Clarity on a Monday Night

by Lolibat

Summary

Thunk- yet another photograph to be pinned to the corkboard. Harry James Potter, immortal assassin at the back and call of the gods, was bored, for a lack of better word. "Who do you need offed this time?" he asked. Green eyes glanced at the image before him, already wondering if his corkboard had any room left for its soon to be newest addition.

Undisclosed location

Thunk. A razor sharp steel blade pinned a photograph by the center to the corkboard. The picture was one of a lovely young woman with blue eyes. The exquisitely engraved knife sunk deep through the lady's forehead and into the coarse material behind the photograph. On the other side of the room, a dark haired man lounged lazily on the couch. He twitched his fingers slightly and watched unblinkingly as the knife detached itself and soared to him. He caught the blade easily between two fingers and sent it flying once more towards a different photograph.


As he detached the knife from yet another photograph, he reached for a glass of red wine. He sipped on it languidly as he observed his handiwork with half-lidded green eyes. Across the room, the corkboard was absolutely covered in photos; they were layered one upon another, all filled with
holes and cuts. Strangely, the pictures were secured to the board without any noticeable aid; no tape, no pins, no tacks—just magic.

The man set down his half-empty wineglass with a contented sigh and spun the knife in his hands expertly. Just as he was about to throw the obsidian blade once more, he paused. His disinterested emerald eyes suddenly flickered towards the doorway; he stared into the darkness for a moment before getting up fluidly.

'Looks like I have a visitor', he absently wondered which client it was this time. It had better not be Loki this time—not after what "he" did the last time he "visited".

He ran a pale bony hand through his hair as he headed through the doorway. Just before exiting the room, he tossed his knife behind him towards the general direction of the corkboard. He left without looking back; had he cared enough to look back, he would have seen that the knife embed itself in the picture right between someone's eyes.

"So, to what do I owe the pleasure?" He asked sarcastically as wine poured itself.

The raven-haired lady in front of him sipped her wine delicately before replying: "Naturally, this is not a social call, dear Master of mine," she smirked.

She looked up from her wine glass, revealing blood red eyes staring past thick black lashes. "I need someone killed." She said elegant, the last word rolling off of her lips. A deceptively delicate hand slid a photograph across the table.

Harry took a fleeting glance at the photograph but did not touch it. Instead, he scowled at her; really, the Perevells should have known that no god would consent to being bound like a common spirit. The first thing Death did when he died was challenge him for her freedom— and a reversal of roles. Harry knew that as a measly mortal, he would have no chance, but he was hardly given a choice in the matter. It has been five hundred years since the Hallows were more or less forced upon him, and to this day, he lives—ageless for eternity. Indeed, it was a curse greater than any other, in his eyes. Just because he was ageless in appearance did not mean that he was immune to illnesses; the gods have decided to generously granted him continuous good health in return for his aid in some of their… requests. Their circular logic baffles Harry at times; here he is, stuck as an immortal servant, and these beings have the gall to act like they're doing him a favor. Go figure.

All that time ever did was wash away his emotions, leaving him cold and callous. In the span of these years, he has seen kingdoms rise and fall, dictators come and go, humans live and die; all while the sands of time escape from his desperate grasp. Slowly, his heart withered day by day as he wastes away, isolated in his own dimension.

By the time his heart deadened completely, he had already ceased to care.

Magic was now a thing of the past, a notion to be scoffed at. The only wizard left in the world was him— all possessions, all knowledge, all history was now his, but he has never felt any emptier than he did now. Again, what is the use of a world of wonder if it was a world of one?

Simply put, assassinations were now his specialty—again, one forced upon him by the unique circumstances of his existence. The omnipotent entities wouldn't have bothered with him at all, except for the tiny fact that they are not allowed to meddle in human affairs directly. Humans were created to have free will, and the power of the gods does not belong on their plane of existence.
Well, technically, neither does Harry's. For the most part, he lives alone, with a dimension all to himself. Occasionally, a mortal would stumble across his dimension looking for their final resting place, and each time Harry would direct them to the nearest exit- a portal he would like to call the Perfectly Round Tunnel of Endless Light. Oddly enough, ever since the invention of some electrical muggle device, he has been getting hundreds of these visitors a day. He didn't mind the company, but these mortals never stayed, and he had the speech memorized to the last comma.

Harry wondered if he should put up a sign somewhere on his property.

