The red eyed prince

by Boozombie

Summary

The prince of the lost kuruta kingdom, was only a prince in name. when a trip to secure peace through union goes awry the young prince finds himself at the mercy of the self proclaimed pirate king.
Chapter 1

Sea air whipped around my blond hair. The sliver metal of my chain crown, glinting off the one blood red jewel.

Dispite the light atmosphere I felt a gloom in my chest, by this time tomorrow I'd be in a new home, set to be married to The princess of Nostrade, neon.

I had no experience with the Nostrade family, I didn't even know what princess neon looked like. All I had were rumors, and they weren't pleasing.

Neon was famously a brat, crying and whining her way through life, the Nostrade family didn't seem to have had any hardships as one of the many kings under the ten don's United Kingdom's.

I know I'm just a political piece in the quest to gain even more power. My own small nation had been wiped out long ago, I was the only survivor of my people. I was a prince without a home land.

"Kurapika!" Turning to give my companions a small smile I found myself looking at prince Gon of the whale islands and his faithful knight Leorio.

The boy was, as always, full of excited energy. When my nation was attacked, and plundered, the hunter king had swooped in and rescued me, before delivering me to the absence king ging. He was a confounding man, shy and graceless but kind all the same. He had no interest in ruling a kingdom and instead left it all to his cousin and regent ruler queen Mito. He had giving me to her and I'd been happily living with her and the little prince for five years.

"Yes prince Gon?" I asked in my usual stuffy way. We were royalty, I knew Gon didn't like it but we had a way we must behave. He couldn't be galivating through the forest forever.

"Don't be like that!" He yelled and jumped to hug at me.

"Ya no one is around to see you drop the prince act" Leorio grinned at me.

Laughing softly I tried to keep my crown straight as I was continuously attacked by gon's hugs. I had watched the small boy grow from a young age, he was practically my brother.

"Gon this is unbefitting of a prince" I laughed again as he messed up his prefectly groomed hair, returning back to it natural spiked look.

"But after the wedding you won't be with me anymore" he whined rubbing his head into my chest. My face fell slightly. That's right after today I wouldn't see Gon anymore, maybe at political functions but that was it.

I knew the only reason king Nostrade had wanted me to marry his daughter was because I still held claim on the kuruta land and the masses of silver and Ruby's that the land held. It was a wonder that the hunter king had even worked for me to have that claim. My knowledge of ruling a kingdom was only a bonus.

"That's right, after today" I muttered pushing the boy off lightly.

"You'll write, right?" Leorio asked, Leorio had been training to be a knight when I had arrived at the tender age of 12. He had become something of a best friend, after a few nasty fights, in the
years that followed.

"Of course I will" I told him seriously. The whale islands was something of a second home to me, I loved the carefree people and the friends I had made. They were the only reason I was doing this. The pirate king had begun attacking the areas around the islands, for protection and peace I had agreed to the terms of alliance the king of Nostrade had given queen Mito.

The pirate king, my blood boiled at just the thought of him. No body knew what he looked like, or even his name but everybody knew the stories of the ruthless pirates that had taken down the mighty kuruta nation.

I had been helping the hunter king in resent years to put an end to them but they escaped every carefully planned attack. It was like they knew exactly what we were going to do before we did it.

It was frustrating that the destroyer of my people were still out there somewhere pillaging more helpless people.

"I'm going to miss you" Gon told me softly looking out to the sea with a longing look.

"Just focus on your studies Gon, and be a good king" I whispered out to the sea as well. We didn't need any tender goodbyes. No matter how much I loved Gon I had to always remember I wasn't his brother, I was just the lost prince his family had took in at the request of the hunter king.

"It netero going to be there?" Leorio asked "he is your adoptive father after all" I rolled my eyes at that.

"Just another political move" I snapped. I didn't particularly care for the man. Yes he had saved my life but I knew it was all an act of power on his part. The kuruta had been isolated for so long, I always figured he believed the nation would survive and then he could return me to the thrown, my grandfather dead, along with my parents, and he could rule from the shadows forcing the nation to open its doors and share the massive wealth of my land. I would have been a puppet either way.

He was one of the few, after all, that knew the royal family's secret. The scarlet eyes, only children born with them could rule the nation. I had been the first in line as the kings grandchild but many others could have taken the reins had I not wanted too.

"Still he should be there" Leorio muttered angrily. He had always hated my pessimistic attitude but I couldn't believe that anyone did anything out of the goodness of their hearts. Other wise why didn't he send in troops to save my people and the rest of the royal family? He appeared like a ghost in the night just before the attack, boarder line kidnapping me. It was something I had found suspicious for a long time.

He always explained that he had been passing by the seas near my lands when he saw the ships and snuck through the boarders unattended to see what was happening, the hunter king was a warrior after all, he had seen the phantom pirates and had known what was about to happen and almost left before he saw me. I had been sneaking out that night, meeting a good friend, he told me it was coincidence and that he hadn't known I was the prince only that he thought he could save at least one child. It was all bullshit in my opinion.

"Let's stop talking about this" I told them as the sun started to set. It would be a long day tomorrow and I thought it a good idea to get some sleep.

I listened to hear any howling wind of the ship rocking fiercely, but nothing. the captain had told us
a storm was coming and to try to get some sleep but how could I? I had lived on an island My whole life on islands I could be of help in a storm.

Finally deciding I couldn't sleep I threw the blanket off of me and left the room. I don't care if I'm in the simple blue nightgown I normally wore to bed but I did take the time to place my crown on my head. If someone told me to stay out of the way I could always through my weight around a bit. No one would dare tell a boy with a crown on his head what to do.

leaving the cabin was a bit of a shock, first off, there was no storm, second, the sails weren't down and the entire ship felt like a ghost town. Where are my guards, or even the other ships? I couldn't see past the fog.

"I don't smell a storm captain"

gon's words made me shiver. What was happening? I would ask Gon and Leorio but they had been moved onto a different ship in preparation for our landing on the don's territory.

"Hello?" I called out and listened closely for any reply, I could hear a slight dripping noise and I felt someone else's eyes on me. Shivering again from the cold and the feeling of dread.

Deciding to tell a guard about my foreboding feeling I made for the guards quarters. My bare feet were quiet along with the night as I opened the door as silently as possible. My brain screamed at me to run but seriously where would I go? I'm in the middle of the ocean. My best bet is to grab one of my favorite guards and have her soothe my worries.

Maybe we were just evading a storm, I tried to be positive.

The place was completely dark and when I stepped into something wet with a thick splat my whole body shivered.

Something is wrong.

The light breathing of men sleeping in there hammocks was absent, it was eerily quite. The wetness on my foot felt to thick to be water and was beginning to dry on the edges.

The smell of rusty metal suddenly assulted me and I felt my fear spike.

"Marine?" I called to the women that had been my personal guard for years quietly before repeating it louder my voice shaking. "Are you trying to scare me again?" I asked the darkness hopefully "you got me now please come out" I called again.

"Prince" I heard the barest whisper from the darkness, squinting slightly at the sound of marines voice.

"Marine!" I called out in slight relief. Ignoring the small ocean flooding the deck I ran forward into the darkness. I stepped on something squishy and tripped suddenly.

Turning slightly, the liquid on the floor drenching the front of my nightgown and splashing into my hair, I looked at what tripped me and the world seemed to fall into a tail spin. Soro's dead face laid in front of me. Looking down at my hand I could suddenly see the color.

Red

What is going on? Why is he dead? Why is the floor drenched in blood? Why why why!
"prince" marines voice called to me again. Her voice full of pain and panic.

Looking over to where her voice came from I tried to get up but kept slipping back into the blood a number of times before I was able to find her broken and barely alive form in the center of the room.

"Marine what happened?" I cried out quietly taking her in my arms.

"Run" she whispered her eyes looking up at me in fear "the phant-" she hacked up blood in a dry cough "you have to run"

her breathing began to fade and my world seemed to be falling apart. "No no marine please" I called, this women had been with me since I was 12, she had taught me to defend myself, she had been my everything.

"Run" she whispered again her eyes focusing in on something behind me. A light filtered in from behind me and I turned slowly.

"You were suppose to be sleeping" the deep voice bombarded my muddled brain. I looked up at the dark man standing over me, a blond women slightly behind him holding a touch. My eyes wondered over the corpses that were strewn around the place in horror.

Was I breathing? Looking back up at the man who had a slight smirk on his face at my astonishment.

"What did you do to marine?" Was the first thing out of my mouth. I couldn't think, everything was rushing around too fast right now.

"Isn't it obviously?" A black haired boy said stepping out of the shadows "I tortured her to death"

"Is this seriously the little prince that has been setting up traps at our raids? Seems a little air headed to me" another man commented a slim sword dripping with blood laying over his shoulder.

My arms tighten around a still breathing marine, she wasn't dead yet I could still save her.

"What do you want" I snapped my brain finally beginning to move away from the shock.

"That's very simple" the dark man leaned down into the blood and cupped my still shocked face his thumb rubbing at the blood on my cheek gentle. "Why do you insist on standing in the phantom pirates way?"

My vision blurred and a different kind of red took over my sight.

The phantom pirates. The people that laid waste to my entire kingdom. The people that cut out my family's eyes and tortured my people for fun.

"Well that makes sense" someone said in a bored tone when my eyes flared brightly.

"Well well well of it isn't the lost prince" the man still holding my face breathed. My hand moved without my permission and smacked his offending hands away from me.

"You!" I growled and I felt the chains of my crown rattle.

He didn't react to my violence but everyone else did. It was only a second before the man with the sword was holding it against my throat.
"Everyone you are dismissed, make sure to pay the captain for his good work and tell him I look forward to our continued business" the dark man, who I suspected was the feared pirate king, commanded and my world spun even further.

The captain had been a trusted man in the whale islands for decades, he's been working with the pirates.

The group of pirates grumbled but didn't disobey, it wasn't long before I was left alone with the man.

The room somehow felt smaller.

"You are prettier than I imagined" was the first thing he said to me after silence only filled by my panicked panting.

"You destroyed my kingdom, your exactly the hideous creature I imagined" I glared my eyes not fading.

"Oh I'm not even a little handsome to you?" He smirked suddenly invading my space more, not minding the pool of blood at all.

Marines breath hitched and I tightened my arms around her and backed away.

"You know women all over the world fall for this face, this body" he continued forward until I could go no further for fear of falling back into the gore.

"Stay back!" I shouted but suddenly looked down at the mother figure in my arms when I felt her breath stop. My own breath stuttered as her chest suddenly heaved and her eyes widened and she looked up at me in wild panic before stilling and light faded from her, her body going completely limp.

"No" I begged. The dark man seemed to watch with disgusting interested until the very end.

"Good that's over" he grabbed the new corpse from my lap and threw her with little care. "Now I'll have your undivided attention"

"you bastard!" I cried trying to throw a punch but he easily stopped my fist and twisted it. I cried out in pain and horror as he used his momentum to shove me down into the blood and crawled over me.

"You know I came for you, destroying that kingdom was always the second part of the plan, kidnapping the heir and raising him to my standards was the first" he explained as his hand felt up my chest slowly. "It seems even when my plans are stopped fate is on my side, you have grown well and they even managed to keep your survival a secret how cute"

my mind raced with the new information, it hadn't been just a raid, but a kidnapping. I had been targeted and somehow I was taken out of the line of fire.

"Get off me! You murdering bastard!" I skreiked tried to throw him off and striking out with my one free arm.

"Aren't you curious about why I wanted you my red eyed prince?" He whispered as he pinned my other arm effortlessly and leaned down into my face.

"I don't care!" I screamed and threw my knee up kicking him in the balls. His face twisted with pain
and his grip loosened on me. I pushed him off and scrambled to get up. "I wouldn't be able to understand a monster anyway" I spat and ran for the door. My foot falls splashed more blood and gore on me and I'm sure I'm covered in blood by now.

I had to get away, find a raft, swim for it anything. I didn't have magic power, or insane physical strength. I hated them all and I wanted them to die but I wasn't stupid, I couldn't face them on my own. For now I had to run, retreat, meet up with netero and tell him what I've learned so we can strategies.

Throwing open the door I only paused for a moment when I spotted ten or so people loitering around the deck. They paused to look at me in mild surprise. I spotted the ship captain by a blond haired boy and sent him a death glare.

"Grab him!" I heard a piercing command from behind me and I tried to sprint for the side of the ship. Several of the pirates were quick to race after me but I was faster. I was so close to the ship railing and I jumped.

I was mid swan dive when I felt a tug on the back of my nightgown and was stopped midair.

"Jesus he'd rather dive into shark infested waters than face you cap!" The man holding me laughed. His voice booming and baritone.

I looked down into the clear waters and my eyes widened as I recognized the breed of sharks circling the ship, there must have been at least fifty white tips. They were aggressive and deathly, and I'm covered in blood.

The man holding me pulled me over the side and dropped me like a miss behaved child. I looked up at the monster of a man with a gut wrenching smile in his face.

"No more of that now! I don't think any of us could face down the sharks to save you princey" the man punctuated his sentence with a booming laugh, and it felt like an attack on my ears.

"Ya I don't feel like fishing him out" another large man joined him and I was still frozen in horror of my situation. Bouncing up rapidly I tried to take everything in, there were ten people. All staring at me with varied emotions but the most prominent would be disinterest, the dark hair man had joined everyone on the deck and was giving me a heated glare, promising retribution for his abused parts.

I jumped away from the two mountain men to try and get some space and took a fighting stance.

"Stay back all of you!" I tried to sound threatening. I knew the basic skills of fighting but I was a prince not a warrior, A strategist behind the line of fire. I had never been placed in a real fight before. All those years oc being protected by the hunter king and queen Mito felt so wasted because now I could barely protect myself.

The group of pirates laughed, even the less vocal ones seemed to chuckled a bit and I felt my eyes flare up in anger.

"Damn those are pretty" a tall blonde man awed at his first sight of my scarlet eyes. "I seriously envy you captain, he is a looker" he whistled and gave me a wink. I shuddered and a creeping fear started to don on me.

They had attacked kuruta for the heir to the country, marriage even forced marriage between men held up in most royal families but simply taking a country you'd never be seen as its rightful ruler. He said he wanted to raise me to his tastes, he had planned to take my kingdom in the most legal
form. Marriage.

"Just kill me" I whispered as the realization ran through my head in a flash or disgust.

"Oh that took him longer to figure out than I thought it would" a pink hair women commented her head slightly tilted as if she was analyzing me.

The captain strode forward and I matched his steps as I backed away.

"I would kill myself before you could touch me! I swear I will!" I trembled, then jumped in terror when my back hit a wall, my bare feet slipping a bit at the movement.

"Shalnark, repeat the information we gathered before this attack" he called out to someone behind him as he caged me in with his arms.

"Okay!" The blond boy I had noticed earlier responded with a happy attitude "prince kurapika, country unknown, the adopted son of king netero but not next in line, specializes in strategy and battle tactics, currently living in the whale islands under the protection of queen Mito and the young prince Gon. About to be wed to princess neon of the ten don United Kingdom's" he read off the facts of my life with a jovial cheer.

"Hmm" I looked back up at the pirate captain as he pretended to think "let's say if you kill yourself this prince Gon will take your place eh? The whale islands aren't exactly the kingdom I was aiming for but whatever, sound like a deal? Good" my breathing got heavy and I tried to throw another punch but was easily out maneuvered again.

"Don't you touch him!" I screamed and thrashed about as he pinned me once again.

"I won't have to as long as you behave" I felt as if he should be grinning maliciously but his face was calm and unwavering.

"No! I won't" I screamed trying like a wounded animal to wiggle out of his grasp. A small growl left his mouth and suddenly He smashed his lips to mine, our teeth clattering together and I screamed into the forced kiss. No no no this cannot be happening. I would take neon without complaint over this.

I tried to bite at his tongue or lip but I received a punch in the stomach for my efforts. With the wind sufficiently knocked out of me the pirate took more control up the kiss, shoving his disgusting tongue down my throat and nipping at my lip.

When he finally broke the kiss I was panting and gasping for air. He let my bloodied form drop and slide down the wall, my legs refusing to hold me up. I looked up at the pirate with disbelief and terror, why is this happening.

"Welcome to the phantom pirates my prince" he whispered directly in my ear as he kneeled down and brushed my hair out of my face. "Fight all you wish but you'll never escape me now, accept your fate"

before I could say anything at all he was already getting up and ordering his men around "Uvogin make sure my new cargo is delivered to my cabin and guard the door, phinks signal the ships were heading out. Paku, machi I'm going to need you both in the charting room for a meeting as soon as we get back to ryuusaigai. Alright move out" the man I believed to be Uvogin approached me and I tried to sprint away but he mearly grabbed me and threw me over his shoulder like I weighed nothing.
"No! Unhand me you brute!" I screamed and cursed at the man. I kicked my feet into his ribs and clawed at his back. He laughed.

Ryuusaigai, also known as shipwreck haven. A small and sinking island that no one knew the location of. I wouldn't be brought there, I wouldn't go quietly to the pirate kings island.

Before long my voice was hoarse and I had chipped and broken most of my nails. Ships began to appear out of the fog and for the first time since I was 12 I saw the skull and spider of the phantom pirates flag.

I screamed louder, cursed more, threats flew out of my month in rapid fire but it was all useless. I was carried onto the black ship of the pirate kings fleet.

Uvogin carried me aboard and straight into the captains corridors. He threw me onto the bed and I tried to slash as his face with my broken nails.

"You're just not going to make this easy are you?" He breathed before taking both my hands in his fist and looked around for something. His eyes lit up when he spotted it. "I knew the cap wouldn't get rid of these" he grinned happily.

He reached for whatever they were and my eyes widened when I spotted the shakles literally chained to his bed. I tried to rip my hands away and aimed a kick at his jewels but he dodged and effortlessly snapped the metal cuffs around my wrists. "Cap had these put in when we first planned on kidnapping you" he grinned and my eyes widened further, what the hell had he planed to do with a 12 year old chained to his bed?!

"Fuck you!" I screamed and tried to bash him over the head with the metal, I huffed in happiness when it worked. Forgetting that I was chains to the bed now I tried to make a break for the door. I was yanked back by the momentum when the thick chain held tight. Clenching my teeth in frustration I pulled and tugged and even bit at my wrists trying to get them off. The thick metal keeping my wrists together began to bruise me but I ignored the pain.

The pirate Uvogin got up and rubbed at his head. "Stop that you're hurting yourself" he sighed and shook his head at me. Giving up on the chain I decided to attack the man head on. throwing my body at him I tried to get to his neck to bite at his jugular but he caught me mid air and threw me back down in the bed.

"Stay!" He ordered sternly, And I growled god damnit I am not a tantruming child.

"Cap will be back in a few hours I suggest you get some rest" with that he left me alone in the room, huffing and puffing from anger.

