only able to learn the basics. "Kolik na šátek? (How much for the scarf?)" he asks the seller.

"Tři deset liber? Pro šátek? (Thirty pounds? For a scarf?)"

"Ruční. To nejlepší v Praha (Hand-made. The best in Praha)."

"Dám vám dvacet pět liber za to (I'll give you twenty-five pounds for it)."

"Třicet (Thirty)."

"Dvacet šest (Twenty-six)."

"Třicet (Thirty)."

"Dvacet osm a víc penny (Twenty-eight and not a penny more)."

"Dohoda (Deal)."

He's able to purchase the scarf at a lower price and gives it to Sebastian to put it away in one of the boxes. He looks sideways to make sure Mey-Rin isn't watching. She's too busy walking over the ice in terror. As if the ice will break beneath their feet. He rolls his eye. For God's sake, Mey-Rin, they've
"Master, is the scarf for Lady Elizabeth?" Sebastian asks with a slight smile.

"Yes," he lies. He feels like a terrible person not buying a present for Lizzie. His fiance. It's almost Christmas. He's so caught up in the investigation that he forgot about it. If he doesn't have a present for her by the time Christmas arrives, she's going to be devastated. Aunt Francis will be pissed off. He'll be seen as a terrible fiance. Well, if it gets him out of this unwanted marriage, he wouldn't mind. But Lizzie is still his cousin. He still cares for her. He wants to see her happy, no matter how annoying she is.

He will buy her a present, after they have their talk with Undertaker. He walks over to the next stand that sells used books and asks the seller where he can find the Undertaker's parlour. The lady points over to the other side to the right.

"Thank you," Ciel says.

He and Sebastian head over to where Prince Soma, Agni, Catherine and the three servants are. Catherine is twirling around on a pair of skates that a man was offering. At least she's having fun. The man is giving skates to Soma and Agni. The two stare at the shoes strangely.

"Why do these shoes have blades at the bottom?" Soma asks.

"They're called skates," Ciel explains bluntly. "They're used to glide over the ice. I don't recommend you using them if you don't know how. You can slip and injure yourself."

"Oh, of course," Soma nods before giving the skates to Finnian who eagerly puts them on.

Sebastian frowns at Finnian. "Try not to break anything, do you understand?"

Finnian looks at Sebastian frightfully before bowing his head. "Y-yes, sir. I'll try not to break anything."

Ciel reached out for Catherine's arm and grabbed it, stopping her nonsensical twirling. "Lieutenant, we must keep moving. I found Undertaker's parlour. He's not far from here."

"Oh, sorry about that," she says. She bends down and removes the skates from her feet, putting her own boots back on and giving the skates back to the man. "Thank you, sir."

Ciel turns his attention to Soma and Agni. "If you're going to help, might as well come with us. But don't touch anything. Do you understand?"

"Sure. We'll behave. Right, Agni?" Soma says.

"Indeed. You won't even know we're there," Agni says.

Ciel sighs. He was going to find that hard to believe. He then turned his attention to Mey-Rin. "Do you want to come with us or do you want to stay with Baldroy and Finnian?"

She looked at him a bit surprised. "You want me to go with you?"

"I'm asking you. Do you want to come with us or not?" he asked in a more harsher tone. Without saying a word, she nodded her head and gave the skates to Baldroy.

"I won't be long," she said. Baldroy gave her a worried look but said nothing. Of course he would be worried. She's under the care of Ciel Phantomhive and Sebastian Michaelis. If he knew of
Sebastian's true nature, he wouldn't allow her to go with them.

The small group arrives at the Undertaker's parlour. The lady at the stand says there are so many people freezing to death at the Frost Fair. Ciel hopes she's joking. He can't recall any reports of people freezing to death during a frost fair. This is a ridiculous excuse.

The tent resembles the parlour greatly but it's still a tent. A well-painted tent but a tent nonetheless. Ciel sighs. This is going to be a nightmare, especially with those two Indian blokes with them.