But, back to the original issue: he had a nut to wipe off the face of the Earth.

"Right, so who is this kid?" Harry finally took a glance at the photo, wondering if he still had space left on his corkboard. "He's awfully young, isn't he?"

"His name is Yagami Light, also known as Kira," the ruby eyed woman spat. Harry raised an eyebrow. Whatever this Light fellow did, he didn't envy the poor sod in the slightest; the last time Death had gotten so pissed was when some fellow named Stalin came along and set off the third world war. "He is seventeen."

Harry's other eyebrow joined his first. At seventeen, he was still busy chasing skirts- well, until Dumbledore had gone and snuffed it. "Very young then. What did he do to warrant your wrath?"

"He is using my servants' tools to kill criminals," she huffed.

Ah, yes, those amusing miniature death gods of hers. What deity would forego the chance to build a personal army of minions? They may have a king, but he knew that the real power lies with the Queen, who so happened to be sharing a nice bottle of Pinot Noir with him. Harry thought that the tiny little monsters were rather cute, flapping around carrying those Death Note of theirs.

"How many did he kill?" Harry asked in curiosity. Usually Death doesn't bother with mortals killing each other unless the deaths started hitting four digits.

"One thousand four hundred and sixteen," she stated.

"Since when?" Harry asked.

"Since fifty-nine days ago," Death deadpanned. Like him, deities typically count in days. Concepts like months and years change, and being older than dirt, they rarely kept track of time using mortal methods.

Harry was mildly impressed. For a seventeen year old, this kid was going places- places like the top of his hit list.

"How soon do you need him gone?" Harry sipped his wine.

"Now," she demanded.

Harry snorted, "You know that's not possible."

"Then as soon as you can manage it, Harry James Potter. My patience runs thin," She gulped down the rest of her wine and promptly vanished as if she was never there in the first place.

Harry rolled his eyes. He got his order less than ten minutes ago, and her patience is already running out? Demanding and arrogant, unsympathetic and unpleasant- how typical. With a sigh, he drained the rest of his glass and got up, his Deathly Hallows pendant swinging against his black shirt. The
chain keeps him anchored to this dimension; he can neither take it off nor damage it, for it is his collar- also, supposedly his treasures.

Harry checked the magic on his knives casually slipped into his dragonhide boots, which were still as good as new even after half a millennium of use. It was a shame he didn't buy another pair before magic imploded. With a resigned sigh, he pocketed the picture and yanked open his door… only to be greeted with a rather familiar sight.

"Despite what you might think, this is not your resting place; your final exit is-" He began, the words forming on his lips almost reflexively.

"That way," the crouched over, black haired insomniac said, pointing towards the glowing tunnel.

Harry blinked. "Then what the hell are you doing here? Go on, scram." He made a shooing motion towards the soul. He didn't know who the man was, and he didn't care to find out.

The odd soul ignored his motions and muttered percentages under his breath. "Yes, if you are who I think you are going to kill who I think you are going to kill, then there is a sixty-seven point five percent chance of you meeting him." He murmured and bit his thumb.

"You know, you are rather rude." Harry crossed his arms. "Eavesdropping is a bad habit." It was quite obvious that the weirdo had listened in; just how good was his hearing?

"Says the man shooing away guests," the man pointed out.

"You are no guest of mine," Harry rebutted dryly.

"How very hospitable of you to turn down a lost and recently departed soul, Mr. Don't Be Rude," the man rebutted.

Harry bit back a sharp reply. The sooner the nuisance left, the quicker he can do his job. "Look, what do you want? How do you know me anyways?" His anger meter was surely rising, bit by bit.

The black haired man stared piercingly at him with bright red eyes- Death's eyes. Well, looks like the minions have been getting frisky- procreating with mortals and whatnot. They must really have been bored, Harry thought, caught between laughing and scowling, as he met the gaze without flinching.

Again, the nameless soul answered only the inquiries he wanted to answer. "If you meet a man who has my exact current appearance, tell him that he owes me 1.735 jars of strawberry jam that he stole from me; I will be charging an interest rate of 0.23 jars every year the debt goes unpaid. An offering at my grave- a nameless one roughly 1.73 miles to the east of the back entrance behind the last wall-will suffice."