I will get out of here, I will not be here when that man returns. Turning quickly to sit up I continued giving the chain a few test tugs and then decided to look for something to try and pick the lock. This man didn't know who he was messing with.
Chapter Summary

Warning! Lots of smut in this chapter

A flashy hair pin, that he probably stole and murdered for, was held in my mouth as I tried to pick the incredibly complicated lock. Seriously he had this made for a twelve year old?

I assumed the lock was supposed to be in the other side of the metal clasp that held the shackles between my wrists but the pirate Uvogin hadn't thought about that. Now I could pick it easier.

I had been at this for at least an hour now, maneuvering my hand to move the second pin I had found was difficult but not impossible.

"Come on" I muttered from my cross legged position on the bed "open damnit"

like an answer from the gods, the wraithful ones because they apparently hate me a lot, the door to the cabin opened.

Startled and wide eyed I jumped and looked at the door like a deer in headlights. At the door was the captain, he stopped in the doorway and looked me up and down. His eyebrow quirked when he noticed the pin in my mouth the other end still in the lock mechanism.

Glaring at him I took him in as well. He didn't wear a freaking shirt, like an asshole, his body from what I could tell was built and muscular yet lean. He had a long black jacket that hung past his knees with a large collar topped off with a signature privateers hat with a white bandana around his head under it.

He wore tight black pants with heavy back boots, damn someone hates color. The only thing on him that had any color was the two odd blue globe earrings hanging from his ears.

He sighed suddenly and closed the door behind him spiking my fear. He tossed his hat on the desk I had been able to ransack and casually slipped off his coat before hanging it on the back of the heavy chair. "It would seem I should tighten the slack on those chains" he commented lightly as he pulled the chair back and sat, resting his forearms on his knees and continued to watch me. "They were made and measured for a helpless child, not a smart and calculated teen" he finished his eyes looking into me, I felt violated and exposed by the look in his eyes.

"I'm going to run a knife through your chest" I hissed as I spit the pin out of mouth at him.

"Well you certainly are feisty" he chuckled "did losing your people not damage your will at all, it's a pity" my eyes flared and I jumped from the bed to try and attack him with the letter opener I had found in the desk but the slack from the chain wasn't enough and he was sitting just out of my range.

I growled in my throat and screamed he was so close I could almost get to him, I could kill him, just an inch more.

He chuckled deeply and plucked the letter opener from my fingers and stood. "I will have to make
sure all weaponry is out of your reach, you could have actually hurt me if you weren't such a hot head"

"you bastard!!" I screamed and yanked at the chains again. "What the hell is your game? If you think you can break me and use me as you want you are damn wrong!" He smirked at me and turned to walk across the room to the windows that looked out the back of the ship.

The moonlight shimmered around him as he took the heavy curtains in hand and began to draw them closed. "You underestimate me prince" the light faded as he meticulously shut it out. "True, braking you would have been easier five years ago but I have always seen challenge as an opportunity, this set up promises to be much more entertaining" he left us in darkness the only light coming from my glowing eyes.

"The question still remains" I began with a snarl "what the hell did you have in store for me at only twelve?!" The more I thought on this the more it infuriated me. Gon was twelve now, I couldn't help thinking of someone so much older chaining him to a bed and doing the things such a situation implied.

"Would you like me to show you?" My eyes widened when he whispered into my ear, when the hell did he get so close to me? I tried to turn to hit him, bash him over the head anything but to no avail. He picked me up like I was nothing and threw me back onto the bed and crawled over me. "Let's just tighten this for now" his hand traced over my bloody forearm almost tenderly before he grabbed the chain roughly causing me to wince in pain.

"Get off!" I screamed trying to throw him off me before he could tighten the chain.

"Easy now with the struggling" he whispered rocking his obviously excited member into my hips, he's enjoying this "I might just forget to prepare you if I get to excited" his husky voice made me shudder in disgust and I immediately froze in horror. He took the opportunity and tightened the chain to barely a foot of slack and pulled me down the bed until my arms were stained. "In the future you will no longer need the chain, you will enjoy this part of our relationship, but for now you are too willful to trust"

"that will never happen!" I yelled at him, panicked but defiant. "I will fight you, I don't care what you do I will fight!"

"How about you say that again and I'll let every man in this ship have a go, then we will see how you feel?" He bit my ear lightly and a shiver ran through my spine creating havoc. "I guarantee none will be as gentle as me" I could feel the evil smirk against my skin and I gulped at the idea.

"Y-ou wouldn't" I stuttered. I knew more about the captain of the phantom pirates then I cared to admit and one thing I knew for certain was he never shared what he believed to be his. He wouldn't let anyone touch me if what I thought was happening actually was.

"I can't say I would like it, but if it teaches you a lesson I would" with a sudden yank he ripped down the center of my stained and ruined nightgown. Exposing me entirely.

"No!" I screamed and tried to thrash about again.

"This is the way your life works now little prince" he held me still with one hand while he worked to take off his pants with the other "please me, honor me, be a perfect little husband and I will reward you but fight me, misbehave in the slightest way and you will be punished, I would advise you not to test my patience" he left a little trail of kisses down my collarbone and I flinched.
"Just stop" I found myself whispering, dread filling up my stomach, this is real, he is really going to force me into marriage with him "please" to my horror I felt him grow harder at the sound of my begging.

"Hmmm that's a nice sound" he muttered in the unprotected flesh of my neck, his warm breath tickling the sensitive skin.

"Stop it!" I tried to think of anything to make him stop "I'm a man!" Well that got a reaction, not a good one though. He began to laugh dropping his forehead to rest against my shoulder as he laughed.

"don't worry I am aware" to prove his point a stray hand ran up the length of my flaccid member. I jerked at the unwanted attention and my heart began to try and beat out of my chest. "Gender means nothing as long as you satisfy me" I could see his wicked grin through the darkness and I swear I was about to hyperventilate.

"You hardly know anything about me! How can you even want this" I reached for another excuse, obviously that didn't matter too him but maybe I could find a way to stall this, even just for a day.

"Hmm really, I believe I know a lot about you already" his hands roamed down my chest before finding their way under me to hike up my hips forcing himself between my legs "you are temperament, with great intelligence and the ability to apply it" his hand gripped my length and I bucked forward. He ran his hand up and down slowly trying to rise pleasure from me. "You are beautiful too, what else do I need to know?" My traitorous body began to respond to him, my member hardening, my eyes flew open when I felt a finger push into my opening.

"Don't!" I whined in pain as what felt like his thumb slowly worked me open.

"It seems I don't have to worry about any other lovers trying to rescue you" he chuckled at my reaction "as innocent as I wanted you to be, tell me did I take your first kiss?" He smirked at me as he took his hand assaulting my hole away for a moment to grab something. My breathing was getting heavy from unwanted pleasure and fright. His hand came back and this time instead of his thumb he was slipping his index and middle finger inside, he seemed to have coated them in some kind of oil.

"No, of course I've kissed someone!" I flushed at the invasion. It felt weird and uncomfortable, I hate it, it absolutely doesn't make me feel pleasure.

"Hmm that's upsetting, should I kill them?" My eyes widened at the suggestion, and from the feeling of him suddenly stretching my hole. I whined at the pain and tried unsuccessfully to twist away from him.

I didn't say anything, I couldn't I was panting and just trying to stay coherent was difficult. I couldn't let him that Leorio had kissed me behind the castle when I told him I would be accepting the marriage proposal, he would kill him.

"Well?" He pushed, adding another figure "you are not permitted to ignore me"

"I was lying okay?" I snapped at him, my face flushing. "I don't even know your name!" I shouted officially over his hands on me. I didn't want this, I didn't want his fingers in my opening or his hand pumping my member. It was all unbearable. I tried to dig my feet into the bed and push myself away or even kick him in the head. "You killed my family, my people and stole everything! Now you want me virginity too?" I could feel tears building into my red glowing eyes. "I don't even know your name" I repeated again.
I was hoping against everything that he would stop, if he wanted to marry me maybe he would try to go easy on me to increase his chances of making me fall in love. I needed to get sympathy if I wanted to escape.

He stopped for a moment, took his fingers from my entrance and adjusted me slightly.

"Relax, obey and I'll make sure you enjoy this" he whispered and I hiccuped and sobbed. He wasn't going to stop.

"Please don't" I begged one final time. He gave me a little smirk before beginning to push his member into me.

"My name is Kuroro, you should remember that" I tenses up trying to keep him out but the pain was intense.

"Relax and it will all feel better my prince" he mockingly whispered into my ear And I felt tears blur my vision. I didn't want to be ruined enough that I wouldn't be able to run later so I did the only thing I could, I relaxed.

"Good boy" he kissed my tear trails and licked the tears away.

I just sobbed when I left him push all the way in. He held us there for a moment, his lips just hovering over my quivering ones, our body's shoved together.

"I don't want this" I sobbed tugging at the chains.

"It doesn't really matter what you want anymore" he whispered unsympathetically before he pulled back and began to thrust into me. It was almost intimate, his lips over mine, our breathing almost in sync.

"Wrap your legs around me you'll feel better" he told me when I just continued to cry. My whole body stung and I felt stretched to the limit. He raised himself up and caressed my shaking legs. "Do it sweetling" he command almost lovingly.

Dry heaving I slowly raised my legs and wrapped them around his hips.

"That's good sweetling, that's good" he complemented lifting his hips slightly increasing the pressure and I gasped. "See I told you I'd make you feel good" he smirked at me.

"I hate you" I sobbed "I hate everything about you"

"that will change in time" he bent down and captured my lips. Again I tried to bite him but he grabbed my jaw and dug his thumb into my cheek to keep my mouth open.

His tongue examined the inside of my mouth and he tried to get my tongue to dance. His thrust hit something inside me and my entire body jerked, my back arching and I basically moaned unwittingly.

He broke the kiss and readjusted himself again so he kept hitting that spot.

"Have I found your sweet spot?" He chuckled and I turned my face away, burying my face in my arm. He took the opportunity to kiss, bite and suck at my exposed neck.

The thrusts got faster and each one hitting that bundle of nerves. My body felt full of some untamable energy and each thrust forced gasps and moans from my throat.
I tried to keep my mouth shut but he reached up and forced his thumb into my mouth, caressing my teeth. I couldn't focus enough to bite him, so I just let it happen. His other hand moved down to start pumping my now leaking member. My energy spiked and I thought something in me was about to brake.

"Cum baby" he whispered in my ear licking up the back of it and I broke. I screamed and my body arched further my heels digging into his back.

After a moment sanity began to return to me and I felt the hot goo of his cum inside me, the actual evidence of what happened splattered on his chest. I felt my stomach burning and I wanted to throw up.

"See it felt good didn't it?" He grinned devilish at me. He pulled out of me and got out of the bed slowly, never breaking eye contact with me as he began to redress himself and wipe my cum from his chest.

"Get some sleep you're going to need it" he told me before he left me. Cold, sweaty, and feeling sick.

"Good night my prince" he pecked my lips mockingly and I was left alone in the darkness.
The lock made click noise and the shakles fell off my wrists. Breathing a sigh of relief, I could finally uncurl myself from the top of the bed.

He hadn't given me anymore slack to move freely after last night but smart little me had hidden more pins under the pillows.

Moving slowly as not to agitate the bruises and sore feeling in my lower half I moved away from the bed.

I hate that bed, I hate those chains, I hate Kuroro the pirate king.

Moving around the bedroom/study cabin trying to think of how I was going to get the hell out of here. I had to get back to whale island, I had to get home, somewhere safe and maybe learn to fight better.

I looked around for clues, maybe even a picture of the ship. There has to be some escape boats, something to get the hell away from this craziness.

My eyes ran over every picture and chart in the morning light and became frustrated by the lack of anything useful. I looked through the side of the desk I hadn't been able to reach last night and found a few rolled maps. Ripping them from the drawer and laying them out on the desk top I began to read them over with wide eyes.

This is my island, this is a plan for kuruta. He was going to turn it into an empire. My eyes burned in fury when I read over the name he had given my kingdom, new ryuusaigai.

This fucking bastard.

Walking over to the curtains and ripping them back in anger, I know I can be impulsive when angry but right now I don't give a shit. Storming into his closet I grabbed a large black tunic, cringing slightly at the feel of his clothes against my skin, although it isn't like he hasn't tainted my whole being already.

I grabbed the ridiculously heavy chair and picking it up with all my strength, I threw it through the glass window. It shattered with a clatter that seemed to rock the entire ship, I immediately heard loud steps meaning someone was going to run in here any moment.

Grabbing a shard of glass and running into the closet to wait, hopefully they will think I jumped.

The door flew open and I watched as the man name uvogin and the man with the sword came running in behind Kuroro.

"Shit he picked the lock" the man with the sword swore.

"You think he jumped?" Uvogin asked the captain.

"He might have, he is impulsive enough" he mused slowly "but he is smarter than that, search the ship, uvogin start here and I'm going to make sure the escape boats are all still in place"

he walked from the room and I heard uvogin beginning to look under the bed and desk searching for me.
"Jeez this kids a pain" he muttered as he turned and before I could think my feet were moving, I yelled in raged as I thrust the long piece of glass into his stomach.

He breathed out a ragged breath and looked at me with pain and, what the hell, admiration. Is he seriously happy about me fighting back?

"where's the escape boats?" I growled at him and he smiled at me blood beginning to run out of his mouth.

"You won't escape" he grinned at me "but is cute seeing you try" he slumped down into his own blood and I glared down at him.

"Asshole" I muttered fresh blood coating my already bloody feet. My skin felt tight from the dried blood and my hair felt tangled and stiff.

Frowning down at the cuts on my hands from the glass I gave a quick search for the letter opener before finding it in the bottom drawer. I should have grabbed this before then I wouldn't have glass cuts. I guess he is right about me, way too impulsive.

Going to the door I looked both ways making sure it was clear before stepping out into the sunlight. The deck was clear, probably searching for me.

Someone had to be watching to deck, waiting for me to show myself. Taking a quick breath and searching my brain for all information on ships, thinking of the most probable placement for escape boats before taking a new breath and running.

I jumped into the full view of the deck and bolted for the back of the ship.

"Hey!" I heard someone call after me but I didn't falter, just kept running. "Captain! He's making a break for it!" I heard the cheerful voice of the pirate he called shalnark call from behind me.

Almost sliding on the pristine deck I turned the corner and spotted an escape boat. Yes! I jumped for the boat and landed with a thunk inside it, turning quickly to loosen the ropes to release it into the water but was stopped half way with a strike to the head.

My vision went swimming as I turned the rest of the way to spot a disapproving Kuroro looming over me.

"Basta-" the world went dark.

___________________________

I woke with a start, dripping wet and concerned for my own life.

"Wake up" someone barked and I took in my position, I was tide to the mass, the ropes already rubbing my wrists raw. The sunlight hurt my eyes and my head was pounding, at the very least it looked like they allowed me to keep kuroros shirt on. Dispite it belonging to a murderer, it covered my naked body.

The water seemed to have washed some of the blood off me but not all of it.

"I said wake up!" The voice came with a kick to my side this time and I cried out in pain. I jerked my head up and glared with red eyes at the man carrying the sword. He was glaring back at me with a sour expression.
"Nobu, try not to kill him, we do need him alive" looking over to Kuroro sitting casual on a cluster of barrels.

"He could have killed uvogin!" The loud man shouted back irritated.

"And he is being punished for it, but we can't kill him" he paused for a moment and looked immediately in the eyes with a dead stare "yet" he jumped from the barrel and approached me slowly.

I'm embarrassed to admit I flinched, I would like to kill him for the resulting smirk. He bent down and took my face in his hands, I jerked away but his grip tightened. I could feel my heart speed up and my chest rose and fell like I was dying.

Shit I think I'm having a panic attack.

"Kurapika" Kuroro whispered sternly and my eyes snapped to his, just waiting "this is your punishment for stabbing uvogin, and trying to escape" he began slowly.

"You will not be feed, or given clean water and anything the crew does to you without me around will continue until you apologize" my eyes widened comically before narrowing.

"I'm sorry I didn't kill him" I hissed and his eyes held a subdued fury in them.

"Remember this is all your own fault, you didn't have to be punished if you had only obeyed" he dropped my face and I continued to glare at his back as he walked away from me.

"BASTARD!" I screamed after him as I stood and started yanking on the thick rope, blood dripped from my wrists as I continued to yank at the rope screaming my head off.

"Oh shut up" I heard the man, nobu, shouted at me.

"I will fucking gut you!" I screamed back at him, a few of the other crew mates chuckled at his aghast face at my out burst.

"that's no way for a little prince to be talking" one women with short pink hair mumbled in detached amusement.

"I'm barely a prince, you bastards made sure of that!" I snapped at the women keeping the pressure on my bleeding wrists so I could be as close as possible. "You killed my entire kingdom, I will drag you all to hell!" I snarled.

"Well this certainly damages Kuroro pride of being able to make anyone fall for his pretty face" the blonde man laughed as he went about his business.

"Back to work everyone!" Kuroro yelled from the helm. "Ignore him while you have work to do!"

"This is gonna get annoying fast" a boy about my size with black hair and an evil look in his eye. "Captain should have just let me torture you" he glared at me and I didn't back down. He scoffed before walking away to climb up into the crows nest.

For the next few hours in the burning sun I bit, tugged and yanked at the rope. My wrists were swollen but the bleeding had stopped, my throat hurt and I couldn't talk anymore.

They were true to their word, I hadn't been given water or food all day.

By now I was just slumped against the mass, hissing at anyone that approaches. It wasn't until
sundown and the ship was on course without need for constant work that anyone came to taunt me more.

Kuroro and the rest of the crew walked up to me slowly. I pushed myself as far into the wood of the mass as I could. I hate to admit it but I'm terrified.

"Are you ready to apologize kurapika?" Kuroro asked me.

I hissed at him like a feral cat, baring my teeth as threatening as I can.

"I don't think he's gonna be saying anything" the black haired male sighed.

"Ya he's just as uncooperative as this morning" the blonde women analyzed with a cold stare.

"I've only had him a day, he'll break soon" Kuroro told them confidently before striding forward into my area of movement. I rushed forward to strike him but he was expecting me. He grabbed my bound wrists and pulled me upwards. I cried out from the pain in my wrists, the bleeding starting around, running down my forearms.

"No" I whispered hoarsely through parched lips.

"Now I'm going to give you one final chance here, apologize and I'll even let you sleep in a nice warm bed" he whispered into my ear. My body shudder forcing the memory of him whispering 'cum baby' into my ear once again.

"Go screw yourself" I bit back at him.

"Well now then things are about to get a lot harder for you tonight" he sighed as if I was a tantruming child. "Paku bring the buckets" the blonde women turned and grabbed several buckets of soapy water and carried in over to the mass.