They enter the tent. The shelves from his parlour have been moved to this location with jars full of preserved organ stood. Undertaker better hope that a gust of wind doesn't knock those shelves over.

"Undertaker, are you about?" Ciel calls out.

One of the coffins opens up. Undertaker slowly sat up with his arms crossed over his chest and letting out snarls. Soma nearly screamed at the sight of him. Catherine's eyes grew wide. Mey-Rin remained hidden behind Ciel since his tactics still scared her. Ciel simply rolled his eyes in annoyance.

"Knock it off. We need your assistance right now," he said.

Undertaker sighed and swung out of the coffin. "You're no fun, earl. Can I not play games with my favourite client?"

"This is not the time or place for games."

"This is the perfect place for games. It is a fair after all. Though, time is different." The mortician put on his hat and strode over to the group. Soma quickly hid behind Agni in fear. "Well, well, what do we have here? New friends, Lord Phantomhive?"

"Acquaintances most likely," he clarified as he removed the hood from his head. "This is Lieutenant Catherine Makarova. She's from the Moscow City Police."

Undertaker grins. "A policewoman, eh? How interesting! And what about the tall man and the little boy who's touching my belongings?"

Ciel looks about and sees Soma holding one of the skulls with a melted candle inside of it. He sighs in frustration. "Prince Soma..."

Soma looks at them all with wide eyes. He gulps and puts the skull back on the shelf. He scratches the back of his head and laughs nervously. "Um, sorry. I am Prince Soma Asman Kadar, the 26th child to the Raja of Bengal. This is my Brahmin, Agni."

The mortician chuckles. "Interesting allies, isn't it? A Russian policewoman and two Indian blokes. Let me guess, you're here for the body of the man that was attacked and strung up in front of a restaurant along with the other English folk."

Ciel nods. "Yes, indeed. We were hoping to see you as the parlour but I can see you changed location. I also saw your note on the door. Thank you for that," he says this in an annoyed tone. Undertaker snickers. "Do you have the body with you?"

"Hehehe. Unsurprisingly, I knew you would come to see me again. The highwayman incident is becoming popular this week. So yes, I did bring the body. I could have left it back at the parlour but unfortunately, the security in London has been quite shitty these days. There's reports of robbery in London. Two Irish men breaking into people's house and stealing things of value. Fearing that they
will break into my parlour to steal my guests, it took me some effort to transfer them here. The cold out here helps preserve the bodies -.

"As interesting as this sounds," Ciel interrupts him. "I would really like to see the body. I need to see if I can find any clues of the highwayman."

"Are you sure you want to do this, my lord?" Undertaker asks, "The face is still in a gruesome state. I haven't had much time to fix him."

"I think I can handle it."

"Besides, why do you care so much for a victim?"

"It's not me. It's her," he says, pointing at Catherine.

Catherine takes her turn to speak. "The man in your possession is my work partner, sir," she says gravely.

"Oh. My apologies, my lady," Undertaker says, still smiling, "I offer you my condolences."

"Is it all right if you show us the body, sir?" she asks, "It would mean a lot to us if you help us in this matter. Please?"

"Well, my dear, I'm afraid I can't do that just yet," he says, "I require a certain payment for this information you're seeking."

"How much money do you want?" Soma asks as he takes out a bag of coins.

"Little one, I do not wish for money," Undertaker says, "I want you to make me laugh."

Soma frowns in confusion. "Laugh?"

The mortician grins. "That's right. A laugh."

Ciel sighs and facepalms. "The undertaker wishes for a joke. If you make him laugh, he'll tell us everything we need to know."

"And being the gentleman that I am, I'll allow the ladies go first," Undertaker says, "Miss Mey-Rin, would you like to go first?"

"Why must I go first?" she asks in complaint.

"Because I want you to go first," he says with what looks like a wicked grin.