Harry blinked at the amphibian-like oddity before him… and blinked some more. He had no problems remember the message, having been tasked with much worse before. This is by no means the peculiar request he has had to fulfill before- he refused to grant Loki anymore "favors"- not after what he asked for the last time he dropped by- but this was up there in the top dozen requests.

The man with shinigami eyes gazed unflinchingly back at him, awaiting his reply.

Harry saw no harm in it; a debt unpaid would undoubtedly hinder a spirit's journey to afterlife, and the last thing he needed was this weirdo hanging around him for eternity. "Sure; I can't guarantee that your message will be delivered, but if I see a man who looks just like you- Harry doubted that such an impossible statistical event would occur- I'll tell him what you said."
The man nodded. "That will suffice." Then, he added. "I cannot see your name or your death day counter."

"Well yes, I'm already dead." Harry shrugged, stating the obvious. The man cocked his head, as if presented with a particularly interesting specimen. "If that is all," Harry said sarcastically, "I have a task to get to."

The man silently moved out of the assassin's way and watched as he disappeared through the bright tunnel.

"I win, L. In death, I solved a case- this unsolvable one- before you." Beyond Birthday gave a satisfied and peaceful smile as he faded away into light.

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**Kanto, Japan**

Harry stepped out of a bathroom stall easily and made his way out of the shopping center. No one thinks twice about a stranger emerging out of a bathroom stall unless if said stall was already occupied at the time of arrival. If that's the case… well, that's what the obliviate spell was created for.

Right then, Harry thought as he loosened up the muscles in his neck. Time to find this Yagami brat.

"Point me, Yagami Light." The Elder wand immediately materialized from his pendant and pointed north. Harry swiftly disillusioned himself and pulled out his Firebolt, which he also disillusioned.

Time to go to work, Harry thought as he mounted his broom and kicked off from the sidewalk curb.

Several quick minutes later, a coughing Harry dismounted in a suburban neighborhood full of cookie-cutter houses. The air has gotten much worse since his last visit to Earth. What have these muggles been doing to the damn planet?

Once Harry caught his breath- pausing every so often to curse the living hell out of industrialization- he began categorizing the entry and exit paths in the household. As Harry calmly scaled the wall upwards using sticking charms, he contemplated dropping by the cake shop before leaving. It has been a while since he had last indulges in mortal pastries; he wondered if they stocked treacle tarts. The very thought of the delicious sugary creations made him all the more eager to finish said job.

When Harry reached the window, he glanced inside using a small hand mirror that he kept in his pocket. Good, the boy was alone in his room.

Quickly, Harry apparated inside the room and fired a barrage of locking, silencing, and safety spells on all exits of the room. He stood motionlessly as his target immediately got up- knocking his chair over in his haste- and spun around with a wild look in his eyes.

Harry ignored the mad child. His eyes trailed downwards from the teenager's hand- a black pen still within his grip- to the open notebook on the desk. It was crammed full of names in tightly packed columns. Harry took his time in observing the room, his eyes pausing on Ryuk. Reflexively, he sidestepped Light, who was surreptitiously inching towards his blind spot.

"Well, this is a cozy room you have here. I don't really understand what you could possibly be dissatisfied with; you've got a good family, a good home, a good school- in summary, a good life." Harry broke the silence.

Light started to snarl before suddenly clamming up, the wildness in his eyes shifting to fear when he caught sight of Harry's pendant. He reached for something in his pocket, but he did not withdraw his
"What? Don't look at me like that," Harry huffed, catching sudden shift in attitude. He didn't care for whatever the teen was going to do - nothing he could offer at this point would save him. "You've been busy, haven't you? Writing all those names - it's a shame you've been so busy, Yagami Light. You really wouldn't have been in this situation if you weren't so gun-ho about killing people. Usually Death has a margin of a thousand or so deaths per year, so you could have flown under the radar if you were more patient. Or you could have just thrown the stupid little book in a random direction and ran away running and screaming like a normal person."

Again, Light stayed silent. He looked towards Ryuk, silently pleading for him to do something.

"Don't look at that sorry excuse of a minion," Harry drawled. Ryuk shifted uneasily, the grin falling from his face. "That guy isn't getting off easy either. I'd be surprised if he can make it to the next century in one piece. Death really isn't happy with you, which is a shame since you're so young and have - well, had, I suppose - so much potential."

Still, Light remained silent, a bead of sweat making its way down his face. His handsome face was gaunt with fear. His brain worked quickly, betting desperately on making an escape once the man moves. He is a god; he cannot die just yet - the mantra repeated itself over and over in his head.