Kuroro walked me back to the mass kicking and struggling. He took the slack of the rope and tossed it over a hook in the side of the mass, leaving me hanging without even my toes touching the boarding of the deck.

"I guess it's time I gave a little something back to my crew don't you?" Kuroro directed his attention to the group of pirates. The pirates hollard their agreement as the pirate captain turned back to the shivering form.

"No no not that, NO!" I screamed but my voice came out dry and soft. I kicked my feet, trying to scream but it only came out as raspy squeaks.

"Calm down, we've got to get you clean" Kuroro chastised me as he reached into the bucket and pulled out a light blue rag. Bringing his free hand up pushing his shirt up my body and over my head.

I could already feel tears begin to run down my cheeks at the memory of last night and the fear of it happening again.

A few of the more rowdy pirates chuckled and cheered their captain on.

"Stop, stop!" I wheezed out trying to bring up my legs to hide my private parts, I don't want them to see me like this, see me so weak.

"Like I told you, you have no control kurapika" Kuroro placed the freezing cold wet rag on my
stomach. I flinched and gasped at the cold feeling on my sunburned skin.

"Please don't stop" I cried out sniffling, was I really going to let my pride get me raped again in front of all these monsters? No im not "I apologize okay?" He didn't stop "I APOLOGIZE!" I found myself sobbing.

"Do you think I should stop when you refused your last chance?" Kuroro mused stepping aside as he poured a bucket of cold water over my head and continuing to rub to cloth over the dried blood on my skin. "you tried to leave me after what we did just last night, you think you deserve my mercy?"

"It's called rape you pervert" I forced out a growl, not giving a shit that I couldn't stay compliant to save my own skin.

He clucked his tongue at me "shame" his eyes held that same disapproval from before and I had to bite my tongue not scream at him, not caring how much my throat hurt.

His hands continued to wonder, his crew continued to watch and mock me as I was forcefully bathed in front of them. My checks reddened further when I felt a finger prob me. I startled violently, trying to kick my feet away.

"Easy now we just need to clean you out, it's not healthy to keep it in" he whispered in my ear. I shuddered partly from fear, mostly from the cold seeping into my bones.

"I hope you die in the most brutal way possible" I forced out between chattering teeth, the movements of his hands never stopping.

"Only if I get to drag you down with me my prince" he chuckled as he removed his hands, apparently deeming me clean. One last bucket of water was dumped over my head and I felt humiliated.

"Now you can either spend the night hanging from the mass, cold and half dead or you can come to bed with me" he stepped in front of me "choose wisely little prince"

"sleep alone you fucking perv!" I screaming as firmly as possible and he smirked at me.

"Do you think it wise?" He cocked his head to the side "every man aboard just got a free look at your beautiful body, are you sure you wish to be strung up and defenseless all night?" My eyes widened as I looked around and noticed the numbers of the crew had grown. The main crew seemed un effected by my naked body hanging from the mass but I could find many lustful gazes in the crowd. As much as I hated the idea of this man touching me further, I didn't want to be raped by any more men.

I hung my head in defeat and whispered "no" his head tilted further, almost commanding me to give in further. Gritting my teeth I hissed "no I don't want to spend the night here"

"then ask probably little prince" he whispered back huskily.

"Please take me to bed Kuroro" I mumbled against my crushed pride.

"Very well" he chuckled after the low mutter of disappointment that I wouldn't me strung up for the taking all night. Kuroro pulled his cutlass from his belt cutting to rope that held me. I fell instantly only to be caught in kurokos free arm. Putting his sword away before pulling his black tunic to cover my nakedness. He wrapped his arm around my shoulder and braces his other under my knees, picking me up easily.
"Excuse me now men, it's time for me to retire for the night" he grinned at his crew, thinking he had broken me. He had though. It won't last long, I may refuse to be the victim of anyone else's touch but that doesn't mean I'll stop fighting this.

He carried me almost gently back to his cabin and I felt slighted that the window had already been fixed. Can I not win anything?

He placed me on the bed and set to work on untying my hands. I hissed out a breath when he slowly peeled the bloody and wet material off my raw skin.

He shook his head silently at the amount of damage I had managed to inflict on myself. "You must be a masochist" he muttered and I narrowed my eyes at him as he stepped away, presumably to get something.

He came back with a jar of cream and white stripes of cloth "hands" he told me gruffly and I felt off kilter enough to actually put my hands out.

We sat in uncomfortable silence as he spread the creamy substance over my wounds, making me flinch at the stinging sensation, and wrapped my wrists tightly, but loose enough not to harm me.

"There" he eyed me for a moment taking in the soaked shirt before standing to grab another and tossing it at my head "so do I need to chain you up tonight or are you going to try and kill me in my sleep?" I leveled him with a look o wish could kill and he chuckled at me again "I guess that answers that, get chained unless you want to sleep soaking wet"

I quickly switched the shirts embarrassment and fear coursing through me. I wanted to defy him but the threat of sleep naked on the mass was too fresh and too possible still. I need a better escape plan.

He grabbed the chain from the head of the bed and loosened the slack before bringing it over to me expectedly.

Grumbling I lifted my wrists so he could snap them on. He gave me a small smile "good boy" god I want to kill him.

My body tensed as he crawled into the bed after taking off his clothes. I could feel my breath coming out shorter, panicked at the thought of Kuroro special brand of torture.

"we can just sleep tonight calm down" he sighed irritated at my panic, fuck him! He raped me and he dares to be upset at my panic?!

"I won't touch you tonight so just lay down and sleep" he pulled back the covers in invitation. Gulping I moved to enter the covers, defiant but not wanting to go back to the mass.

The pirate immediately enveloped me in his arms and promptly fell asleep. What an asshole I thought as my own eyes drifted shut, I hadn't slept last night and I could no longer fight the urge. I'll escape tomorrow.
I woke up to a knock on the cabin door, my head jerked up the rest of my body following only to be caught by the chain on my wrists and be forced back down.

“Oh good you’re up” a chirpy voice called as the blonde male walked into the room with a bundle of clothing in his arms. “Kuroro wanted me to bring you up to the deck for some breakfast, he says you’ve earned some food” the man gave me a bright smile.

I flushed when the deeply embarrassing thought popped into my head, this man saw me naked.

“No need to feel embarrassed I’ve seen better bodies than yours” he laughed as he set the clothes down on the desk. Turning back to me he eyed me skeptically “okay in order to get you into some real clothes I’m going to unchain you but you have to promise not to attack me okay?”

“Whatever, I’m hungry” I grumbled pushing my hands forward, almost begging to get out of these sickening chains. They only served as a painful reminder that I really had no escape.

“I bet you are!” The overly happy boy laughed as he took my chains in hand “what’s it been two days since you’ve been fed, the poor little royal” he sounds happy and kind but the condescending tilt to his tone made me narrow my eyes.

“Oh don’t look at me like that” he jabbed with his bright smile never slipping. If there is one thing I know about these pirates it’s that this one is a snake, he should never be trusted. “You know while you were chomping down on fancy pork chops, our people have been starving and shaking in fear for the day the ocean swallows us up” my eyes widened at the Accusation in his voice. These people committed genocide against me, how can he be angry about my home life?

“Well never mind that now, the captain is waiting for you so hurry” I huffed a agitated sigh, deciding to not even bother, I’m still exhausted from yesterday anyway.

“He can wait for all I care” I croaked out, my voice still hoarse, while I slipped on the simple white shirt and made a grab for the brown leggings before tugging them angrily onto my legs. These were obviously old clothes, stuff he dug out from the back of his trunks, I know because of the way the leggings hugged every curve of my legs and hips. The pirate whistled as I tucked the large shirt into the leggings before lacing them up.

“Damn” he circled around me and I fought the urge to curl into myself as he looked me over. I can’t show weakness, but Gods did I want to just climb back into the bed and just give up. “You’ve still got blood in your hair but you look good” he reached up and I’m loathed to say I did flinch when he brushed my hair a bit and placed my silver chain crown. I’ve always loved this crown, it’s one of the only relics I have of my family left, my mom placed this crown on me but now it just feels like a heavier chain then the one that held me last night.

“I don’t care how I look” I growled reaching up to rip the useless crown off my head but the pirate smacked my hands away.

“Keep that on, captain wants you to wear it so you will” he glared at me, still managing a bright and happy smile.

“I think I hate you only a little less then you captain” I glared back, maybe trying a little hard to make up for that flinch.
“And I don’t really care if you like me or not” he smiled back. “Come on let’s get you to your fiancé” I cringed like the word burned and maybe it did a little bit. He smirked and turned with a vague wave to follow.

Begrudgingly I followed him onto the deck of the ship, ignoring all the pirates that stopped to look me up and down. I hate this place, these people. There isn’t any escape though, at least for now, I’ll find a way out. All I have to do is wait, lay low and my chance will come.

The blonde pirate lead me up to the rudder where the captain waited at an improvised breakfast nook. He smiled when our eyes met and I felt my eyes flare red at the sight of him.

“My, my you look stunning kurapika” he grinned as the pirate left us. “Did you thank shalnark for the clothes? It’s important to be polite you know” he stood and approached me, he towers above me and I try desperately to hold my ground. I jumped slightly when his hand touched the small of my back and he turned slightly to move me to the table. It was almost gentlemanly, almost.

“No because I don’t owe you people anything” I bared my teeth at him as he lead me to the table and gestured for me to sit.

“Say that again when I’m not providing everything for you my dear”

“God will you just pick a pet name and be done with it” it’s making me sick to hear the parade of cutesy names this man came up with for me. “You make me sick”

He chuckled slightly and sat himself to the side of me and threw his arm around my shoulder. “How about sweetling then?” My eyes flared again and my face flushed. God did that pet name hold a chain around my throat. “I think that decides it then, sweetling” his lips twisted into a sinister smile and I shoved his arm off me, gods I feel like I can feel him all over me. Gross.

“God I wish I could chain you up and toss you into an abyss” I snapped at him and looked over the offerings of food.

“Sounds kinky” he chuckled.

“What the hell is wrong with you!” I gasped at him “is that the only thing you think about!” I accused my voice higher than I meant it to be.

“I forget how innocent you are at times” he laughed as he piled my plate high with boiled eggs and cuts of fruit, probably all stolen.

Glaring hotly at the exasperating man, I could point out so many things wrong with him acting so familiar with the boy he had raped and committed genocide against but decided against giving myself a headache. Instead I decide to turn my attention to the food places in front of me. I didn’t realize but my stomach had been growling hauntingly and I should probably feed it.

“About our wedding” my hand stalled so close to my bounty, god I’m so close to eating. Instead I huffed a sigh and turned to him with a lifted brow. It would do me little good to scream and yell that there would be no wedding, I would be in the wind before then, and if not Netero will never allow it. Unless he can keep me prisoner for another year when I don’t need my guardian to get married. Which I doubt.

“Oh you aren’t going to deny that there will be a wedding?” He matched my uplifted brow jovially. “I’d be happy if I didn’t know you were just quietly planning your escape, which won’t happen, I won’t let it”
“You won’t even see it coming” I growled before turning from him determined and shoving an orange slice in my mouth. I bit the inside my cheek in the endeavor but I think I made my point.

“I would think you’d be happier to be the savior of you're people” he muttered amused as he peppered some salt over one of the peeled boiled eyes.

“My people are dead!” I slammed my fist on the table, an apple deciding to make a escape and began to roll off the table.

“No the Kuruta are dead, you are next ruler to the ryuusaigai people, you're people and this marriage will save them” he told me as he caught the apple and offered it to me. “Now they can legally and safely move to an island not falling into the sea”

“My grandfather would have offered them asylum” I growled low in my throat refusing to take the capture Apple “You didn’t need to wipe out a kingdom”

“Let’s be real here little prince, we are the outcasted people, thieves and convicts not even the children are innocent in the world nations eyes, without me five million would be lost to the seas” he raised the Apple to his lips and bit into it viciously “and no one would have cared, compared to the measly population of 10,000 you're people held, it was a worthy sacrifice”

“Sacrifice” I roared standing up, only to be yanked back into my seat. Without any other options, I curled my fingers into his coat and pulled in close “my mother, she was pregnant!! My father, my grandfather!” I felt my insides clench “my best friend, he was my brother! They were only sacrifices for you, you think I should accept that?! I felt tears invade my eyes and I silently asked if I should accept myself as a sacrifice for his cause.

“Yes I do” his hand reached up and stroked my cheek and I backed away, I don’t want his dirty hands on me. “I know eventually you will accept this, it's your only choice sweetling” I felt my eyes continue to stay in there red state.

“No it isn’t” I told him quietly, I can still kill myself. Yes it would put him in danger but as my mind buzzed I couldn’t seem to care. I don’t want to be apart of this man’s plans, if I died now then netero would get kuruta island. Kuroro wouldn’t be able to touch it without starting a war with the hunter kingdom, he may have been able to massacre my people but the hunter ingrown was much bigger and much stronger.

I was suddenly grabbed by my blonde hair and yanked closer to him “did you forget what I told you?” He breathed into my ear “if you kill yourself I’ll take your little friend prince gon and I’ll make him suffer worse than you’ve already tasted understand me?”

I hissed in pain as his grip tightened “yes” I growled only to have his grip tighten even more “I understand Kuroro” I gasped in pain and he released my hair and turned back to his plate.

“We will be in ryuusaigai by tomorrow morning so eat up” he took a small bite of his egg and he grinned at me “we wouldn’t want you to make a poor impression of you're new people” I resolved to not say another word to him for the rest of this trip. The good thing was shipwreck haven was full of escape ships.

“A nice thing is we have one more night to ourselves” he jabbed in order to get a response. He didn’t need to try much hard since I flipped the table and had to be dragged back to the captain's cabin.
Chapter 5

After my little scene during breakfast, which Kuroro only rewarded me with a cruel laugh by the way, I had been kept in chains for the rest of the day. I did not reserve lunch but to add insult to injury Kuroro had the man I stabbed bring me my dinner, it was a perverse way of sending me a message.

‘You are powerless’

The man, ‘uvogin’ or whatever, didn’t seem to mind that I had stabbed him. He almost treated the incident like a badge of honor. I can’t fucking understand these people.

I threw the dishes at the wall, food and all, screaming all the way. The shattered glass didn’t make me feel better, and screaming at the men that came to clean up my mess didn’t work either. I’m gonna go insane in this ship.

When the work was over and the sun had long been down Kuroro graced me with his unwelcome presence again. We went through the normal state down, each trying to make the other back down.

“I heard you refused your dinner” he finally said taking off his regular hat and the bandanna with it. For the first time I saw the tattoo on his forehead, an equal arm cross, how shameless. “You didn’t eat at breakfast or lunch either you must be starved sweetling”

“I can handle it” I grumbled giving the chain a yank just for show.

“My, my that won’t do” he grinned shutting the door as he threw off his coat revealing his muscular body to my view, it’s not like I’m trying to look but I can’t deny the man’s good looking. As much as I hate to admit it. “I’ve got to keep you feed if I want you to continue servicing me”

I growled in my throat and hissed at him “oh ya that’s right I’m no queen to you just you’re pretty bed warmer right?” My voice dripping with sarcasm.

“Now you’re finally understanding you’re place kurapika, my very pretty bed warmer” he unclasped his belt and stepped closer to me. My eyes widened and I wanted to beg for anything but that again but I bit my tongue, because I know it only excites him. “Now I have to feed you myself, because you so thoughtlessly threw away my kind gesture of peace”

“Wait what are you doing” I don’t think he’s talking about the kind of food that comes to my mind.

“I’m going to feed you of course” the evil smirk on his face Illuminated in the moonlight made him look like a real demon, my heart began to race in fear.

“Stay away!” I yelled trying to back up in the bed, he was faster than me. He reached out and tangled his hand in my hair and yanked me forward. I screamed in pain and before I knew it the slack on the shackles was released and I pulled off the bed and Kuroro took my place.

I was between his legs before I knew it, staring at kurokos cock in horror. I looked up at him and his dark expression made me gulp.

“-p-please I can’t do this” I tried, please have mercy on me just this once.

He took my face in his free hand and bent down in my face “if you bite me I’ll pluck out your teeth and fuck your face until you puke okay?” A shiver ran down my spine and I could do nothing more
than nod in terror.

“That’s a good boy” he smiled at me before his hand tightened and he brought my face close to his hardened member. My lips pushed together on instinct, because my mouth is definitely not where that thing goes, maybe a sharks mouth.

“Open up sweetling I have to feed you remember?” I lifted my eyes to his face again and jumped when I felt the tip touch my lips, cringing at the taste. “Open” his voice dropped into something darker. This room is my personal hell isn’t it? And Kuroro is the devil.

Hesitantly I parted my lips and tried to remember Leorio explaining this to me so long ago. I hadn’t been ready for it and so he laughed it off and said we could try another time and then the boats came early to bring me to neon. I wish I was doing this with Leorio.

He slid into my mouth easily and I gaged when he hit the back of my throat.

“Breathe thru your nose sweetling, relax your throat” I clutched the bed sheets on my still chained hands and did as he said. The taste was appalling, I can’t breath well, and my drool was making a mess of my chin.

“Good boy” he breathed his voice hitching in pleasure. I hate this, I feel pathetic and weak and used.

His tempo was getting faster and ever thrust made me gag, my face was wet from spit and tears producing a slapping sound. I tried to pull away but his hand on the back of my neck left me unable to move on my own.

I felt his member twitch and grow harder against my tongue and I could tell he was getting close. Three quick thrusts that made me think he was going to bust my skull open and he gave a long moan, his cum hit the back of my throat and I really think I’m going to puke now.

His member stayed in my mouth as his hand moved to rub my throat.

“Swallow your dinner sweetling” he muttered, bent over so his lips could brush my ear. I didn’t want too, I won’t. He smirked at me and plugged my nose. With his still hard member in my month I had only one choice, as much as I hate it I did as he said and swallowed.

His dick was pulled from my mouth and I gasped, gulping in large amounts of air and trying not to hurl, my head felt dizzy and my mouth felt bruised. His cum felt like it had coated my throat and even though I swallowed it still felt lodged in there.

“Now that my little sweetling is fed let’s enough our night hm?” My tear streamed face snapped up to look at him in horror as he began to strip his pants off fully, he’s still not done? Aren’t men supposed to have some kind of resting period, he’s a goddamn monster.

“My tear streamed face snapped up to look at him in horror as he began to strip his pants off fully, he’s still not done? Aren’t men supposed to have some kind of resting period, he’s a goddamn monster.

“Now now don’t tell me you got warn out from just that” he grinned gripping my chain and pulling me up on the bed “that was nothing compared to what we’re going to do next”

“Stop!” I cried as he flipped me over, my head spinning with the movement. He pulled me into my knees and I tried to pop up and off the bed but his strong hand on the back of my neck kept me down with my ass up like an offering.