She sighs. "Very well then. Um, why is a dog like a tree?"

Undertaker places a finger to his chin as if thinking. "Hmm. Why?"

"Because they both lose their bark once they're dead."

No one in the tent laughs. Not even the Undertaker. His smile remains frozen on his face. He shakes his head in disappointment.

"You did your best, dearie," he says, "Unfortunately, I've already heard that joke before. Repeating the same joke twice doesn't make me laugh. What about you, lieutenant, do you have a joke for me?"
Catherine nods a little. "Um, yes, of course. Mr Undertaker, is it? Have you ever been married? Do you know what marriage entails?"

"No, I have never been married. What do you think it means, lieutenant?"

"Well, marriage is an intuition intended to keep women out of mischief and get them into trouble," she says with a smile.

Undertaker burst into laughter, trying to cover his mouth to stop but he can't. He continues cackling. "Well then, I suppose that's true. Heheheheheh. That's a good one."

"Will you show give us the information now, Undertaker?" Ciel asks.

The mortician stops laughing and pats the master's head. "Well, if that's what you want. Come with me at your own risk. You've already done your payment."

Undertaker leads them to the back of the parlour where some of his coffins are. He drags one of the coffins and places it on a silver table. Ciel is surprised on how something so thin like him can lift such a heavy weight. I suppose one who is an undertaker cannot be a weakling.

He opens the coffin, revealing the body of Shinsky Christov Yakovich. A Russian man with light orange hair and multiple bruises on his body and face. Undertaker stitched most of his wounds but they are still vivid and red. Dread and nausea creeps up Ciel's throat and his heart quickens its pace at the sight of the dead body. Seeing this just reminds him even more of Madam Red's dead body lying in her funeral coffin.

Mey-Rin notices the colour draining from his face and she places her hand on his shoulder. "Master..."

Ciel shrugs her off. "I'm...I'm all right." He then looks at Undertaker. "Give us the details please."

Undertaker nods. "While doing the examination of the body, I noticed something quite interesting." He lifts up the hairs of Yakovich's scalp to reveal a bloody hole on the back of his head, the size of a bullet hole. "Scotland Yard didn't notice this. They thought it was another blow to the head. Of course, Scotland Yard is not always full of intelligent detective, now is it?"

Catherine's eyes widen in shock. "Someone shot Yakovich in the head?"

"I'm afraid so," Undertaker says, "Judging by the scrapes from his shoes, it seems that he was trying to escape before being shot. He received blows to the head, yes. But it's a gunshot that ultimately killed him. It is quite odd, considering that the highwayman attacked the other victims with blows. Your friend here is the only one who died by a bullet in the head."

"There could be two possibilities for this," Ciel says, "Either the highwayman found out that Yakovich was a policeman and shot him so he wouldn't be hunted down. Or someone else killed him."

"You really think there was a second person?" Catherine asks.

"If you take a look at the other victims, they only received blows, not to kill them but to render them weak. However, with Detective Yakovich was different. If the highwayman didn't have any intentions of killing the other man, he shouldn't have any intentions killing Detective Yakovich."

"What do we do then, my lord?" Sebastian asks.
"We keep looking," Ciel says, "There's no telling when the highwayman will strike again, if he strikes again. We need to be ready for it."

Ciel knows that if the highwayman is still out there attacking culinary competitors, James Norrington could be at great risk. "But my biggest question is, what was a detective doing with a bunch of culinary competitors?" he asks.

"Maybe he liked cooking in his spare time," Mey-Rin speaks up, "It's not a crime for a detective to like cooking every once in awhile."

Undertaker snickers. "Heheheheh. Miss Mey-Rin is right. I may be an undertaker but even I enjoy cooking from time to time. Where do you think I get my biscuits."

"A dog shop," Ciel says sarcastically. Instead of pissing him off, it just makes the mortician laugh.