"No last words?" Harry offered and spun his dagger. "Well, Death isn't patient, and she definitely wants your soul delivered on a silver platter. If you somehow find yourself in front of a small old-fashioned house after this, do yourself a favor and turn around. You'd be in the wrong dimension, and you had better not knock on the door for directions."

Light's heart pounded in his chest, the words registering. The absurdity of the statement reached through the haze clouded his mind - what dimension? He clutched the recorder in his pocket, ironically hoping that L would be able to avenge him. He knew that the detective believed he was Kira. Surely the man would investigate if his top suspect suddenly disappeared.

The tension was stifling inside the small room; quickly, Harry leapt into action and froze Light in place. In a heartbeat, he appeared next to the petrified teenager and said in a bone chilling voice,

"Don't you know, Yagami Light? The gods don't appreciate mortal trying to do their jobs for them. They're not patient, and they are not kind. It is because of your arrogance that I am here on their orders. I was sent to be your judge, your jury, and your executioner. Remember - you brought this on yourself." Harry's voice cut through Light's muddled thoughts. The assassin pressed their bodies close; he could hear Light's frantic last breaths and the hate in the boy's eyes.

In one swift blow, Harry's dagger sliced from the middle of Light's right shoulder - above the clavicle - diagonally down past the left edge of his sternum. The magic imbibed in the dagger ensured that Harry met no resistance as the blade cut through flesh and bone as a knife would butter. On its way down, the tempered steel severed nearly all the major vessels in the body, causing the teen to bleed out before the minute was over. Coldly, Harry dropped the body with a thud. Light's eyes were open wide with fear even in death - a sinner's eyes. Crouching down, he carved the mark of the Deathly Hallows on the base of his throat - this mark goes directly into the soul and singles the target apart from the rest of the deaths. That way, his clients would know that the job has been done. Casually, he wiped his dagger clean on Light's shirt and spelled off the lukewarm blood from his clothing.

"Well, that's one job done. Now, what to do with you?" Harry looked up at Ryuk unflinchingly. "You'd best make yourself scarce before Death comes after you. I'd wager you have a good couple of decades left if you're lucky." Harry shrugged as Ryuk did just that - the concept of living on hand.
limited startled the creature.

Harry strode over to Light's desk and picked up the death note. He turned it around and flipped through the pages from front to back. He spoke aloud, knowing that his words were being recorded. The quiet click of Light's recorder had not gone unnoticed. "So this is a Death Note… I suppose it's a pretty cool toy, but toys are for children." Harry dropped the note back down on the desk. "She didn't specifically order me to dispose of the notebook; I shall leave it be for the next mortal foolish enough to incur Death's wrath."

Harry admired his handiwork and leapt out the window, cancelling the spells on his way out. He had things to do and places to go. Surely, there was a treacle tart somewhere with his name on it.

L Lawliet chewed on his thumb in thought; when he chose to take on the Kira case, he expected that it would be his last case. Never did he think that it would end like this.

His keen black eyes took in every pixel of the images before him, which had arrived within the past hour- along with some very unsettling news.

Yagami Light was found murdered at roughly 19:15, Monday 21st of January, 2003- in other words, forty-five minutes ago by Yagami Soichiro. He was found with the Mark etched into the base of his throat. Investigators subsequently photographed the crime scene and discovered a voice recorder, which was still recording.

The Mark- a bisected triangle with a circle in the middle- is linked to a series of unsolved murders dating back five hundred years ago. Each and every one of them went unsolved. The deaths all occurred in the same manner- a diagonal cut across the chest leading to mass hemorrhage and subsequent death. Oddly enough, the cut was completely smooth- even across bones and various organs. No message was ever left behind other than the strange mark. The killings are whispered in hushed tones; the murderer was never referred to as anyone but M- for murderer or marks. L was very familiar with those cases even though there has not been one in close to half a decade. Each and every single one of the victims were criminals of the worst kind- people who murdered thousands of lives. Some say that M is a gift to humanity- a hope for humankind. Others suspect that M is a group of people, an organization of assassins for hire.

L knew very well that there was no such organization, and no government agency- however covert- is linked to the murders. He suspected that more than one person was behind the killings simply by deducing that no human can live more than a hundred and twenty years at most. The mark was not related to any kind of cult, religion, or organization; he ran numerous searches in the past years, none of which yielded conclusive answers.