“No” he said simply thrusting into me unprepared. I screamed but was relieved I didn’t feel anything tear. A mix of my spit and his cum was our only lubricate tonight, he was not gentle with me tonight. He wasted no time in beginning to thrust in and out of me.
“Please at least go- AH!” I felt a moan rip out of me as he hit that bundle of nerves again. “Slower! Please I can’t keep up”

He didn’t go slower, no he speed up. His balls slapped against my skin and his hand found my thigh in a bruising grip, his other still holding me by my neck keeping me down. Every thrust rocked my entire body and I drenched the pillow in my tears and sobs of pain mixing with pleasure slowly.

“Don’t keep up then” he whisper pulling me off the bed so I was resting against his chest, bouncing on his cock with every assault. I turned my head away from him as he started nibbling on my ear “let yourself fall to this kurapika, it’s the only thing you’re good for now”

Each moan and hissed breath was stolen as he continued, kissing and sucking on my neck adding to his list of bruises he has marked me with.

“Follow You’re body and fall for me kurapika, that’s the only way for you” he continued to whisper and I felt my head fall, tears dripping onto the sheets as I bounced.

“No” I whispered determined to stare at my imprisoned hands as I moaned, gasped and whined.

The night wore on and before to let me sleep he had raped me in three more positions and I’d never felt so full and used in my life.

The next morning I woke to a tray of eggs and sausage with a note.

‘Make sure to eat unless you want me to feed you again’

I can’t win against him, everything I do has a punishment that is humiliating and unavoidable unless I do as he says.

I ate every bite, desperate to be rid of the feeling of his cum stuck in my throat. It didn’t go away, like him it refused to leave me be.

As I waited to be collected for whatever humiliation he had planned for me today I felt myself daydreaming about kuruta island. If not for Kuroro I’d be training to take over for my grandfather by now. It would be difficult but I’d make it through the day, my mother would make me my favorite desert and I’d complain that I’m not a child anymore but I’d eat it anyway and she would wrap me up in her warm safe arms and hold me as I talked about how I was going to be a good and fair king. I’d babble on for hours about what laws I’d change and what measures I’d take. I had wanted to end the closed gate policy and start exporting to other countries to keep us from being attacked ever.

My dad would ruffle my hair and tell me how proud he was and my grandfather would start planning my wedding to pairo. We had always known we were engaged but it had only made us closer friends. Pairo would put on the enchanted queens crown and gain the ability to bear children.

The queens crown. A magic crown past down in the kuruta royalty that makes the queen able to carry a child no matter the gender or any defects that affect pregnancy.

Bear children. No there is no way he knows about it, it was the highest secret of the kuruta people. And there is no way he has it, he destroyed everything on my island and it had been locked away since my grandmother had passed. I can’t think I’m it because it won’t happen.

I shook my head and tried not to worry about it but now that it came to mind it was the only thing I
could think about. The fear and worry was eating me alive.

When they finally collected me it was when we had docked at shipwreck haven. The blonde pirate came to dress me again and I was so consumed by my worries that I didn’t say a word to him. It took me a moment to recognize the clothes he was forcing on me, they were mine. My best clothes that made me look every inch the royal prince that I can barely call myself, I had planned to wear it for my first meeting with neon and her people.

I flinched again when he put on my crown again and clipped little cuffs with dangling chains on the tops of my ears. He reached over to remove the single earring I always wore and jerked away.

“Not that! This earring please just let me wear it” it burned my pride to beg him but I knew if I didn’t he’ll force it away from me. He raised an eyebrow but shrugged before turning away and coming back with a single silver stud and let me put it in my other ear.

“How did you guys get my clothes?” I asked him with a grumble as I began to dress begrudgingly.

“We knew what room you had and picked them up before to sink that ship” he answered with his usual upbeat attitude.

“You sunk the ship?!” I turned at a got the shift over my head.

“Well we didn’t want anyone coming after us too soon, and that captain had outlived his usefulness” and he knew too much, he couldn’t return without me and say I’d fallen overboard or something. No one would believe that, and if he told netero that I’d been abducted I would have been saved by now.

“Alright let’s get you our on deck, everyone is waiting to meet their new queen, Kuroro has already made the announcement to the people” I felt my fist clench and my eyes burned red.

I caught a look of myself in the mirror, seeing myself all dressed up in my blue, white and yellow Traditional clothing for my peoples murderers filled me with hatred. For myself, for all of ryuusaigai and mostly for Kuroro.

“And here he is ryuusaigais savior, my bride, and you're soon to be queen Kurapika Kuruta!” Kuroro threw an arm around my shoulder and I jumped. I hate how my body reacts to him without my say so. My natural react to the predator took precedence over my decide to appear strong.

The people gathered at the harbor were strangely quite, every time I had ever been announced to a new people they’d always cheer, I remember feeling anxious every time but this was a different level. The people stared at me as if I was another species, muttered and whispering their first impression of me. Words like selfish, and pampered brat floated over me. The people were obviously lacking proper clothes and necessities but I hadn’t expected anything less from the sinking islands residents, damn that man he dressed me like this on purpose. He wanted me out of place.

I didn’t have time to prepare myself as Kuroro began leading me down the ramp. I tried to keep my head held high but suddenly I pitched forward and I realized that Kuroro had tripped me right as he caught me in his arms like some kind of devil in a gentleman’s skin.

“Are you unhurt my sweetling?” He asked loud enough for the people to here. For a moment it seemed the ice between the people and I had melted, moved by the care Kuroro showed me. I
could almost guess what they were thinking, if Kuroro loves him so he can’t be that bad.

“Don’t touch me you monster!” I growled shoving him away from me. And the ice was back. The people glared at me at the rejection of their ‘kind’ king.

“He’s not worthy of Kuroro”

“Such a clumsy brat, he should be thankful Kuroro even cared to catch him”

“Poor Kuroro, marrying such a bratty royal just to save us, he’s a true hero”

Kuroro gave me a secret smirk and a little wink and I realized that he knew, he knew how’d I would react to him catching me, and he knew how his people would see me after I rejected him.

I clenched my fist and told myself I didn’t care, it’s not like these people could replace mine anyway. I don’t care what they say think of me anyway.

And so began my long three months of hardship on shipwreck island. What has my life come too.
Chapter 6

I held out hope through every night of rape, nightmares, escape attempts, and punishments that Netero would come for me. He wouldn't leave me to rot, I was his adoptive son no matter how staged it all was. It all came crumbling down a week later when Kuroro called me into his office and pushed a large, delicate white envelope across his desk to me. The Hunter Kingdom’s insignia was pressed into the corner. I’ve never ripped open an envelope faster in my life, this could be my ticket out of here.

The words were beautifully written and they sank poison into my bones. The letter basically read as this:

Kuroro had contacted Netero about a royal wedding. Netero had tried to find a way to negotiate my release but had realized that King Kuroro wasn’t going to let me go and had sent a prenup to ensure my safety.

“So Netero has abandoned me also,” I growled, my fingers ripping the delicate paper.

“Oh don’t be so pessimistic, he did send this to make it impossible for me to kill you,” he pushed the glossy piece of paper. The prenup stated that if I died, then the rights to Kuruta Island went to my guardian, Netero, unless Kuroro and I had a child, then rights would go to that child. The way Netero phrased ‘having a child’ suggested he knew of Kuruta’s deepest secret. “Although that old man must be going senile, or he means adoption,” Kuroro mused. I breathed a sigh of relief, he doesn’t know, he won’t purposely force me to bear a child. I doubt he even has the crown.

“But I’ll still be married off to a monster,” I snapped at him, ripping the offensive letter apart and moving to stand, assuming he was done with me for the day.

“Where do you think you're going?” He asked with a raised brow, oh I guess I’m still in trouble for trying to tear through the floorboards and dig a tunnel.

“Going back to the room, you obviously just wanted to rub this in my face, if you’ll excuse me.” I turned to leave again but Kuroro stood from his desk and came around, catching me by my waist and pulling me close until my back was pressed against his chest.

I clenched my jaw and tried to ignore the nausea rolling in my stomach, every touch by him felt like a brand.
“You haven’t been a good boy for the last two weeks, but in light of our engagement being official, I’m going to grant you the freedom to roam the island, as long as you are watched of course.” I felt my eyes flare at him in anger, I’m not a dog.

“Of course,” I growled, my voice low with hatred. He smiled pleasantly and waved me off, done with me for the day.

Kuroro didn’t bother to try to make me like my nights with him anymore, sometimes it was even used as punishment, but most of the time it was just the norm. It makes me sick that I was beginning to become numb to it all. Most nights I just stayed quiet and let him finish. It’s not like any of my fighting had ever made him stop. I still cry though, much to my shame.

On the nights that Kuroro decided I needed punishment, I always cried worse. I wasn’t allowed to go numb, to stop feeling and fall into my happy place. Kuroro would wrap my legs around his waist and force me to feel, whispering words of “look at me, sweetling,” as he thrust against my already bruised bottom half. Let me tell you one thing, spanking is humiliating. He told me some people do it for fun, I find it hard to believe.

Egg head and Handy, the two goons that would follow me around the island, followed from a respectable distance. They wouldn’t speak to me, probably some kind of order from Kuroro, so I simply made up some names for them to amuse myself. The island was bigger than I had thought, but through the clear water I could see the island used to be bigger. You could even see the water marks on the rocks from where the water used to be lower.

Sometimes I wandered the island, trying to connect to the people but most just glared at me and nodded respectfully. Other times I went through the marketplace looking over the items for sale in Ryuuseigai, many tried to offer things but I ignored most of it. Most of the time I just walked the shores and tried to guess what underwater mark was the final straw in the decision to kill an enter race.

I could feel a bleeding wound inside of me getting bigger and bigger, I kept picking at it, tormenting myself with what I was being forced to do. The rape wasn’t even the half of it, it was the wedding.

Kuroro had already sent out ships to Kuruta to rebuild and start up his city, it’s been over a month
since then. I never thought I’d go back to Kuruta, and I never thought I’d only be the Queen. After
the “I do’s” he’ll own my birthright and that cauterizes that bleeding wound in rage.

“Time to go back,” Egg shouted at me and I sighed, picking myself out of the sand I had half
submerged myself in. I wish I could just disappear, just corrode into the wind and mix with the
sand and the sea.

“Okay.” I whispered, walking myself back to the goons and pushing myself in front of them. I
refuse to be led around like a stray puppy.

They backed up to their usual distance from me and I kept my head up like grandfather instructed
me to do when the world was crashing down on me. I steeled my eyes like mother did when nobles
told her she didn’t belong in the castle, and I puffed my chest like my father when he needed to
fake his confidence.

“It’s the Queen,” they’d always whisper.

“I heard he’s a spoiled brat,” I didn’t back down, I met every eye.

“Did you see how he treated the captain?” I felt blood in my mouth from a broken tooth I had
sustained from grinding my teeth.

“Definitely a brat,” I never let any of it take me down.

I walked myself through the entrance hall of Kuroro’s ‘humble home,’ the guards stopped as soon
as I passed the threshold, and glared down any member of the crew who dared say a word to me.
They barely spared me a thought nowadays, I’ve outgrown my entertainment factor for most of
them apparently.

“Hello little prince!” Uvogin shouted, he always seemed to want to make conversation with me. I
don’t understand him most out of them all. I didn’t reply to him, just kept moving for the room
Kuroro kept me locked in at night.

“Why do you even try with him?” The one I knew as only Nobu asked the giant. I didn’t hear his
reply.
I entered to room and braced myself to deal with Kuroro again but was pleasantly surprised to find he wasn’t in the room.

“Your majesty?” I jumped when a maid entered the room behind me.

“You don’t have to call me that,” I told her, quickly taking her in. She was tall, older than me with heavy brown hair and bright grey eyes. “Just call me Kurapika,” her eyes lit up with surprise.

“The Captain asked me to bring you this, he’ll be eating with the crew tonight.” The maid sat down a tray of steaming food, certainly better than anything Kuroro had fed me the last month. He’s got to look ever the gentleman, huh?

“At least he’ll be leaving me alone for awhile” I sighed falling onto the bed.

“Why do you hate the captain so?” The maid asked with a pout. “He does so much for you!” She stomped her foot as if I was the one that was hurting him every night.

I shrugged my shoulder and got up to look over the offerings I had been given tonight. It looked like chicken, but I wouldn’t put it past him to serve to a rotten pigeon or something, steamed asparagus and what looked like an artichoke heart lay on top in a beautiful display.

The girl huffed and began to leave me alone and my stomach sunk.

I don’t want to be alone.

“Wait!” I stood quickly. She turned to me with a raised eyebrow and I stuttered for a moment before clearing my throat and blushing a bit. “It gets pretty lonely here, would you like to join me?”

Her face gave way to a soft smile. “I would love to you-Kurapika,” she corrected herself and approached me slowly.
“So are you excited to go home?” She asked as she sat by me on the bed.

“In all honesty, it’s been a long time since I’ve seen the forests of my home,” I told her, trying to focus on anything good about my life right now.

“What’s it like?” She smiled excitedly “Kuruta, I’ve heard it is beautiful!”

“It is, rolling hills and miles of serene forests and clear river waters full of rainbow colored fish, I’m sure you’ll love it,” I told her, looking over visions of my home in my mind’s eye. “I miss it all very much.”

We lapsed into easy conversation about ourselves, sharing stories about our childhoods on islands very different from each other. I don’t think I’ll mind having this girl on my island.

“Are you going to continue working for Kuroro when we make the trip to Kuruta?” I asked hopefully. I want her to continue being part of my life, in only an hour she had become the only bright spot in my very small world.

“Yes, I’ll be getting married but he’s a fisherman so I keep a job to distract me when he’s gone.” She sighed with a sappy smile, just happy to think of him. I wish I knew what that was like.

“I’m happy for you,” as I was about to continue into an offer for her to visit with me again, I heard the unmistakable sound of Kuroro coming to grace me with his unwelcome presence. I froze not knowing if this would be okay with Kuroro, I can’t let him hurt my new, and only, friend. “You have to hide!”

“What?” She laughed, already getting up to greet her king. “Don’t be ridiculous, I’m sure he’ll be happy to know you’re bonding with your people.” She gave me a reassuring smile but it did nothing but make my stomach sick, he doesn’t want me to bond with anyone. He wants me alone and isolated for his torment.

“Please just trust me,” I begged standing as well. “Please hide.” She looked down at me with an emotion I couldn’t place swirling in her eyes before finally she nodded slowly, uncertainly, and moved towards the closet.

“Okay? I’ll just sneak out once he leaves?” She asked and I nodded furiously pushing her along.
I breathed a sigh of relief when the closet snapped closed and suddenly it clicked. She’ll see everything in there, she’ll see how he treats me and tell the people, then it’s just a matter of time.

I turned and calmed myself just in time for Kuroro to make his entrance. We went through our normal stare down as he removed his hat and coat. His eyes ghosted over the room before he hid his face from me.

“How was your day sweetling?” He asked in a voice dripping with sickly sugar.

“The same as yesterday,” I answered harshly, knowing not answering would make my night even worse. He really had a thing about me ignoring him.

“I see you didn’t eat your dinner,” he commented slowly moving over to the now cold plate, I had completely forgotten about eating during my conversation with Hail, the maid.

“Oh, I wasn’t hungry,” I lied even as my stomach grumbled and I braced myself for him to jump forward and begin my punishment for not eating.

“You’re an awful liar sweetling.” He chuckled and I froze in surprise. Why the hell is he being nice? What is his game?

“I haven’t seen you today,” he raised his arms invitingly and cocked his head in an effort to look cute, he doesn’t, monsters aren’t cute. “Give me a hug?” He asked. ASKED! He never asks he just takes.

“What are you doing?” I couldn’t help but demand. This isn’t right, did I fall into a different reality? Am I in a world where Kuroro and I actually liked each other, does that world even exist?

“I’m asking my beautiful fiancé for a hug?” He asked back and his lips pulled into a shark’s grin and his eyes glinted with an evil twinkle that promised punishment if I didn’t get my ass over to him.

“But you don’t ask!” I yelled at him, stepping back. What the fuck is happening?
“What are you talking about sweetling?” His time of voice was sweet and almost worried, but his face was dark and dangerous. “I always ask, that’s what you do when you love someone.”

His eyes drifted over my shoulder to the closet and the realization knocked the wind out of me. He knew, I couldn’t get anything by him, and he is continuing his Charade for Hail in the closet.

“I know you’ve had a hard time adjusting to all this,” he continued. “But your attitude seems to be getting worse, now you even treat me as an enemy in our bedroom?” God, he even made his voice crack like I had been hurting him. “Now please my sweetling, give me a hug.”

His eyes spoke of death if he had to beg for me even once more. I stepped forward and shuddered as he wrapped me up in his arms and his lips brushed my ear almost lovingly.

“I know she’s in the closet sweetling,” he whispered, his voice cold and with a slight growl of repressed anger. “If you don’t want me to kill her, you’ll play along”

“Don’t hurt her,” I whispered back and I felt his lips twitch just as he pulled away from me and moved toward the closet.

“I’ll just change and we can cuddle,” he continued his act and I stood frozen as he opened the closet and Hail tumbled out.

She grinned sheepishly as Kuroro gave a fake surprised look.

“Oh sweetling are you trying to frame the maids for stealing again?” Kuroro chuckled and Hail’s face fell, she looked at me in bewilderment and betrayal. Kuroro reaches down and helped her up, my eyes focused on his hands on her arm, knowing how dangerous he could be if I didn’t go along with whatever he wanted.

I didn’t say anything, only wrapped my arms around myself and fought back tears. She’ll never like me after this.

“I’m sorry Hail, Kurapika has had a hard life. I hope you will forgive him,” Kuroro told her and began to try and move her from the room. “He is still adjusting to the people of Ryuuseigai and he
doesn’t like being proven wrong.” He sounded so genuine, so concerned with how she would think of me, but I knew he was having fun painting me as the bad guy.

“It’s okay captain,” she whispered and looked back at me, the anger and hatred in her eyes killed me, I began to cry. At least he didn’t kill her.

“Good, good but just to be safe I’ll have you moved from caring for Kurapika alright? I’m sorry for his behavior.” Kuroro drove the final nail in the coffin and I dropped on the bed like a marionette with its strings cut.

The door closed behind her and Kuroro turned to me. The kindness drained from his face and I gulped.

“Do you have anything to say?” He asked as he moved closer to me.

“Thank you for not killing her,” I began knowing it might make my punishment easier. “And I’m sorry.” I ended knowing it’s what he wanted me to say.

“You tried to ruin my reputation and all you have to say is you’re sorry?” He bent down in front of me and I tried to avoid his eyes, already over trying to fight all of this. What was the point, I never win.

I could clearly see a path where I’m not punished at all now, he had given me a chance to admit that trying to fight him was pointless and stupid but no one ever said I knew when to quit when I was ahead.