He continues staring at the body. Thousands of thoughts invade his head. Madam Red getting torn to shreds with a death scythe. The sharp toothed smile on the vile reaper. The blood splattering on the cobblestone ground. And Mary Kelly slaughtered in a room. So much blood. So much blood. SO MUCH BLOOD.

Without warning, he vomits. Yellow-red liquid gushes from his mouth and splatters onto the snow. Mey-Rin gasps in shock and goes to his side to see if he's all right. However, he pushes her aside and continues vomiting.

"What's wrong with him?" Catherine asks worriedly.

"I told him he wouldn't be able to handle it," Undertaker said, only he's not laughing this time. His tone seems serious this time.

"He's vomit is a little red. Is that blood?" she asks.

Mey-Rin's eyes widen when Catherine speculates this. However, Sebastian confirms that it's just the raspberry sauce from the custard pie Ciel ate for breakfast. However, something is telling her that Sebastian is lying to not scare the others.

After a minute or so, Ciel stops vomiting. Sebastian walks up to him and gives him a handkerchief to clean up. Ciel wipes his mouth clean and takes a deep breath, trying very hard not to vomit again. His stomach has become a tight knot and still feels vile. He can't even look at the body, knowing that the sight of it will cause him to vomit once more. Undertaker is right. He can't handle. At least, not now. It's too soon.

"I need some air," he coughs before leaving the tent.

Ciel steps out of the tent, still feeling nauseous and his mind swimming. He can't look at a fucking body without thinking about his aunt now. This is fucking ridiculous. He sighs and pinches the bridge of his nose. Come now, keep it together, Ciel. It's just a body. Nothing more. It's just a body.

He slowly looks up and is shocked to see Alois Trancy walking towards him, wearing his usual purple attire. However, he's not wearing his black shorts. Not in this weather. Lord Trancy is wearing long black trousers and a heavy plum-coloured coat made of velvet. Ciel frowns. What is he doing here? He better not be here to cause any trouble. Ciel still hasn't forgotten what he did to Mey-Rin at the party. And he's sure Mey hasn't forgotten either. She's going to freak if she sees him here at the Frost Fair. I need to get rid of him.
Alois stands in front of him smirks in amusement. "Well, well, if it isn't Lord Phantomhive. What brings you here? Hmm? I suppose even the queen's guard dog must take the holiday."

Ciel scoffs and shakes his head. "I am not on holidays. I'm on duty."

Alois grins. "So, you're here on investigation as well? What a coincidence! So am I. We are also tracking someone. Apparently, this anonymous individual has been causing havoc in Manchester."

He shows the perfectly rough sketch of a man dressed in a crimson coat and red sunhat. For a moment, Ciel thought it was Grell but soon realizes that this man has short black hair and wears yellow-tinted sunglasses. Ciel frowns. "Why would he be wearing yellow sunglasses on cloudy winter weather like this? We've had reports that he's been slaughtering people in Manchester with the belief that the victims were vampires. And he claims to be a vampire himself which is odd. Why would a vampire be killing his own species?"

"Schizophrenia, perhaps? Psychosis?" Ciel guesses. His next guess would be lycanthropy but that's an illness where the individual believes himself to be a werewolf, not a vampire.

"We're not sure. But the queen asked us to investigate and put a stop to it before he kills anyone else. There's been rumours saying that he's here in London."

"And how come I wasn't informed of this?"

"The queen knew that you were too busy with the highwayman case so she didn't want to bother you with another case for the time being. Also, this is a case where the queen doesn't want Scotland Yard knowing that we're involved in."

"Any possible leads?"

"Not at the moment. So far, we only have an image of him."

"Wearing those scandalous clothes, I'm surprised you haven't caught the bastard yet," Ciel says almost teasingly. Anyone who is wearing such attire is begging for attention. If this man hasn't been caught yet, then he must be really good at stealth. Or perhaps he changes clothes every once in awhile.

Alois frowns at him. "Oh really. And what about you? Do you have any possible leads?"