None like the recorded conversation that L played a dozen times. Clearly, Light knew that his chances of escaping alive are next to none. Thus, he did the next best thing and gathered as much evidence as he could to help L. The irony did not escape L- here was Kira, silently pleading L for help in the last moments of his life. L wondered if Light was physically unable to talk or did not want to incriminate himself. The question is- why did M allow for such an action?

Stubborn to the end, L mused, gathering his last impressions of the deceased teenager. The recording answered a great many questions but also raised many more. An assassin working directly for the gods- or more specifically, a personification of Death- who seem to have a death quota per person every year. The very idea was ludicrous at best. If someone told L of this two hours ago, he would have referred the person to the nearest psychiatrist.

But now, perhaps the idea is not so farfetched- not any more than an untraceable killer having
technology five hundred years ago that is still miles ahead of current advancements. L hopped off his chair fluidly; he had a crime scene to get to. He ordered all investigators to leave the premises; he would personally gather the evidence. For that, he wants no interference whatsoever.

The detective made his way out of the five star hotel that he had temporarily set as his base of operations and walked towards the Yagami house, which was a short distance away; the crisp night air and mild exercise would most likely increase his blood oxygen saturation and thus boost his cognitive ability. Of course, the fact that a rather famous cake shop lies in the path did nothing to deter the detective.

Little did L. Lawliet know that it would be the most memorable walk of his life.

To his eternal disappointment, Harry could not find treacle tarts in the bakery. Apparently, he was in the wrong part of the world for treacle tarts. In his humble opinion, that is blasphemy, for treacle tarts ought to be globally famous by now.

Before his ego could inflate any more, Harry hurriedly squashed it with vehemence. He would not be as arrogant as his clients- no, he would rather suffer an eternity of disease before that. In order to satiate his sweet tooth, Harry reluctantly settled for a slice of strawberry cake instead.

This cake isn't half bad, Harry thought as he finished the last bite. He got up to return the plate and emptied the store of all their strawberry cakes. He would need them for his trip back.

Upon receiving the delicious desserts, he carried the large bags out of the store and headed towards the nearest bathroom, which in this case happened to be in a park. Conveniently, the same park that L was strolling through on his way to purchasing a strawberry cake.

Like B had predicted, the inevitable happened. The two forces of nature stopped dead in front of each other, both shocked by the appearance of the other.

L could not believe his eyes; he painfully tore his gaze away from the Mark pendant only to memorize the man's features, pausing at the distinctive jewel-like eyes and the odd lightning-bolt scar on the man's forehead. His heart pounded a sound that was loud as a drum to his ears. For once, he was speechless.

"Oh, you've got to be kidding me," Harry groaned and palmed his face. He casually froze L in place when the detective twitched towards the assassin, itching to capture him. "This cannot be happening."

L wondered why the infamous assassin dreaded meeting him of all people- detective or not. While he cannot discount the possibility of the man knowing his true identity, the chances are very slim. "I can't believe that goddamn frogman had hit the nail right on the head," Harry groaned. L was momentarily distracted by the movement of the strawberry cakes before chiding himself. There are more important events unfolding here. He paused to process the absurdity of the statement- and the fact that the assassin had a rather old-fashioned British accent. The only person that the term "frogman" would usually apply to was himself. There was a possibility that "frogman" would be used to describe people who caught frogs for a living or otherwise looked like frogs, but both the occupation and the phenotype were rather rare. L's breathing was labored; he pulled his mind away from the panic from being utterly paralyzed in the presence of a known killer.

Said killer- possibly mentally ill- sighed- an action out of L's slim character profile of him. "Well, I did promise that creepy weirdo," L would have frowned if he could. "You know a guy who looks just like you, right?" He began.
L's heart skipped a beat. It was impossible—no, nothing is impossible now.

"Yeah, well, even if you don't know him, he knows you. That bloke looks just like your carbon copy. Maybe an evil twin? Anyhow, he told me that if I saw you—which he said there was a sixty-some percent chance of happening—I am to pass a message to you. He says in no unclear terms that you owe him… 1.735 jars of strawberry jam, I believe? From that time when you stole it from him and that he's charging you an interest rate of 0.23 jars per year. He says to make an offering at his grave," Harry recited and paused to remember the location of said grave, "Which is 1.73 miles to the east of the back entrance behind the last wall, wherever that is."