“No, I’m not sorry!” I snapped calling my eyes forward in a moment of my inner flame relighting. “I’m going to fight to my last breath.” I growled even as his face darkened and his grip on my hands grew tighter. “You may be able to force me to marry you, but by god I’m not going to give in to you!”

“Then it seems I’ve been going easy on you.” He stepped away from me and I felt my stomach twist in fear painfully. What the hell is wrong with me, am I a freaking masochist? I should have apologized and promised not to go against him again and bided my time for my escape but I can’t just lay down my pride! “You need to be taught a lesson, and apparently I can no longer treat you gently.”
“TREAT ME GENTLY?! When has he treated me gently? He treats me the way someone would care for an exotic pet they were trying to break into some sad domesticated creature.

“What are y-you going to do?” I tried to sound braver than I was but like every time I’m faced with an angry Kuroro, I’m terrified.

“Tell me Kurapika, do you know what urethra sounding is?” He asked as a sinister look took over his eyes and he turned to his dresser to pull out a small box and came back to the bed where I was still frozen in fear.

I know what a urethra is but what the hell was urethra sounding?

He opened the box and pulled out a thin long rod of silver metal with a ring on one end and a small ball on the other.

“This is a urethra sound,” he told me holding up the thin rod, he watched me as I tried to figure out what the hell he was going to do with that rod.

Urethra, rod. Little hole, thin rod.

Oh holy shit

“Did you figure it out yet?” He grinned when he saw the horror in my eyes. I tried to crawl backwards only to be followed up onto the bed. “You know I’ve been letting you tune out of our time together because you’ve been such a good boy, but it looks like from now on you’ll have to pay attention.” He quickly took my wrists in his hands and pinned them to the bed. “This sounding rod will force you to pay attention, the pain and the pleasure of using one is indescribable Kurapika.”

“Stop! Things aren’t supposed to go in there!” I shouted fearfully. This can’t be happening, putting something inside there that can’t be a thing.

“Don’t worry my sweetling, I’m very experienced with urethra sounding. Every male lover I’ve had has basically called me a god after this activity.” He grinned as he reached around to pull out several slips of satin. He began to tie the fabric around my wrists as I shook, frozen and afraid.
Normally I’d fight, I’d struggle and maybe even scream but I couldn’t move. It’s like my body has been trained. My mind kept screaming to try and kick him, anything, but I was shaking violently and my body wouldn’t respond. The second he touched my wrists it was like I had no control over my body anymore and of course Kuroro noticed this.

“Well it seems one part of you is obedient at least,” he chuckled as he finished tying up my hands but kept the pressure on my wrists. “It seems I don’t even need to tie you up anymore but I like how you look like this, now,” he gripped my wrist harder as if he was testing how far this new control went. “Do not move.”

“Kuroro don’t please, spank me, fuck me into the mattress just don’t put that inside my-my...” I felt my face heat up and I can’t even say the word. It’s shocking to me and even Kuroro that I’d rather have him humiliate me with a spanking again than have him stuff anything inside another hole things weren’t supposed to go up.

“Oh don’t worry my sweetling,” he whispered as he moved back taking the sounding rod in his hands again, unapologetically smug when I didn’t, couldn't, move. “We will get to that, tonight I feel like roughing you up a bit just how you like it.”

“I DON’T LIKE IT!” I croaked desperately begging my own body to do anything to protect itself. “God damnit why can’t I move!”

“Because your body knows who you belong to.” He ran his free hand down my chest almost tenderly. “Didn’t I tell you this would happen? On our first night together I told you, you wouldn’t need to be held down anymore, soon you’ll start to enjoy it too.” He laughed to himself as my eyes widened in fear at what now seemed inevitable, would my mind really begin to like this? “Well of course only when I allow it, you are mine to control after all.”

“No, no,” I chanted as he slid down my body and made himself comfortable between my easily spread legs.

“Just sit back and enjoy,” he chuckled as he wasted no more time and took my flaccid member in his hand and to my horror I grew in his hand almost immediately. “Hmm, it seems I’ve trained you better than expected, all you needed was a little push.” He grinned and held up the thin rod tauntingly.

“Please don’t this Kuroro,” I begged.
“You know that turns me on Kurapika,” he hummed at me, tapping the rod against my slowly hardening member.

I felt tears prickle in my eyes and a chill spread out through my nerves from my stomach. Icy fear burned my veins, he isn’t going to stop this time either. I watched, betrayed by my own body, as he dipped the rod in some kind of lubricant and teasingly ran the ball end over my tip and past my urethra several times.

I gasped when he gently pushed the ball end against the entrance to my urethra. “Oh god,” I whispered in horror.

“We haven’t even gotten to the good part, don’t go calling me a god yet,” he laughed and twisted the rod slowly, stretching my skin and making tears gather in my eyelashes.

I turned my head away, not wanting to look as he mutilates my dignity.

“Don’t look away Kurapika, you will watch,” he snapped at me and my broken obedient body forced my head forward to watch as he slowly applied pressure on the rod and it began to sink into my body with a painful sting. My face scrunched in a mix a disgust and a deep odd feeling pleasure. “Relax and enjoy, it’s not often I let you enjoy your punishments.”

“Gah!” I cried as the rod got in about an inch and he pulled it back half way. God this doesn’t feel right. I couldn’t focus on his words, not like I had the ability to talk anyway. My head was spinning and I was beginning to pant as I stared determinedly at the sounding rod moving up and down inside me.

“Feels good huh?” He grinned as he brought it down again, further than before. “Let’s go a little further,” he whispered pushing the rod down and a long moan was forced from my lips. I watched, horrified, as the rod sunk down, disappearing completely inside me until all that was left was the slightly larger notch and ring on the end.

“This little bit will keep it in while we play.” He smiled and began to push the notch in, stretching the tiny hole around it.

“No! It’ll tear!” I gasped breathily.
“Don’t worry,” he whispered as he continued to push and my mouth opened in a silent scream that shook my entire body. I had a strange feeling of being stuffed full, pressure built up inside me like a half cocked gun, finger on the trigger ready to set off an explosion. “See that was easy.” He chuckled and gently stroked a finger down my trembling shaft. I twitched at the contact, it was like my nerves had been set on overdrive.

Every slow touch and stroke set my body on fire, bathing my world in a deep hue of scarlet dancing in my shaking vision.

“We’re not done yet,” he taunted me before moving to free his own strained cock. “I’m gonna fill you up completely.” My eyes widened when I realized what exactly he meant.

He carefully lifted my thighs and my head began to spin at the amount of pleasure at such a small movement. He didn’t stretch me or lube himself, just curled himself close to me and thrust into me. I yelped when he pressed against my prostate from both sides, I swear for a moment I forgot how breathing worked.

“So I see you can be speechless, what a nice change!” He grinned still buried inside me, casually stroking up and down my shaft, continuingly stealing my breath. When the fuck he start doing that? “Although I do miss the begging, you’re quite cute when you beg you know.”

“Bastard!” I managed to gasp when he deemed it time to pull back and thrust again. Hitting my prostate with enough force that the sounding rod popped out at the end and slid half an inch out of me. I gasped and a long tortured moan was forced out of me, my back arching and cum leaking out around the sounding rod.

“Did you cum? It’s only the first of many my sweetling.” He started at a slow pace, my ass basically in his lap, my world in an everlasting somersault, my eyes still locked on my own cock, a rod inside me, as Kuroro began to pump the rod in time with his slow thrusting.

I was already over stimulated, already my body was buzzing, every cell practically jumping at any movement Kuroro made.

“Ahh” I gasped and moaned, hating myself for it but unable to do anything about it. My body was a prison and I’m in hell.

And the night went on.
I woke up entangled in Kuroro’s arms and I couldn’t seem to move. A bone deep exhaustion from Kuroro keeping me up the entire night kept me trapped in the bed with Kuroro. He forced me to cum more times than I can even recall, I’m pretty sure my mind stopped working half way through the night. Kuroro and I are covered in sweat, grime, and cum and I’m pretty sure our skin is stuck together.

Kuroro woke up with a lazy, content smile and had pulled me into the shower to clean up. He was oddly subdued and had been almost gentle helping me wash up as all my limbs were basically noodles. The man fucking hummed as if life was all dandy and he was king of the goddamn world! Well I guess he kinda was the tyrannical ruler of my world.

“Let’s get breakfast,” he smiled at me. SMILED! God the man was on one hell of an afterglow.

He led me through the hallways and I followed along, deadly silent and somber. The punishment of the night had proven something to me. If I wanted to escape I couldn’t rely on anyone. He stopped before entering the room and turned back to me and I froze in fear just being on the receiving end of his black demon eyes.

“Kurapika, because what you did was unacceptable,” he paused waiting for me to do anything warranting punishment. I didn’t, I stayed quiet with my head down and my face blank. He was pleased by the response. “I’m going to have to punish you further.” I gulped. “From now on you may only speak to me or the crew. If you dare utter a word to anyone else, I’ll kill them and you will watch, understand?”

He... he can’t do that! He can’t just cut me off from everyone, everything! ‘But he can,’ my mind supplied and my stomach rolled and my shoulders hunched.

“I understand Kuroro,” I answered emotionlessly. He kept looking at me for a moment, deciding whether or not I was being honest before giving me a little smirk and lifting my face with his forefinger and thumb to peck my cheek. I flinched but he didn’t seem to mind, already turned around and continuing to the dining room where he didn’t normally allow me to eat with him and his crew.

The twelve heads of the Ryuuseigai pirates paused in their movement when Kuroro entered with me in tow. I could see it in their faces, wondering what the prisoner was doing here, intruding on their ‘family’ breakfast. Well all except Uvogin, the giant randomly liked me and I really don’t understand it. I once caught him showing a random citizen the scar I gave him like a badge of honor.
“Good morning Spiders,” Kuroro said easily leading me to the head of the table. Everyone slowly went back to what they were doing but kept a suspicious eye on me as I silently sat in the chair Kuroro directed me to and then promptly ignored me in favor of talking to Machi and Paku. I ignored the chatter around me and took the plate piled with food numbly when offered.

My ass hurt, it felt like it was on fire and I kept shifting to relieve the pain, every muscle in my body felt like an out of tune choir, screaming notes at an unamused crowd. My eyelids didn’t want to stay up and my head was pounding. In short, I feel like shit.

“Most of the old buildings are still useable from what the reports say,” Machi’s voice cut into my misery. “We can start selling them off to the citizens now,” she finished and my entire body twitched, selling off the homes of my people. People they massacred.

They continued to talk plans for government, export, import, new laws, and how to dole out pieces of land. My mind immediately went to selling a limited supply of fishing licenses, as not to hurt the ecosystem that had been so long without human interaction, once the ecosystem leveled out you could add to the amount of licenses given out.

Yet when I tried to release the idea, all I received was Kuroro’s hand at the back of my neck, squeezing, ordering me to shut up and telling me my input wasn’t needed. I swallowed the idea and continued to eat.

“What should we do about our monetary system?” Continue with trading as the main use of monetary, it keeps fake money out of the system so value of items don’t inflate and is determined by the consumer. I kept silent, and stuffed my mouth full of eggs.

“Land distribution?” Keep the value low on a restricted amount and if the people prove a value to farming and using the land they may expand, keep tax low for the first ten years to allow wealth to accumulate. Shut up, I screamed at my own head, no one cares.

“Army?” Everyone should have mandatory training and keep the reward high for making it into a career, but jobs few so we aren’t running on the military. Housing, education and health insurance to anyone that fights for the country, continue after retirement if they find no other income source. Why am I tormenting myself? This is how I wanted to run Kuruta, I had worked for years to find the ways to improve the lives of my people.

“Education is important, we should start setting up schools.” Mandatory general education for all
before a simple internship program so the people get hands on experience with what path they choose, everyone in the country should have free access to education throughout their lifetime but will only be mandatory in adolescents. Schools should start at 10am to make sure children get enough sleep and run till 3pm until the years of internship before becoming more focused on real life skills and ending at 1pm.

I could maybe be content if I could just make life a little easier, it’s all I ever wanted to do. Being a good ruler had been my only dream and Kuroro stole that from me not just once, but three times now.

I feel useless sitting here eating as everyone laughed and planned what to do with my island. I scraped the scrambled eggs around my plate and thought about just disappearing. I am sick of this day to day, everything felt washed out and empty, at this point the only reason I’m still breathing is that my love of Gon overrides my pain.

The world drained away as I ate slowly, my face wet as I stared dead at my plate. I feel half dead already.

I didn’t notice when the room went silent, twelve set of eyes focused on the tears blazing down my cheeks as I ate, as if I didn’t even notice the fat tears landing in my plate. When I finished I pushed myself away from the table and whispered, “I’m going for a walk, thank you for breakfast.”

Kuroro stopped me for a moment to peck my lips and brush the tears off my face.

“Have fun sweetling,” he hummed and I nodded before heading towards the door to leave the building, and head for the beach, the only peace I have on this crazy island.

I watched Kurapika push away from the table and move from the room after a kiss from the captain. Kuroro was going to appoint me his guardian had we succeeded in taking him when he was younger, I had gotten strangely attached to the idea back then and was distraught when we hadn’t found him in his room all those years ago.

Now seeing the boy I had raised as a son in my mind cry with a dead eyed look at the table, I felt my heart hurt. I had been hoping Kuroro could convince him to change his perspective and even maybe be happy with us, but obviously that was to much hope for from the captain.
He had a sadistic streak, but if we had gotten Kurapika at twelve I could have protected him and raised him to enjoy such things, we could have used his mind to make everyone’s lives better. Harsh I know, but it was all I could have done for him.

Maybe I should bring up being just being slightly kinder to the boy to the captain. He has obviously broken, if Kuroro changed tactics now we could get a pretty decent queen out of all of this.

“I’m heading out as well,” I told the table and began to follow the boy out of the building. Kuroro gave me an upraised eyebrow and I waved a hand at him and left.

The boy walked with the weight of a thousand suns on his back, milling through the town in a daze. I could see he thought about talking to some citizens out of spite but decided against it and I breathed a sigh of relief that he wasn’t so stupid as to disobey Kuroro when other lives were at stake.

He stopped only once more, he gazed at a stall with pictures of his home land, buildings that would be going on sale soon. I noticed his eyes caught on one in particular and he caught back a small sob before continuing on towards the beach. I stopped to look at the picture that caught the Kuruta’s attention. It was just a normal house, a little nicer than most of the others, but it wasn’t the castle or anything.

“Good morning Ms. Paku!” The stall owner yelled out to me and I waved to him.

“Good morning,” I called back approaching him, keeping on eye on the head of blonde hair bobbing through the early morning crowd. “What information do we have on this building?” I asked tapping on the picture before pulling it off the board.

“A lot actually,” he smiled at me. “That one in particular kept great records.” He took the picture to look at the serial number he gave it on the back. He turned to grab the records from the back of his stall. I liked Mr. Lee, he keeps an excellent organization. “Here are the records, did you want to put down an offer on the property? We aren’t taking them yet but for a spider, anything.”

“Yes, actually I’ll put down an offer,” I told him taking the file away and flipping through it quickly, taking in the information quicker than any normal human could. My eyebrows raised and I felt the ghosted touch of sympathy at the knowledge revealed to me. This had been the home of Kurapika’s friend and fiancé, no wonder he was close to sobbing at just the picture of such a tender
childhood memory.

Closing the file with a snap, I moved to follow Kurapika towards the beach again. I think it was time I had a talk with the boy.

Kurapika was curled up on the rocks, his feet in the cold swirling waters when I found him. His face was filled with a deep sadness and self loathing, eyes fixed on a small cliff with a bunch of sharp rocks under as if he was considering the pros and cons of ending his life.

“Kurapika,” I called trying not to scare the vulnerable looking child, that’s what he looks like right now, a lost broken child.

He jumped anyway and turned to me with big scared eyes. His face immediately snapped into a glare.

“What do you want?” He growled at me and I tried to soften my expression but that’s difficult when you have a permanent bitch face like mine.

“I just thought you might want to talk?” I tried stepping closer to him and he didn’t even move only stiffened slightly.

“What would you want to talk to me about?” He mumbles kicking up the water like the child he is.

“Well” I paused not really knowing how to start a conversation with the boy after how many weeks of whatever in god’s name Kuroro had put him through. “You must have a lot to get off your chest” I sat down next to him tucking my legs under me and away from the water.

“Oh ya sure where should I start?” He snapped at me wrapping his arms around himself, hands clenching his shoulders desperately. “Being raped nightly by the man who probably slit my pregnant mothers throat!? Being isolated from anyone that doesn’t have my family’s blood on their hands!? Oh how about the fact that I can’t even help make decisions about the land that is my birth right and you people seem determined to force me to be queen of!”

I froze completely with the blonde broke down into ugly sobbing breaths and I felt I had no right to be trying to rub shoulders with him. He curled in on himself and screamed hoarsely into his knees, his finger nails making blood blossom over the fabric of his shirt.
In a moment of spontaneous emotion I wrapped him up in my arms and buried his hands into my chest. I pulled his nails from his shoulders and held both his hands in mine to keep him from hurting himself.

“Shhh shhh it’s going to be okay” I whispered as I took one hand to brush through his hair. “I know it’s all bad right now but” I trailed off looking for the right words to say to him.

“But what?” He sobbed into my chest.

“But you might still have a chance to make a life for yourself kurapika” I finally told him before pushing his shoulder so I could wipe his wet face. “Kuroro seemed pretty happy this morning, and I’m sure if you just do as he say eventually he’ll trust you to rule with him” it’s the only option for the boy, I wish I could do more honestly but if kurapika stopped disobeying Kuroro then he might easy up on the boy, and he would definitely let him live past adopting a child.

“Oh I should just give up my pride, be content with this life that’s been forced on me, just let myself be used like some bedroom bunny plaything?” His sobbing over got worse when he said it aloud.

“It should only be for a short time, once the captain sees you calming down and not trying to escape he’d love to let you help rule and even give you more freedoms,” I continued to try and fight the steam of tears on his face, holding him close to me. “You could be happy kurapika, just give in and someday this will all be a bad memory okay?” His head fell and I knew it wasn’t what he wanted to hear but it was his only choice.

“I’ll talk to Kuroro and ask him to take it easy on you okay? Just behave and everything will get better alright?” I could see he wanted to tell me to fuck off but instead he sniffs and nodded. I smiled and pulled him close again. We watched the sky for a few hours and I felt happier to know I was finally acting like the mother I always wanted to be. It’s not perfect but if I groomed kurapika right, like I was supposed to do years ago, I could make both him and Kuroro happy.

Now just to talk to Kuroro.
Chapter 7

I don’t know if Paku ended up talking to Kuroro, but if so then Kuroro definitely didn’t listen. Kuroro had been walking on a fucking high the last month and my mind had slowly become a darker and more dangerous place to tread.