"I do. But it's not your business to know. This is, after all, my investigation. You keep out of my way and I'll keep from getting in your way."

Alois chuckled once more. "How rude of you! I gave you information of my own. Why can't you give me yours?"

"Because it's private business. Besides, you've only given me information of what he looks like and what he's done. You didn't give me a names or details that can help find him. In fact, everything you've given me is invaluable. Anyone in London can be wearing red since the colour is becoming popular as well as green."

"Like your aunt?" Ciel glares at the blonde boy when he said this. He doesn't want anyone talking about his aunt. No one. "I heard about her death. I never got the opportunity to say how truly sorry I am for her passing. But rest assure that her soul is now in heaven. Or do Phantomhives go to hell?"

"Master..." Mey-Rin approaches Ciel but freeze on the spot when seeing Alois. Her face turns deathly pale and her eyes grow wide.
"Mey-Rin, go back with Finnian and Baldroy," Ciel orders. However, she remains standing, possibly overwhelmed with fear.

"Oh so you have the servant bitch to replace your dead aunt then?" Alois says with a smirk.

Without thinking, Ciel immediately smacks Alois Trancy in the mouth with the back of his hand. "You will never disrespect my aunt or my maid again!" he shouts angrily. "And you will apologize to Mey-Rin for hitting her that day!"

Alois tackles Ciel to the hard icy ground. He yells and starts slapping Ciel sharply. "Who the fuck do you think you are, eh?!" Ciel tries blocking the blows with his arms since he doesn't know how to fight back. "I don't care if you are the queen's guard dog! You have no right to lay a hand on the earl of the Trancy Manor!"

"Stop!" Mey-Rin rushes to them and tries to pull Trancy from him. "Stop! You're hurting him!"

Alois pushes her away, however. "Get off me, you wench!" He gets tackled by Soma who came out of goddamn nowhere.

"I'll teach you some manners, ass!" Soma shouts as he punches Alois in the face. Alois cries out in pain as his nose bleeds. Soma continues to punch and slap him repeatedly.

"Prince Soma, no!" Agni and Sebastian ran to them. They take hold of the prince and pull him away from Alois before he could do any more damage. Soma kicks and shouts and tries to pull away from the two servants. Agni puts his arms around Soma to restrain him. He whispers something into the prince's ear. Whatever he said finally gets him to stop struggling but remains glaring at Lord Trancy.

Ciel is pulled back up by Mey-Rin. "Are you all right, Master?" she asks as she dusts the snow from his hair and shoulders.

"I'm all right," he says while glaring at Lord Trancy.

In the background, Sebastian picks up the young master's top hat that have fallen on the ground as well and puts it back on his head. Undertaker comes out of his tent to see what the commotion is all about. The mortician folds his arms and chuckles, amused by the scene.

Lord Trancy stands in front of them, glaring at all of them but mostly at Ciel. His nose and lip are completely bloody. "Claude!" he calls out for his butler.

The butler, Claude Faustus reappears next to Alois Trancy in a matter of seconds. Ciel finds this very unnerving. His resemblance to Sebastian is very uncanny. The only difference being that his eyes are gold rather than brown like Sebastian, and his black hair is tidy. It's all too eerie and alien-like.

He bows before Lord Trancy. "Yes, your highness."

"I want to leave. Right now!"

"As you wish, your highness."

Ciel clenches his hands tightly. However, he feels empty for some reason. His hands feel empty. He looks down and notices that his father's family ring is not longer around his finger. He gasps and looks through the pockets of his coat.

"Where's my ring?" he asks, panicking. "Where's my ring!?"
Ciel glares at Lord Trancy as he chuckles as if finding it funny. He holds up a ring with a blue diamond in his hand. My ring.

"You're looking for this?" Lord Trancy drawls mockingly.

"Give it back to me," Ciel growls, "You have no idea how important that ring is to me."

"Oh really?" he chuckles. "If you want it back, then come get it."