The great detective L nearly dropped his jaw. No one—not Misora, not Wammy—knew the exact amount of strawberry jam that B had in his refrigerator. The jam was the first thing that he had seized and had checked for poisons. L had B incarcerated in the strictest, most secure prison he knew. He had received news this morning that B had been killed by Kira; he knew that there was a chance of Kira doing just that, but his heart still twisted uncomfortably at the news. He never bothered to ask about B's grave, preferring to shove away his memories of B permanently. L scolded himself for being distracted by such sentiments and hurriedly refocused his attention.

"What is with you people looking at me like that? First the creep, then the brat, and now you." Harry muttered, a bit discontent. "Can't a guy just do his job in peace?"

Well, that would depend on the nature of your job, L thought sarcastically. If your job is to kill people professionally, then no, you may not perform your task in peace.

"Well, whatever," Harry waved his hand and turned his back. L strained against his invisible bindings, but they did not budge in the slightest. "I'm heading back before my cakes melt. Don't snuff it too soon, alright? I swear, if you come knocking at my door, I'll drop kick you straight to hell. No more amphibians on my doorstep," Harry huffed and made his way to the bathroom. Only when he was about to disapparate did he release L.

Another job well done, Harry thought, satisfied. He withdrew the photo from his pocket—another photo to add to his collection.

END

Omake/extras: Caught between Goodness and Greatness

L immediately abandoned his course to the bakery and instead rushed towards the direction M went. As he expected, the killer had disappeared. He could not find neither any traces of the man nor any form of transportation. It was as if the man simply disappeared into thin air.

Frowning, he made his way to the Yagami residence while replaying, pausing, and rewinding the last fifteen minutes of his life. What did that man do to render him immobile? There was no poison in his blood, and no contact was initiated. The air was clean, and the encounter was entirely random. In fact, the man seemed rather vexed and in a hurry to leave… to refrigerate his strawberry cake. While he could empathize with that worry, he was much more concerned with the man's knowledge and ability to defy the laws of physics.

Certainly, his abilities and knowledge supports his credence, and the man did not seem to be mentally ill. Seeing the surreal first handed makes the unbelievable suddenly very believable.

He arrived at the house promptly, this worries still at the forefront of his mind. He shoved everything
away into a pile and directed his attention to collecting evidence. As the recording suggested, the Yagami was laid back at the spot where M had dropped him. The other person or entity present in the room was now absent, probably having taken M's words to heart. He was not sure if the third party was human; he had monitored the Yagami household for some time before the murder (L kicked himself for not continuing the surveillance for longer), and he never saw another person in Yagami Raito's room- not even his family. Occasionally, he caught glimpses of what could be Raito muttering to himself- perhaps he was addressing an invisible third party? The chances were slim, but he could not discount that.

L tiptoed carefully and used whatever tools he could to collect evidence- hair, fingerprint, footprint-anything he could get his hands on. He noted absently that the room was very organized- the only object out of place was a chair, which might have been knocked aside when Light got up. Other than that, Light did not show any signs of struggle.

Or perhaps he couldn't, a part of L suggested, his most recent experience still vivid in his mind. He did manage to turn on the recorder though, another part rebutted. M didn't immobilize us until we started moving towards him, the original part argued. L paid the parts no mind. He would regather their analysis later at a more convenient time.

To his triumph, M actually left fingerprints. Either the man was ignorant of the new technology- which L highly doubted- or he was confident in his ability to go unidentified. L highly suspected that it was the latter.

Continuing, he strode over to the black notebook lying open on Light's desk. His sharp eyes spotted one name at the top of the page: Beyond Birthday. L picked up the book after dusting it to copy the fingerprints- undoubtedly a mix of M's and Light's.

The Death Note, L mused as he flipped through the book, skimming the rules and the columns of names. So this is Kira's killing method. Presumably, the third party in the room was a shinigami, explaining cryptic clue that Kira had left behind earlier. He would have to reinvestigate the Kira case later; compared to M, this case was insignificant. However, he would confiscate the book for further investigation. Such absurd methods require extensive testing, and he did not trust the investigators not to misuse such power.