Kuroro had been all smiles and tender touches in the mornings, and at night he tormented me with almost gentle, loving hands. Pain only came when I was in trouble, and he had been surprisingly lenient lately. Hell, I spat in his food when he wasn’t looking and all I got was a light chuckle and a rather forceful kiss taunting me as if to say, ‘I’ll swap spit with you anytime, no need to sneak it into my food.’

The ‘sex’ was still torture to me, even if Kuroro forced me to pay attention now by making me feel more pleasure, it was borderline painful for me. Only because I hate thinking the murderer of my people can make me feel anything but revulsion.

Despite what you’d think he didn’t visit me every night, in fact I was locked away at least twice a week in the darkness of Kuroro’s chambers. Left alone with the bleeding wound on my soul, picking at the edges falling into the bloody pit of anger and hatred that fuels me.

We have a scheduled date for the return to my island now, and a date for my impending damnation.

Kuroro had left a schedule for me today. I lifted myself with aching bones, my body basically vibrating with a dull sore pain, but I have to get moving if I don’t want to be in trouble. I dressed in the limited supply of clothing I had at the moment, all of my clothing had been sent to Neon’s castle ahead of me. I only had what they took from my personal luggage.

“Let’s see here now,” I muttered picking up the schedule and looked it over, I had an appointment for measurements with Machi and a few other seamstresses to sew my wedding dress and order new clothes for me. Then I’ll be meeting Kuroro for lunch and after, a meeting with the head wedding planner. Kuroro has most likely already planned everything so I doubt this is anything more than a show for his people.

After that Kuroro and I have to go over seating arrangements, again this was all just a show, and on and on with more fake appointments to arrange a royal wedding.
Falling flat on my back on the bed, I waited for Shalnark who is scheduled to be my ‘chaperone’ for the day. His job was simple, write down anyone I talk to and keep me on the offensive schedule.

I didn’t have to wait long. Shalnark opened the door and quickly ran his eyes over me.

“Good you’re dressed, at least you’ve learned that much” he smiled snidely at me and I huffed, pulling myself from the bed again I stood silently waiting for him to guide me to wherever my first appointment is. “You know you can talk to me right? I won’t be punished for it if you want to scream and beg like a little baby.” He leaned against the doorway taking in my emotionless face and downcast eyes.

I shrugged hopelessly, uncaring of his taunts. I glanced up at him and caught a moment of pity in his eyes before his face slid into an easy smile and he turned to guide me down the halls. “Well you’re a lot less fun like this but whatever,” he muttered.

I followed him down the halls, only a few turns until we found ourselves entering a large room with women bustling around, carrying stacks of white lace and silk around in almost frantic movements, Machi at the helm of the chaos directing the room expertly.

“Good,” she nodded when she noticed us enter and pointed to the slightly raised stand with mirror positioned around it. I quietly walked to the stand. “Girls, undress him and get the base we have started on so we can pin it,” she told a few of her workers. The girls quickly began to undress me and I was unsurprised by how uncaring I was to my own nudity in the room full of women, it’s not like it was the first time.

The base dress was immediately thrown over my head after my arms were pulled above my head, the girls were rather rough with me, acting as if touching me will curse them. I wish I could curse people with a touch, then I wouldn’t be in this situation.

Machi circled me critically and snapped her fingers, one of the girls brought her a pair of bare heels. “Put these on, they are about the size Kuroro ordered for you.” I nodded and slipped the shoes on and she raised a brow at me, not expecting this to be so easy.

“I know right? He’s being way too compliant,” I heard Shalnark whisper to Machi with an edge of suspicion.
“I just didn’t expect this so soon,” she commented back before shoving Shalnark away to start pinning and fitting the base of the dress around me, being careful to not prick me. After about twenty minutes of silently balancing in the four inch heels I wasn’t use to and listening to the girls whisper gossip about the suddenly quiet ‘brat’ queen, finally Machi asked me to step down and walk around a bit to see if it was flowing right.

“Good, alright Kurapika you’re all done. Keep still while the girls get the dress off you.” She wrote a few notes on a little notebook as I raised my arms to have the dress removed, my eyes caught Hail coming in with drinks for the seamstresses. She froze when our eyes made contact and I ripped them away quickly but not before catching sight of a girl meeting Hail halfway to spread her gossip about why the queen has stopped talking these last few weeks. There are many theories and all of them include my apparent mental breakdown.

Oh well, I guess it’s better than her being dead.

I dressed quickly and let Shalnark lead me away without looking back, it was better this way.

_____________________________________________

I watched the queen be led away by one of the King’s men with a pained look, I really did believe I made friends with him but I guess he didn’t feel the same. It was such a shame his people had been wiped out by disease when he was so young, it seems he needed the social learning.

“Did you hear the queen has completely stopped speaking?” May whispered to me as she came to take the drinks off my hands. “Everyone is saying he had a total mental breakdown and yet the king is still going to marry him! Damn, I wish I had a man like that!”

“You mean he isn’t speaking to anyone?” I asked with a raised brow. When I spoke to him he seemed desperate for attention, I was almost inclined to believe the king wasn’t giving him enough.

“Some are saying they have seen him talk to the king and a few of the high crew but otherwise he speaks to no one, even if you directly ask him something,” she told me with the giddy excitement of a young girl with someone else’s dirty Laundry to wave around.

“Hey May,” I began wanting to ask about something that had been bugging me. She would know, she knows everyone’s secrets. “Have any maids told you anything about the queen framing maids
“What?” She looked startled at the idea that something so scandalous could be unknown to her. “Has he done that? How could no one tell me something like that!”

“It was just a rumor I heard,” I interrupted, not wanting her to spread a story around, mostly because I got the feeling I should keep it hidden that I was poking around. “It might have been made up so I thought you’d know.”

“Well none of the other maids said he has done anything like that. I mean he rarely spoke even before, none of the maids have even had a conversation with him,” she told me quietly. “He alway was pretty untouchable.”

But I talked to him, but I touched him. I know I did, it’s why I took it so hard when I found out he was using me to prove a point. I need to talk to him, I need to know what he’s thinking.

“Thanks May,” I told her before going on my way.

Kurapika has been accompanied the entire day, I couldn’t find the chance to talk to him even once in the many times our schedules clashed today. At one point I thought I had an opening when Kuroro and Kurapika appeared to have an argument about the guest list and the young queen had tried to storm out but Kuroro had caught him by the wrist and pulled him into a deep hug. My heart melted at the care in the action.

The king whispered lovingly into his ear and Kurapika stiffened before relaxing into the hug and even wrapping his arms around Kuroro as well. People could say what they wanted about Kurapika, but to me it seemed he was just angry at the world. He obviously couldn’t control his temper, he wasn’t a brat, just a kid in unfamiliar territory. Maybe if he had a friend besides the King’s high crew.

“I have a crew meeting Kurapika, I’ll have your dinner sent to our room for you,” I overheard Kuroro tell Kurapika as he gathered his things and Shalnark moved to lead Kurapika back to his room.

Making a decision quickly, I hurried past them down the hall and disappeared from sight. I quickly made my way into the royal chambers and hid in the closet before anyone could see me.
I waited for Kurapika to enter the room as silently as possible, it only took maybe two minutes before Kurapika and Shalnark entered.

Kurapika seemed borderline afraid for some reason, and Shalnark’s face was dark and scary.

“You just don’t know how to behave do you?” He growled at the queen who in turn was beginning to shake. “It’s one thing disrespecting the captain in private, but don’t you ever make a scene like that in front of our people again!” I had never seen Shalnark sound so angry or even look so murderous.

“I. . . I am so-sorry,” the queen stuttered and curled in on himself. Was he afraid of being hit? Has the high crew been abusing the queen behind the king’s back? No wonder he has been slowly withdrawing into himself, no wonder he treats the king like an enemy. He must think the king’s in on it but the king couldn’t know, the king is the king and loves the queen. I have to help him, I have to tell the king but first I need evidence.

“God this new broken you is pathetic!” Shalnark muttered before turning and slamming the door closed when he left. I waited a moment for his footsteps to fade before launching out of the closet. Kurapika was surprised for a moment as I tackled him onto the bed and held him tightly in my arms.  

“Kurapika, I didn’t know how the high crew was treating you, please forgive me!” I cried into his shoulder. “Is it all of them or just Shalnark?” I asked but he remained quiet. I pulled back and tried to catch his eye but he avoided me, seeming pained and upset. “Please Kurapika you can talk to me! We can tell Kuroro how they are treating you and he’ll fix all of this,” I told him, trying to break through the layer of ice that had thickened since we had last talked.

He continued to remain quiet, not a single word passing his lips, avoiding my eyes as he tried to push me away.

“Don’t worry Kurapika, I’ll make sure they never harm you again!” I promised and stood. If Kurapika is too afraid to speak up against them, then I guess I will do this on my own.

I stood and left the room without looking back at the fragile human being that would be my queen, I will help him. I love my country, I trust my king, and I believe in my queen’s strength to get through this.
I entered the twists and turns of the hallways my grandfather had built years ago, my family had always served our royal family, I knew these halls better than anyone else. It only took a moment before I found the dead end hallway that led to the passage ways that even the current king didn’t know about, forgotten long ago.

I made my way back to the royal chambers behind the walls and was greeted by the sound of Kurapika’s muffled sobbing. I wanted to tear down the walls and hug him again, he didn’t deserve this.

I made myself comfortable for the wait in store, I just needed to witness any of the crew physically hurting the queen. People would believe me if I tell them what I have seen, but I need to actually seen it.

I waited for hours looking through the cracks of the walls to watch Kurapika slowly eat his dinner, his shoulders heavy with the weight of his troubles, heavier than the universe. He paced a bit seemingly worried over our one-sided conversation from earlier.

“Stupid Kuroro,” he huffed talking for the first time, throwing himself onto the bed. I raised a brow at the aggressive tone his voice took. It was so full of loathing and misery. “Inviting queen Mito and Gon to the wedding? I don’t want them to see me like this.” He pulled his knees into his chest and his face slid into an expression of complete heartbreak and hopelessness.

We got lost in the moment, separate from each other but never have I felt so pulled by the misery of another human. We were so lost that we both jumped when the door suddenly opened.

For a moment my heart stabbed with worry that someone had come to abuse the queen, I don’t know if I could stay still if I actually see it, but breathed a sigh of relief when it was only the king.

Yet his face was so dark, his posture so intimidating that I felt a chill run down my spine.

“You had been doing so well, Kurapika,” he started. “I almost believed I had broken that feisty spirit of yours, so why don’t you tell me why you thought you could speak to me that way?” Kuroro shut the door with a decisive click.

What the hell is happening, this isn’t my king! He loves the queen, he’d never speak to him this way!
“Why did you invite Queen Mito?” Kurapika asked quietly. “More blackmail? You already rape me every night, hold threats over my head, just leave them out of this!”

Rape? What is Kurapika talking about, what has been happening to the queen all this time?

“Still calling our love making rape eh?” Kuroro shook his head, and began to peel off his clothes. “So how should I punish you tonight? I’m beginning to run out of ideas, the no talking rule has been very effective, but it seems I need to reinforce the fact that you’re mine.”

“You don’t own me!” He screamed from the bed backing up slowly, tears already rolling down his face. I could see the effects of a panic attack rolling over his shoulders, he was terrified of Kuroro!

“Yes I do Kurapika, I have proven that many a time by carving that fact into your body over and over.” He approached the panicking boy. “I make you gasp and moan in delight, I control every little moment of your life, I even control your body, soon I’ll even control your mind. How could you say I do not own you?” He grabbed Kurapika’s arm and yanked him forward in the bed and with blinding movement, slapped him hard across the face.

I gasped, covering my mouth and feeling the wetness of tears I didn’t know I was shedding.

Kurapika’s face was turned to the side, a small trail of blood leaking from his mouth.

“You can have all of that but none of that is me,” he whispered. “I’ll never give you my soul, my heart will never be handed to you under the sun of the Kuruta, you will never own me!”

“I don’t find that I care,” Kuroro growled back, slapping the boy again and again and again. He beat him into the bed, until he was quiet and still, the only sound his tormented sobbing.

“Now how shall I force you to remember your master?” He asked the terrified boy, he pretended to think, tapping his knuckles against his chin.

‘Monster,’ my mind supplies, he couldn’t be human. He’s a monster, a demon. He was abusing this poor boy who had already lost his family, how could he be so cruel? Certainly he would have helped us without all of this? It’s not like he has any reason to treat him like a prisoner.
“Ah, I know,” he snapped his fingers and several people entered the room. Uvogin, Shalnark, Machi, and Nubo along with three men dressed in white. “I’ll brand you like the lowly slave you are.” He smiled and my body shuddered at the ice carried in that smile.

I can’t just watch this.

“No! Please no Kuroro!” He cried trying to jump from the bed. His eyes locked into the tattoo gun in horror and he turned back to Kuroro with red glowing eyes. “Kuroro please, tattoos are forbidden to my people, you’ll take away my place in the Scarlet Land, don’t do this!”

“Kurapika,” Kuroro growled taking the boy by the neck and pulling him close. “Your people are dead, your culture is gone. I made sure of it,” he hissed and I stumbled back.

No wonder Kurapika looked at us all like murderers, no wonder he didn’t want to be here, no wonder he hates the Ryuuseigai people! He has every right too. I would hate anyone that killed my entire people.

“I slit your mother's throat, stabbed your father in the heart, and beheaded your king,” he continued as Kurapika cried and clawed at his hands, obviously he couldn’t breath. “I killed your culture, there is no Scarlet Land for you to escape to, Kurapika.”

“Pl-please,” he whined breathlessly. Kuroro threw him back onto the bed and Kurapika gasped and coughed. “Kuroro you’re my master okay? Please don’t defile me anymore!”

“No.” He stood tall, giving his crew a look and they went around the bed to start grabbing at his limbs, pulling him to lay flat on his belly on the bed. He fought and struggled pulling at his own limbs to get free. “You’re mine to do with as I please now,” he placed his hand on the curve of Kurapika’s back and leaned down to whisper, “Be still.”

Kurapika stopped struggling, tears poured from my eyes as Kurapika became almost lifeless, like a doll.

‘I even control your body.’ His words echoed in my head and I wanted to sob but I couldn’t even breath. How could anyone do this to another human being? Sweet Kurapika, too kind for the world of Ryuuseigai, a crueler Ryuuseigai than I had believed I was in.
“No,” Kurapika breathed on repeat as the men in white began to work. The first touch of the needle made the boy jump, he even struggled for half a second before Kuroro touched him again and whispered his command again and he lost his fight again.

“God no!” He cried, a flood gate opening in his eyes drenching the pillows and heaving in and out at ink was driven into his skin.

“This is happening Kurapika because you choose to fight me, in public no less. You think I don’t own you?” He asked with a snide hint to his tone I didn’t recognize from my king. “Maybe you’ll finally come to your senses when I screw you into the mattress and smear ink and your blood over the sheets, won’t that be fun for us Kurapika?”

“I hate you!” He screamed and sobbed. I backed up until I was against the wall of the small passage and slid down the wall. Tears dripped onto the floor and horror and pain tightened my chest. How strong would a person be to endure this for so long? Kurapika, my queen, he was the strongest person in the world.

I watched as the delicate almost tribal line of symbols was drawn over the length of Kurapika’s back. The small of his back and neck was dotted with a beautifully designed swirling circles. After hours of screaming and crying, Kurapika was limp and the only sound he produced was small whines and wheezing breaths.

A fourth of the way up the line they began a new line of symbols across the line. It matched the reverse cross on the back of the king’s jacket. Marking the boy as the devil’s prize.

And Ryuuseigai is hell.

My back was killing me, the tattoo throbbed and my back side was just a red tide of pain. Kuroro had delivered on his promise to screw me into the mattress, I thought he was going to snap my spine with how far back he bent me, if fact I was hoping he would, then maybe I could be out of this hell. Although what is the point in dying now? There will be no afterlife for me anymore.

My body felt weak and standing made my vision go black for a moment. Kuroro had left me some
medical balm for the tattoo. I threw it at the wall and sunk to my knees.

Why? He has already taken my happiness from this life, what more could he want from me? Now he has taken away my chance to see my people again in the after life. There would be no entry into the Scarlet Lands for me, now that my back held one of the high sins of my people.

I didn’t have anymore tears to cry, everything I had I gave up last night. I clutched at the stained sheets and wished for death, if the ceiling could just fall on me right now. Kuroro can’t blame me if I just died accidentally, then I can fall into the void of the sinful, my soul to never re-enter a world with so much cruelty and pain. I hate this world.

“You are a mess this morning.” Shalnark’s voice broke me from my downward spiral. “I hope you aren’t thinking of ending yourself, you know what will happen.”

“I wish this place would go up in flame while we all sleep,” I replied quietly.

“Oh scary.” He laughed, mocking my pain. These people had no soul. “Hey, the girls in the kitchen made you tea and some pastries, don’t break our glassware okay?” He places down a tray and leaves me with that, exasperated with my very existence.

I growled and picked up the tea cup and moved to hurl it against the wall but something caught my eye. I quickly drank the contents and flipped the cup upside down.

‘Abandoned wing 12pm’ it read in beautifully lined handwriting. I ran my thumb over the ink and it smeared, erasing the words from existence, leaving no trace. I wiped the residue on the sheets, it mixed in with the rest of the ink staining the clothe.

Who is sending me messages? Shalnark told me not to break the glassware but I doubt he would have anything to say to me in confidence. Maybe it’s an assassination attempt? Wouldn’t that be great. I dressed quickly, hissing when cloth touches the gaping wound on my back.

“God damn him,” I mutter. “I don’t even know what time it is.” I sighed as I moved to leave the room. I need to catch a maid and ask for the time.

I opened the door and found myself almost colliding with a maid that was bustling past.
“Oh your majesty,” she quickly bowed and tried to sidestep me. I looked around to make sure no one was around but us.

“What time is it?” I asked in a whisper. She almost dropped the broom she was holding in shock.

“It’s almost 12, majesty,” she answered through the shock, staring at me dumbly.

“Can you point me to the abandoned wing?” I asked again and if possible she looked even more shocked by my continued speech.

“It’s that way.” She pointed to the right, almost skeptical that this was happening. “Take two rights and a left then just go straight until you reach a big dusty dining room.”

“Thanks,” I whispered and I turned right out of Kuroro’s room. I tried to keep an even pace, I still don’t know who sent me that message, and what they want from me. Do I dare hope that someone is going to help me? Or should I just hope that someone wants to kill me?

I passed fewer people the closer I got to this abandoned wing of Kuroro’s rotting manor.

“Hello?” I called as I entered the dusty room. “You sent a message?” I tried again walking deeper into the room. “If you’re gonna kill me, please just just do it quickly.” I sighed as I sat in one of the chairs. a cloud of dust jumping into the air.