Before Ciel can reach for the ring, Lord Trancy flings it across the ice. The ring flies and spins, blue light shimmering from the diamond, before landing and skidding through the icy ground. It fell on the other side of the fence where the ice is almost thin as paper. No one can step on that ice without falling through it and dying in the ice cold depths.

He yells in frustration and lunges at Alois Trancy once more but Sebastian holds him back. Alois grins maliciously, his teeth stained with blood. He spits blood at Mey-Rin which splatters on her pink coat. She and Catherine gasp at the offense. Alois simply laughs and leaves with his butler. Soma almost lunges at Alois like Ciel but Agni holds him back as well. Undertaker tries spitting back at the spoiled lord, not liking the disrespect he showed to the girls, but Alois and his butler are already far from reach.

Ciel wrenches away from Sebastian's hold. "Get off me!"

Soma pries Agni's arms from him. "That is enough, Agni. I am fine."

"Who was that horrible boy?" Lieutenant Makarova asks.

"His name is Alois Trancy. He is the earl to the Trancy household," Sebastian explains.

"And an annoyance, I assume."

"Indeed. It seems that we might have the misfortune of encountering him once more after we conclude with the investigation."

"Enough of Trancy," Ciel says harshly, "I need to get that ring back."

"Lord Phantomhive, you can't do that," Lieutenant Makarova says, "It's just a ring. You can get another one."

"Unfortunately, that ring belonged to his father, the previous earl of the Phantomhive household," Sebastian says, "It's irreplaceable."

Lieutenant Makarova blushes red in embarrassment and bows her head shamefully at Ciel. "Forgive me, my lord."

Soma also looks down, feeling guilty and ashamed for what happened.

Ciel shakes his head. "Forget it. It doesn't matter. What matters now is to recover that ring."

"Let me do it, master," Mey-Rin volunteers, "It's my fault for causing them. I am the one who caused this aggression between you two."

Ciel pats her arm. "You're not going out there. I am not risking your life again like last time." He turns his attention to his butler. "Sebastian, this is an order, go and get -."

"Soma! No! Don't cross over the fence!"
Ciel turns around and his eye widen in shock when seeing Soma climbing over the fence and walking over the ice. "Prince Soma, no! That's thin ice!"

"I'm going to get your ring!" Soma shouts from the other side of the fence.

He almost runs after him but Sebastian holds him back once more.

"No, master. You'll fall."

"So will he!"

Mey-Rin steps forward to go after Soma but Undertaker places a hand on her shoulder, stopping her actions. Mey-Rin turns to look at him in confusion and he shakes his head.

Ciel watches Agni climb over the fence and shouts out Soma's name once more.

Unfortunately, Soma ignores him and proceeds to slowly walk over the ice towards the ring. He is clearly shaking and breath puffs out of his lips in a white mist. Instead of stepping on the ice, his feet drag carefully across the ice, trying not to put too much pressure on the ice as it makes a low cracking sound beneath his booted feet. The ice shows the dark blue-grey waters beneath it instead of the ice being white as the snow. That's how thing the ice is. So thin that you can see the colour of the water.

Ciel's heart speeds up as he watches in terror. *He can't do this. He can't. Come back here, you stupid bastard.*

As soon as Soma gets close, he picks up the ring in his hand. He slowly turns around and lifts up his hand to show the ring.

"I got it!"

Ciel sighs in relief. He has it and he's still standing on the ice. "Good! Now get back here!"

Soma nods and continues walking slowly back to solid ground.

I close my eyes and take a deep breath. However, my eyes snap open at the sound of cracking. I run over to the fence and shout at Soma to stop walking and start running. The ice is breaking. He needs to move as fast as possible. But the ice gives way and Soma falls through the ice and into the water.

"Soma!"

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*Some of the chapters will be borrowing events from Season 2 and you will also be seeing an unexpected crossover in the future. I do hope you enjoyed.*

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