Later that night, L tapped endlessly on his keyboard. He had recreated M's physical profile from memory, and he ran searches based on the fingerprints that he was able to obtain. He was unsurprised that the fingerprints did not match any in the database; the technology was not older than two hundred years at best. The fact that the searches turned up negatively supports the theory that M is one man and not an organization. L's portrait of the man was actually more useful: L found a match.

With anticipating building in each second, L clicked on the matching result- the entry dated back to over five hundred and seventy years. An old historical archive in Surrey, England had to be demolished, and a rather old librarian and converted the records into electronic format for storage purposes.

L was sure that she never knew the significance of her actions. He traced the pixels on the large monitor in front of him. He had a name at last.

Harry James Potter, born 31st of July, 1433. Orphaned nephew of Pentunia Evans Dursley and Vernon Dursley. L noted that all records of Harry James Potter ceased when after his eleventh birthday. A quick backtracking of both of his relations noted that Petunia Evans Dursley's sister, Lily Evans, had disappeared in much of the same manner. Neither of the disappearances were questioned.
Nonetheless, L stared intently at the old—almost primitive portrait displayed on the screen. He was more than ninety-five percent certain that this man was M—and a rather powerful being connected to gods at that, if his words are to be taken at face value.

Gods, a rather youthful part of L exclaimed in wonder. This man could prove the existence of gods.

This man is also a mass murderer, a more serious part stated calmly.

Yes, many questions can be answered by this man— not only regarding religion, but also regarding his supernatural abilities, and to a lesser extent, culture and history. This man could be the key to a new era for humankind. However, extracting the information would prove to be quite tricky, for he had no way of knowing the fully capabilities of the target. Even if he was able to be caught, there would be no guarantee that the being would be cooperative. Thus, coercion or force would be out of the question. An even more complicated issue would be catching the man, since his appearances were rather random before. L could hardly wait half a century for the being to rematerialize again only to find a cooling corpse.

The detective stared at the little black book resting innocently on the far side of his work station. Light's recording echoed in his mind.

"Usually Death has a margin of a thousand or so deaths per year, so you could have flown under the radar if you were more patient." He could almost hear that ageless, teasing voice.

L had no doubt that Light unknowingly exceeded the quota. He had been killing an average of twenty four criminals a day, if not more. Over almost three months, the total death count would exceed one thousand by quite a margin.

And Death acted because of it. Death, a female entity judging by M's use of the feminine pronoun, noticed the killings and had thus ordered M to stop them at the source.

Meaning it was possible to lure M by catching Death's attention through a thousand lives lost by the hands of one. If it was possible to predict the appearance of M, it was possible to negotiate with him, to find his weaknesses, and perhaps to bring him to justice and solve this half-a-millennium long case.

To close such a case would be the ultimate height of his career. It would prove that justice can prevail above all. Even better, the potential for new technology and abilities was limitless. To be able to cut through solid bone and tissue so easily—to immobilize someone at the very thought of doing so—that power would revolutionize the world.

And all it took was one thousand lives.

"The gods don't appreciate mortal trying to do their jobs for them. I was sent to be your judge, your jury, and your executioner." L's mind quoted the words back at him, recalling them in the same voice that said them.

One thousand lives. What was one thousand lives in the grand scheme of humanity but a drop in an ocean? All for the chance of a new world—what would be the price? There is no guarantee of it, but presented with greatness and goodness, which holds precedence?

L crouched, motionless, his eyes fixated on the small black notebook. He sat for a long, long time, completely still.

Slowly, he reached for the notebook and flipped to a blank page.
AN 1: The Perfectly Round Tunnel of Endless Light isn't actually made up. If you google near death (or revival shortly after death) experiences, a number of them describe this endless tunnel of white light.

AN 2: Yes, I did twist around the timeline and the development of various technologies.

AN 3: In this story, magic is biologically inherited, meaning genetics. Take that with as much irony as you wish.

Mandy: Well, here's another short little one shot to tide my readers through until I can update my other stories. I actually wrote this one quite a while ago, so all I did was change some parts and polish the story up a bit. If my summer plans go through, then I might not be able update until quite late in the summer. On the other hand, I have exams quite soon, and my roommate got me sick. So now I'm stuck feeling nauseous and the room won't stop spinning. Great.

I do believe I could have written L better. The canon L probably would have been a lot cautious in making his decision and would have taken more time. Even if he had to make a decision, he wouldn't be the one writing the names. Anyhow, I hope you guys liked it. :) Feel free to drop a review or a PM if you did.

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