“I’m not going to hurt you Kurapika.” I jumped and turned to see the figure coming out of the darkness, I recognized that voice though. “You’ve been hurt enough.”

“Hail?” I whispered as she stepped into the light. “Hail, what are you doing?”

“I’m going to help you Kurapika, I know what he’s been doing to you, what they all have been doing for you.” She came forward and pulled me into her arms. “I can’t imagine what you’ve been through,” her arms shook as she held me and I almost laughed in relief. Finally someone on my side, finally someone knows.
“How?” I whispered hugging her back in the secluded area.

“I wanted to get evidence and I hid behind the wall last night,” she told me. “You begged and they didn’t even flinch. I’m so sorry Kurapika, no one should go through that.” She wiped at her eyes as she pulled away from me. “I won’t cry, because we are getting you out of here.”

I pulled back too and wiped at my own tears. “Thank you Hail, thank you.”

“You’re so strong Kurapika,” she told me and I couldn’t stop the new flood of tears that spilled down my cheeks.

“Don’t cry,” she murmured. “you still can’t publicly talk to me, so I have it all here for you okay?” She looked around again and shoved the paper down my shirt. She pulled away from me again and pushed in the chair I had pulled out, it’s like we had never been here.

“Okay I got it-“

“Kurapika!” We jumped and turned. My heart stopped and I could feel Hail begin to shake in terror. “My, my, what the hell do you think you’re doing?”

“Hail,” I glanced at her, my eyes brighter than they had been in months. “Run.” She didn’t need anything more, she turned quickly and ran for the opposite doorway.

“Catch her,” Kuroro called behind him, almost bored in his tone. “I have been expecting this, I knew eventually you’d find a way to tell someone.” He walked towards me and I backed up with a glare on my face.

“Leave her alone!” I shouted at him. “She doesn’t know anything I just wanted to talk to her, she’s the person that makes me want to stay! Please Kuroro, she’s the answer to what you want!” I’m reaching, I know I am. He could have heard every single word that was said between us, but if there is any chance I could save Hail’s life then I’ll sell my soul to the devil.

“Hm, it’s true I want you to want to stay, I want every part of you.” He continued forward until he wrapped his arms around me and I did everything possible to garner mercy from him, I didn’t fight it, I even leaned into him. “I’m quite selfish you know, I like the treasures of the world where they belong, in my possession.” His hand stroked down my cheek and I did everything possible not to
flinch away, my eyes slid shut blocking out my glow and I pretended I was back in the Whale Islands, on that rainy silent night Leorio kissed me. “And you are the greatest of treasures my sweetling.”

“Then don’t kill her Kuroro, I’ll stay I’ll be good, I’ll do everything, anything you say, I swear.” I begged cuddling my face into his hand to prove my point. “Just let her live.”

Hail was dragged back into the room by Phinks and Nobu, she was screaming vulgarities at them and crying. I tried to turn and run to her but Kuroro caught me and held me back.

“What would you have me do Kurapika?” he whispered in my ear before licking a trail up the shell of it. “Would you like me to make her your personal hand maid? Keep an eye on her so she doesn’t tell the others? I think you know as much as the rest of us that once the maids get a secret then the kingdom knows as well.”

“Please Kuroro, she doesn’t know anything, I just wanted to talk to her again!” I tried again hoping that this once he wouldn’t catch my lie.

“Oh Kurapika, it would be Irresponsible of me to let the women that tried to assassinate the queen live.” Both mine and Hail’s eyes widened and she choked on a scream at the blatant lie.

“You monsters!” She screamed. “I’ve seen what you’re doing to that poor boy!” She continued and my head dropped, I have no way to save her now.

“Kuroro don’t! You want everything right?” I turned in his arms and weaved my fingers through the cloth of his shirt. “I’ll be so good you’ll forget I’m a prisoner. I’ll never run or oppose you and I’ll stop fighting you in the bedroom. Everything you want, just don’t kill her!” I raised myself into my toes and moved to press my lips to his and he reciprocated in kind.

The kiss was gentle and inquisitive, he was thinking and whatever he decided on would decide Hail’s life.

We pulled away and I held his eyes with mine, begging silently for mercy for Hail.

“Execute her, and the maid Kurapika talked to earlier,” I shoved him away and tried again to run to Hail.
“No!” Kuroro caught me again and threw me over his shoulder.

“What should we tell the people?” Phinks asked as Hail began to struggle anew. Screaming about the monstrous actions of Kuroro and the high crew.

“Spread the story that the maids were involved in a plot to kill the queen, and please gag her, we don’t need her gathering sympathy for Kurapika,” he told them as I beat on his back and cried.

“Don’t do this, I said I’ll give you everything!” I begged again.

“I already have everything, Kurapika,” he told me as he waited for everyone to filter out of the room, dragging a struggling Hail.

Once the room was empty I was placed back in the room, of which I immediately sank to my knees and shook in rage and sorrow.

“Come now, you must know keeping her alive would have been too risky.” He sighed as if this was a temper tantrum.

“I thought you would yield for one of your own citizens,” I confessed. “You’re my monster but you care about your people, I thought I understood at least that much about you.” My voice was soft and my lips trembled at the effort of keeping my heart out of my throat.

“Then I guess we both overestimated each other,” he whispered, turning to leave me in the dark dusty room, alone and cold. “Because I thought you’d be harder to control, I’m almost disappointed.” He stepped away, moving to the door before pausing. “Well? Are you going to wallow here all day?” He patted his leg as if I was a dog and I got up, one hand clutching my heart and the paper beneath my clothes, following behind him out of the door.

We walked at a slow pace and before I knew it, Kuroro was slowing down more to put a ‘comforting’ arm around me. We looked the picture of a concerned king over his queen that had almost been killed. I knew he only did this because the halls were getting more and more crowded.

He led me back to his room, maids peeping in to watch as he led me to the bed, tucked me in and
even kissed my forehead as the cherry on top of his performance. He stood tall as I turned away from him and he left, closing the door on my cage yet again.

I didn’t cry, I have no more tears.

The execution of Hail and the other maid, who looked so confused and scared I could even look at her, was quick and bloody. Just a simple beheading, not like I had even seen one before. Hail tried to scream her secrets behind the gag and the maid I didn’t know the name of tried to beg, she had done nothing to deserve this.

I did this, I killed them. Hail and the maid were dead the moment I talked to them. Kuroro announced their ‘crimes’ and you could here the murmur of disbelief. Already rumors of my apparent cruelty in framing them were beginning to circulate.

I bowed my head and kept my expression in check, I kept the guilt burning inside me from shining through and held Hail’s note close in my closed fist. I won’t let the chance she died for go to waste, I won’t be marrying Kuroro the pirate king.

The second it was acceptable I excused myself and went back to the manor to sulk and plan. My bodyguards followed to all the way to the royal chambers, I guess they had become pawns of the performance as well. I slammed the door closed and waited, waited for Kuroro to follow, to put me in my place, anything. When it was clear he had no intention of following, I carefully unfurled my fist and unfolded the paper yet again. Going over the information I now had for the zillionth time.

Hail had prepared a small sailboat, apparently it was her late father’s and hadn’t been used in awhile. She included a map to where she hid it, surprisingly on the beach I frequented, and even a sea chart marking where we were and the nearest inhabited island. This was my one chance, and I’m taking it the hell out of here.

I planned and discussed with myself on how I would get out of the room and escape my bodyguards for the majority of the day. Only stopping when Shalnark brought me a tray of food and I ate every last bite, I’m going to need the energy. By the time dinner rolled around and Kuroro would be returning, I had laid out a thorough plan of escape worthy of being written in the stars.

It all starts tomorrow. When Kuroro leaves me tomorrow morning, it will be the last he sees of me.
The next morning I woke with fresh bruises and dry eyes like most mornings after nights spent with Kuroro, and although literally rubbing Hail’s blood on me caused me to break my no-crying rule, my resolve remained strong.

I dress in my most inconspicuous clothing and took one of Kuroro’s bandanas to cover my blonde hair and another to cover my face. Hail had mentioned actually seeing my torment of a few nights ago so yesterday I figured there must be hidden passageways, much like my childhood home, and my guess was right. In the bathroom behind the mirror was an entrance to one of these tunnels.

It ran the entire length of the bedroom, you could see everything between the cracks. The musk of dust and disrepair was thick but I consider it an upgrade. I almost thought about just staying here, hiding forever but I knew I needed to see this through.

I wandered the tunnels for an indeterminable amount of time before I found an exit. I peered through the cracks to make sure no one was around before opening the door cautiously.

I shut the door with the same amount of caution and even marveled at how well hidden the passageways were.

I moved through the manor with a brisk pace but I kept myself calm, tried to look like I belonged. I even picked up a bucket full of water and a mop along my way, hoping to God no one would look twice at a maid walking the halls.

My plan was going as well as I had hoped and I almost let out a cry of joy when I made it to the front doors undisturbed, but I held back, keeping calm and to the edge of the room as I walked out like it was the most natural thing to do.

“The queen is gone!” I heard someone shout just as I passed the threshold and I almost stalled, almost panicked. Taking a breath and calming my frantic heart I continued forward like I wasn’t having a panic attack. Someone must have come to give me breakfast, it’s okay they don’t see me, I rationalize to myself.

I was in the marketplace before the guards and Kuroro’s crew were pouring out of the front entrance like a kicked ant hill. Acting quickly, I grabbed a hooded cloak from a busy stand while the owner was distracted with other passersby and wrapped it around my shoulders, pulling up the
hood so I could run through the crowd unnoticed.

My heart was beating harder than a sea storm in winter, adrenaline was plentiful enough. I felt I could see and hear even the slight rustle of the wind and for the first time I could feel hope making me lighter. My body was light, I could swear I was flying to the beach rather than just sprinting at full speed.

The sand under my shoes was a godsend, the smell of the saltwater beating against the sand was the most heavenly fragrance in the world, and the sight of the lone rocky cave in the distance looked like the gates to the Scarlet Lands to me.

I panted and laughed as I lunged my entire body forward, it was so easy and Hail will forever be my hero. I sprinted full speed into the cave, quickly hiding and checking to see if any of the pirates had made it to the beach yet, but the gods were on my side today and I still had time.

I took in the boat quickly, it was indeed small. It was meant to be handled by only one sailor, maybe a ten foot deck but to me it was the greatest ship to touch these waters. Hail had changed the sails and prepared food and water reserves for me already. Hail was an angel of mercy.

I untied the boat from the rocks and gave it a push, pushing my worn out body for all it was worth to free the ship from the almost flooded cave before jumping on. The pirates were just arriving on the beach when my boat peeled out from behind the rocks. I waved in a taunting manner, hoping Kuroro could see me as I sail away from this hell.

“KURAPIKA!” I heard him shout from the sand just as I dropped the sails, stumbling on weak legs as the boat jerked forward. I laughed, chest heaving and eyes alight, the boat may be small but it was fast. “Get your ass back here!” He tried again.

I glared at the shore and found him standing ahead in the crowd of people and smiled, a full and bright smile, my red eyes matching the intensity of the sun behind me. “STAY IN HELL KUROKO!” I shouted back and laughed at his resulting roar of fury.

I turned from the shore and took the large rod that controlled my vessel in hand and began to sail away. The wind and waves helping me as I left Ryuuseigai and Kuroro behind me, hopefully forever.

The salt encrusted wind in my hair, the spray of water in my pores and the golden sunlight burning
my pale skin. This was freedom.
Chapter 8

The first night was hard, my body was sunburned from the day of sailing and my eyes wanted to slide shut in self-satisfied exhaustion. Who could blame me? This would be the first time I’ve slept in months without the threat of rape hanging over my head. Yet I couldn’t sleep, I couldn’t let myself relax until I was back in the safety of my guardians. This experience had proven without a doubt that I was weak in body. I need to learn to fight, defend myself.

I had two close calls today, if I fall asleep I won’t be able to get away if he finds me again. Luckily the Kuruta were experts at sailing, I had basically been raised on the small boats on the rocking rivers of our city. I knew the ways to use the sun to hide, I was an expert in finding the waves that would propel me forward, it’s a shame the Phantom Pirates hadn’t opposed my people on the waves, we would have wiped them out.

I rubbed water over my sweating neck and shed my shirt to wrap it around my head before taking in the stars and turning the ship slightly to port. The water lapped again my rocking ship, it almost felt like a lullaby. With the moon and stars as my guide I felt safe for the first time in forever. I can’t wait to see Gon and Leorio, Leorio would definitely cry when Netero delivered me back to the Whale Islands. Queen Mito would wrap me up in her motherly arms and soothe every wound. My wedding with Neon is definitely cancelled after all this time, maybe they will let me marry for love. Leorio and I could date finally, no more secret kisses behind the courtyard, only the thought that maybe we would like to promise ourselves to each other.

“Get real,” I spat at myself then flinched at the very idea of being physical with literally anyone after this experience. I might be ruined to sex forever.

I raised the sail as the wind slowly faded, without the wind I’d lose the waves and I might as well take a nap. I laid down on the wet deck and smiled into my arms as I fell into the void in my mind.

‘Beautiful’ was the first thought that came to mind when I thought of my treasure, but with his visage on that tiny ship, that smile I had never seen before, and those eyes so bright and happy for the first time since I clipped his wings, the thought that came to mind was ‘divine.’
I didn’t even know he could rise to greater heights of beauty, but he was basically an angel in that moment as he yelled at me to stay in hell.

Well if I’m in hell then I must be a demon, and what better captor for an angel than a demon? When I get him back I’ll chain him down with more force than ever before. I’ll punish him with nightmares he could never imagine, I’ll break every bone in his lithe little body if I have too.

I guess I asked for this, I accused him of breaking easier than I had expected and now he has flown away from me.

“Kuroro!” Paku called her tone louder than normally, she had probably called me numerous times. I was still pissed at the apparent skill Kurapika had at sailing, of course we had given chase immediately but Kurapika was basically an expert at using the wind and waves, it had been fruitless. It was almost impressive.

“Yes Paku?” I answered with a heavy sigh.

“We need you to decide on what we’re going to do.” She looked at me as we rocked on the dark waters.

I looked over the crew I had brought with me to chase down our meal ticket. Machi, of course, Paku, Nobu, and Uvogin, they were some of my best.

“Send a message to Feitan,” I finally decided. “I want the ships prepared tonight, our people sail out tomorrow. Machi,” I turned to her as she had the best instincts. “Chart the most likely course Kurapika would have taken. Nobu, Uvogin I want you to prepare the cannons, maybe even the harpoon, prepare everything.” They nodded and began to filter out of the room to complete their tasks.

“Kuroro,” Paku started and I knew where this was going. She had tried to defend Kurapika in the past, asked me to go easier on him. I didn’t punish him for his secret meeting with that maid and look what being nice got me: a runaway bride and hurt pride. Then of course there was this odd pain in my chest as Kurapika made a mockery of my head. God those eyes.

“Don’t try this with me now Paku, if I had punished him he wouldn’t have run,” I snapped at her. Kurapika belonged under my thumb, he belongs to me and nothing she could say now can change my mind.
“If you hadn’t killed his only friend this wouldn’t have happened either. Don’t you think that was punishment enough?” She asked me with more emotion then I had ever heard from her melancholy voice before.

“No I don’t! They planned an escape Paku,” I hissed at her. “I should have had him chained to the wall, hanging from the ceiling, and burned the spider into his chest!”

“Did you forget we need him alive?” She hissed back. “You know stress can kill a person, you can’t really be so dense to believe he likes anything you’ve done to him.”

“Of course I’m not stupid Paku, just how long have we run together?” I asked sinking into my chair, the image of my angel on that boat, that smile dancing on his lips.

“I have run with you since you were a sniveling child with a brilliant mind, still under your father’s thumb,” she answered in a dead tone.

“And how many times have my plans failed?” I asked her with a smirk.

“Not since we were children stealing food from vendors,” she sighed before she looked up at me with fury again. “But your plans have never included controlling a human being for this long, or you were kinder. If you didn’t push him as hard as you di-“

“He would have run either way!” I cut her off. “We only need him until we’ve been married a year to cool the rage of the other kingdoms, and I can adopt a child to ensure our people.”

“You executed our people Kuroro!” She slammed her hands on the desk. “You beat and rape him senseless every night, do you really think you can control him like this?” She took a breath and calmed herself. “If you could be kinder, gentler to him, he could even like you. You aren’t the monster he thinks you are Kuroro, I know you.”

“You are right about one thing Paku,” I sighed sitting back my eyes thinking over everything that went wrong. Kurapika’s first smile given to me flashed in my head again and my heart sped up, that’s odd. “What I have done so far isn’t working, I can’t just break his body, I need to break his mind.”
She sighed and rubbed the bridge of her nose. “You never listen, I swear.” She turned and stomped out of the room and I smiled slightly. She had become rather attached to Kurapika before ever even meeting him, it wasn’t fair of me to have promised her motherhood all those years ago. I know how seriously she takes my assignments.

I’ll have to warn the others when we eventually have to get rid of him, she’ll be upset for awhile. At the thought of killing the boy my chest tightened rather painfully, what is that about?

It’s not like I have any attachment to the beautiful, smart, cunning boy, right?

The sun was bright and the air humid the next morning, the wind was perfect. My ship cut through the waters, the sail alive and bloated against the mast.

The bright smile had been pinned to my sunburned face since I woke, wiping the sweat from my face, I re-tied a few ropes, checked a few knots, mostly to keep myself busy under the burning sun.

The salt in the air stung the tattoo on my unprotected back, I could almost feel it baking the ink, lifting it from my skin. Maybe it will be gone one day, fade like the nightmares of my life, fade like Kuroro from my life.

I took the steer and repositioned my direction again. I didn’t want the strong winds to rip my sail, then I’d truly be lost. It would take another day to get to the nearest inhabited island, I didn’t know if I’d catch a boat to another island or just restock my supplies and continue on. It’s not like I had any money but I had thought to grab my silver crown and as much as it would kill me to sell the relic worn by the many heirs before me, I would do anything to make sure Kuroro could never hold the reins to my lands.

Taking a breath, I looked over my work with satisfaction. Everything was perfect, the knots were tight, the sail was strong, and my ship was moving at a speed Kuroro’s wouldn’t be able to keep up with. Nodding my head I sat down and pulled my food reserves from under the deck. I kept an eye on the winds as I snacked on the dried oat cakes and sipped at the canister of water. I didn’t realize my mouth was so dry or that my stomach was so empty until my first bite. Tears ran down my face as I ate, dripping onto my thighs, it was the best thing I had ever eaten. The cakes were bland and the water stale, but it tasted wonderful. Nothing Kuroro could force on me could taste like this, nothing tastes like this when you live in a cage.
I’m free, it’s over. I wiped at the tears, laughing quietly to myself and clasped a hand over my heart. Soon I’ll be back with my family, I’ll take Gon and Leorio in my arms and hug him in the most undignified manner. I’ll mourn Marine and Hail, even the other maid with Queen Mito and maybe finally forgive Netero for saving me that night. I’ll finally thank him for taking me away before Kuroro could take me when I was so young.

Once I finished my oat cake I wiped my eyes and stood again to continue my journey. Wait for me, I’m coming home.

The stars were a light flicker through the swirling dark clouds in the night sky, the seas were darker tonight. The moon was blocked out by the clouds, and the winds howled in warning for the rough night ahead. A sea storm was coming.

My boat jerked and rocked as the waves gradually got rougher. My eyes stayed in the sky searching for the storm's eye, that would be my only haven, a boat this small wouldn’t be able to survive a full out storm.

Lightning crackled in the distance and I held off raising my sails, hoping I could make it to the eye in time. Then, by the sea god’s mercy, I spotted it in the vortex of clouds. I yelled in victory as I jammed my steer in the direction of the eye. My ship turned against the rising waves, knocking against my ship violently, and I began the preparations to raise my sails. Lightening cracked again accompanied with the boom of thunder.

Something hit the water with a deafening noise, splashing a wave over my small boat and my boat tipped dangerously knocking me to the slick wood of my deck. I lifted my head and the sky flashed again, showcasing a ship stalled out under the eye of the storm. It was when I realized my mistake, I hadn’t heard thunder but the boom of a cannon firing right at me!

The black ship under the light of the moon may be smaller than Kuroro’s many ships, but the spider and skull on the flag were a dead giveaway.

They have found me, and in a storm no less while they occupied the only safe haven!

“Fucking bastards!” I yelled as an actual clap of thunder drowned out my voice. A cannon boomed in the distance again, coming right at me. I jumped for one of the loose ropes I had untied to raise the sails and yanked it desperately, my boat lunged forward out of the path of the cannon. It
clipped the far side of my deck, destroying the railing in a symphony of splintering wood. My boat pitched back and I slipped down the deck, saving myself only by grabbing onto the mass before I fell into the rough seas. The cannon ball exploded in the water, pushing my ship in the other direction basically on the other side for half a second before rolling back into its rightful position.

I screamed in fright as I was tossed around like a rag doll, holding onto the mass for dear life as the cannons and the waves played a deadly game of monkey in the middle with my ship. My ship began to fill with water and I looked up to realize Kuroro’s ship was closer now, or to be more exact I was closer now. Through the tossing and turning my boat had been corralled into the eye of the storm.

I looked at the foreboding image of Kuroro’s ship, lightning lighting off the sails and the people on board in a twisted and disturbing picture of my fate.

I screamed at the spiraling void, brutalizing my throat, ripping my vocal cords to shreds as I let go of everything. All of my pain, rage, and hatred poured out of me in a desperate roar against the booming thunder and strikes of lightning that rivaled the wrath of god inside me. The water shook and the air shivered as light zipped directly over head, rain broke the sky above us as I continued to scream.

A boom and thump making my boat shudder shut me up. I looked to my shaking mast and my eyes turned red as I took it the profile of a harpoon driven through the wood. The rope was pulled taunt and my boat was slowly pulled closer to Kuroro’s.

Turning back to the ship, I glared. if he thinks I’m gonna go to him that easily then he is in for a surprise. On wobbling legs, I ran across the broken deck, threw open the hatch and pulled out the sailing knife that had been in my supplies, sticking it between my teeth and climbed the mast with the grace and adrenaline of a hunted animal.

I worked quick to release my boat from Kuroro’s hold, the rope snapped when it was halfway cut and whipped me in the face. The boat tipped in a fever pitch and I grabbed the mast in desperation as a wave engulfed me for a moment. The ship swayed back with a groan and I jumped from the mast, slipping, and pain shot up my leg. With a sprained ankle and blood fogging my vision, I pulled myself up and grabbed for the ropes, pulling them tight and shifting back to steer myself back into the storm.

My boat turned and shook with the forceful movement, rain pelted my skin and my boat began to sink, slowing me down.
Then the last nail was driven in.

Lightning flashed, zipped, and struck the metal harpoon stuck in my mast. I cried out in shock and pain as my limbs flailed, my teeth gritted, blood oozed, and vision went black. I dropped to the deck, lucky to still be breathing. Looking to my torn and ruined mast, I felt the fight leave me.

Maybe if I apologize, if I beg and give him what he wants, he’ll forgive me?

‘How many times has begging ever helped you?’ My mind hissed. None, not once has begging ever helped me. I raised myself on the deck and tried to think of a way out of this.

I have an extra sail don’t I? I moved to the hatch, my body crying in pain. I pulled the sail from under the deck and yanked on ropes to drop the ruined one. I panted and angrily swept hair out of my one good eye as I worked to string up the new sail. I climbed the mast and chanced a glance at Kuroro’s ship just as the sound of cannons curved the air.

I watched with dead eyes and broken dreams as the cannon ball flew straight at me.

“I give up,” I whispered. I hugged the mast, took a moment to appreciate the good things in my life as I prayed my people would forgive me for not being able to join them.

The deck exploded. Shards of wood stabbed into my legs and I shrieked as the mast flew up several feet and I took a breath for what was about to happen. The water embraced me as the mast plunged into the depths. It sank with its momentum about ten feet if the pressure crushing my head was anyway to tell. Then the mast stopped and slowly began to rise. I repositioned myself and pushed off the mast deeper into the dark and frostbitten waters. I kicked and swam so far down my breath ran out and my body begged for air but I kept pushing, I needed to get deep enough that when my body forces me to save my own life it will be too late. I’ll be too deep to get up before I die.

Everything felt like in was zooming out, the edges of my vision dark and fading, my chest burned and before long panic set in. Twenty feet down my lunges convulsed and my mouth gaped, trying to breath only to suck in freezing water. My limbs reached up and my body twisted, desperate to break out of the water before everything stopped. My limbs went limp, my mouth and throat didn’t even try to keep the water out and my vision darkened until it was just black.

Finally I’m free, I won’t go back to him. A smile curled on my lips and I welcomed the godly figure that swam towards my fading body gratefully. ‘Take me away from here,’ I called out
silently with my face stretched with that same gentle smile and I began to forget what I was even doing here, but I remember pain and wanting for death, I want this. Even if my eyes are a beacon of desperation in this darkness around me, I know I no longer wish to be apart of this world.

The figure caught me and I felt something press against my lips, something soft and loving, someone wanted me to live and was begging me with their desperate warm lips. I returned the kiss with the little energy I had left, not minding the odd feeling of air being forced down my throat.

My vision was black again before it danced back into existence, scared black eyes caught mine and I tried to search my tired mind for the answer to who he was, but I came up empty handed so I brushed lazy fingers down his face and hoped he wouldn’t cry for me before my eyes slid shut and everything disappeared.

I had dove into the water as soon as the ship exploded, following the mast down, the last place I had seen him. The waters had been dark and murky, I couldn’t spot him in the waters. Panic welled up in my chest as I searched with every limb for any clue as to where he was.

When I spotted the soft glow of red below me I found my heart jumping in joy and pushed myself to swim deeper, faster than I ever have before.

When I was close enough to see him, he had that divine look on his face again, the warm curl of his lips as he slowly sank into the sea was worthy of a million paintings being dedicated to it. I pulled him into my arms and kicked us up, bending my neck to push air into his lungs as I went, I was surprised when he began to move his lips against mine. Just who did he believe I was in his water logged brain? He’d never kiss me back, and for some reason I felt slightly disappointed by that fact.

I pulled away and looked him over as his eyelids began to fall and panic squeezed my chest again. ‘You can’t go.’ I found myself saying and as if answering, his hand brushed down my cheek and his eyes shut cutting out the light.

I pushed my legs harder and breached the surface with a gasp. I pulled Kurapika tight against my chest and he fit so perfectly there. Of course he would, he belongs to me but I still marveled over it.

I swam as fast as I could to my ship and yanked on the rope ladder waiting for me to climb,
indicating I wanted them to pull me up.

Uvogin, most likely, didn’t waste a moment and he began to pull me and Kurapika up with vigor. With in a moment Uvogin had me close enough to the rail that I could hand Paku the fragile body of Kurapika and lift myself over the deck.

“Captain he’s not breathing!” Paki yelled in panic as soon as I was over the railing.

“Put him down!” I yelled and she immediately obeyed me and laid him out on the dark wood. Machi and Uvogin crowded around as I got on my knees and placed my hands on his cold dead chest and pumped. His ribs cracked and I ignored my own fatigue, giving twenty pumps before tipping his head back and pressing my lips against his again to breathe into him.

“Come on!” I growled moving to pump his chest again, this time thirty before stopping to breathe twice against his wet lips. “You are not allowed to leave me!” I ordered and moved to begin pumping against. My actions were desperate and I hated the way Machi stared at me like she had just figured out a challenging puzzle.

Just as I bent to press my lips to his again, he spat water and coughed. I rolled him to his side as he continued to cough out a small pond. I rubbed his back in a soothing manner, everyone breathing a sigh of relief. “That’s good, get it all out,” I whispered. “Breathe, you’re okay”

He gasped and coughed, spitting saltwater. His eyes snapped open and he looked around with confusion. His eyes met mine with a blank look, like he didn’t remember who I was. Maybe that would be best but alas realization overcame him and he squealed something that I think was supposed to be a screamed curse.

I tried to pull him close, feeling a need to rock him and tell him he’s safe now, before he struck out with surprisingly strong limbs and punched me in the face. My neck snapped to the side at the unexpected attack and he dropped from my arms. He desperately tried to get up and run for the railing to finish what he started, but he could barely move now that the adrenaline began to fade from his system.

Sunburned, half drowned, obviously sprained ankle, one bleeding and wounded eye, struck by lightning, broken ribs, and large splinters of wood sticking out of his legs, he really managed to ruin himself. There was no way he could move.
We let him crawl along the deck, gasping and moaning in pain until the shock won out and he dropped into unconsciousness with a wet thump, his head hitting the deck.

“Kurapika!” Paku called and pulled the boy into her arms. I growled and stomped up to her, ripping the boy from her and curling him up in mine again.

The other looked at me with shock at the possessive action. I calmed myself by shaking my head and turned away, moving to my quarters, rattling the deck boards as I went.

“Get us on course to meet the fleet!” I shouted and slammed my cabin door shut with my foot.

Once inside my room my shoulders dropped and my head felt fuzzy. Why the hell am I acting like this?

The only time I had ever acted like this was that book from years ago. It was one of a kind and once I had it I wouldn’t let the others even look at it, let alone touch it. I still had it, under lock and key because it was mine!

I glared at the half dead boy dripping blood on the floor, angry that he had climbed so high into my favor. He was just a kid, a worthless human like every other, yes he is beautiful with a brilliant mind but there were hundreds of others just like him that weren’t so difficult to handle!

I laid him over my sheets with more care than what was needed and just stared for a moment.

“What are you doing to my black heart?” I asked him running my knuckles down his cheek. I glared when he turned into the caress making my heart do that stupid racing it did when I thought of the blonde boy. My hand traveled down to his thin, snappable neck and squeezed, cutting off his air as he slept.

I tried to picture ending him a year from now, I pictured wrapping my hands around him just like this as he slept and tearing the life right out of him and pain swept through my chest, making me gasp. I fell to my knees and clutched the sheet my treasure laid on, my mind a buzz with one thought, ‘I don’t want a world where he doesn’t exist.’

This could ruin my plans. I can’t have this little brat controlling me with sweet smiles and unholy laughs. He couldn’t fit into my perfect plan anymore, he had grown too rebellious, too strong, too
unbendable. The only way this ends well for me is if I get rid of him as soon as possible.

‘You can have the world and him,’ my wicked greedy mind whispered. ‘Aren’t you Captain Kuroro Lucilfer? Certainly you can find a way to have it all.’ It continued, ‘you could make him want you.’

No, Kurapika will die, I just have to give myself time. Get over whatever this is somehow.

With my mind settled, I stood and allowed myself only one kiss on the half dead boy’s lips before I stalked out of the room, calling for Machi to clean and dress the boy’s many wounds as I did.

Waking up was agony. Breathing was painful and were nerve was set afire.

“You might want to stay still” a voice called from my right. I turned my head over, wincing at the pain in the action, to see machi as she packed a few things into a small trunk.

“Why do I feel sticky?” I croaked out, my voice surprisingly hoarse and rough. I pushed myself off the bed with a wheeze, biting my lip as every muscle screamed complaints. My head started spinning and if not for machi quickly catching my shoulders I would have slipped off the side of the bed and crash broken to the floor.

“I told you, you do not want to be moving right now” she hissed and forcefully laid me back in the bed. Luckily for her I didn’t put up to much of a fight. God I feel like I was dragged by a horse a couple miles.

“What the hell happened?” I asked as she took the blankets and tucked them under my chin, making me realize how cold I was. “How did I get here?”

“You escaped, we caught you, you sustained a number of injuries” she answered stepping away from me. “I bathed you in a special mixture that should help the burns all over you, stitched up your legs, bound your ankle and chest, and cleaned and dressed the cut on your eyelid, your lucky you didn’t lose an eye” she huffed at me.
“Thank you” I whispered and her bodily froze, spine straightened as if I had said something surprising. She looked of me with a look I couldn’t place and watched me. I smiled hoping to sooth the awkward atmosphere.

“Do you know who I am?” She asked suddenly. Stepping closer and looked over my head feeling for any bumps or bruises. “What’s the last thing you remember?”

“You all hurtled a cannon at me” I answered without hesitation.

“And your thanking me” she raised an eyebrow at me. “Why?”

I frowned and turned onto my side sadly. I winced at the pain but decided I could deal with it. “I’m just so tired” I answered her and she stayed there for so long, I felt her eyes drilling into my back.

“Sleep well” she finally replied and finished her business before leaving me alone. A cunning smile pulled at my lips, if I can’t get away then I might as well turn them against each other right?

I closed my eyes and fell into a blissful painless sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Much thanks to my amazing beta serenechaos!!!!
It wasn’t until the next morning that I truly felt every burn, bruise, and cut on me. I groaned when someone’s large hand shook me awake.

“Oh sorry, I forgot how beat up you were,” the giant laughed when I shot him a glare. I softened my features and tried to smile through my aching muscles.

“That’s okay I guess.” He seemed starstruck for the barest of moments before straightening his back and coughing into a closed fist.

“We’re approaching the fleet so you might want to wake up and be ready for when Kuroro comes to collect you.” He lowered his voice some when he saw me wince at his ear splitting volume. “Just thought I’d warn you, he’s pretty pissed off.”

“When is he not?” I scoffed. The giant turned and began to retreat but I caught his hand and made him look at me. I lowered my head in almost a bow, trying to hide my little smirk and play into my newest act, the broken toy desperate for any kind of human interaction I can find. “Thank you for the warning Uvogin,” I whispered in a small voice, I even let my voice croak.

He grinned and tousled my hair in his large hand, “I’ll have someone bring you some water huh?” He moved away from me. “And you can call me Uvo.” I listened to his heavy feet that made the ship creak as he left me, he didn’t even close the door.

As much as I loathe the pirates, Uvogin was hard to hate.

I carefully tried to place my legs on the ground and stand. If I hadn’t expected my legs to give out I would have been on the floor right away. I hissed in pain when I felt my stitches stretch painfully. God, I’m really beat up this time, and I’m naked again. I guess that couldn’t be avoided, my shirt had been gone the second I went into the water, my pants were ripped and probably covered in blood.

I clutched the sheets to my bandaged chest and tried to breath through the pain but breathing was agony. Bruises from what I can only assume was CPR crawled up my ribcage, constricting my movement. Bandages around my eye left my vision feeling lopsided, and my wrapped ankle squealed when I tried to place it down again.
“You can't walk huh?” I looked up and tried to center Kuroro in my field of vision but I had to turn my head slightly.

“No, I don’t think I can.” I sighed, giving up on trying to stand and just picking at the frayed ends of the blanket.

“Alright I’ll help you dress, we’re switching ships,” he sighed closing the door to the room and moving to the closet. “I don’t have much on this ship, but I’m sure anything is better than being carried across the boardwalk naked.” He pulled a few white button ups out of the closet and a pair of black dress pants.

He placed the clothes next to me and tugged at the blanket. “Come now, it's not like I haven’t seen you naked before,” he smirked and I sighed before dropping the blanket. He took the shirt and shook it out.

“Arms up.” I raised my arms as much at my body would allow and he slipped the shirt over my head and pulled my arms through the soft material. “You’re being rather obedient this morning,” he mused as he buttoned the shirt up.

He bent down and slipped the pants up my bandaged legs until my body met the mattress and without being asked, I lifted myself onto my hands for a moment so he could pull the waistband over my hips and button it up as well. “Good boy,” he whispered and stepped away from me.

The clothes were huge on me, the sleeves and cuffs of the pants engulfing my hands and feet. To summarize, I looked like a child wearing my parent’s clothes playing dress up.

“Cute,” he laughed and I glared, daring him to say anything more. He took the dare. “You look rather cute like this.”

I pouted and turned away from him. “Come on, we’re almost to the ships so let’s get you up.” He bent forward again, looping an arm under my legs and one behind my back. “Wrap your arms around my neck so you don’t fall, okay?” I nodded and put my arms over his shoulders and clasped my fingers around his neck and looked away.

His arms held me like I was something precious, making sure to be careful around my many bruises.
“Why are you being nice?” I grumbled as he moved to take me from the room.

“Don’t worry sweetling,” I winced when we stepped out into the bright sunlight. “This is just an interlude, I have no use for a broken puppet.”

“So this is only until I can take a beating again,” I accused. His face was set in stone and his arms tightened around me, it was the only answer he gave me. “So when can I expect my funeral?” I continued with a hiss, not looking at him, instead taking in the many ships the we were approaching. I recognized many as civilian ships from around Ryuuseigai, I could even spot many of the people on the ships out to get a look on the runaway queen.

“What did you tell them?”

“You became frightened of the sinking island, combined with the trauma of the assassination attempt, so you tried to head for Kuruta ahead of us,” he answered easily. I nodded my head because that seemed viable, something you’d expect from a weak queen that didn’t know the fear of approaching death that the people thought I was.

“You really are a master of lies, aren’t you?” He didn’t react as we joined the four others on the deck.

“Kurapika!” Uvogin turned to me with a smile and bent to pitch my cheek. “You look like a child playing pirate with that eyepatch!” He laughed and I forced myself to giggle back.

“You’d know better than me Uvogin.” I plastered an innocent look on my face. “I bet you played pirate all the time as a child.”

“I didn’t have to play, I was born a pirate!” He jeered happily. I laughed with him. He stopped and rewarded me a toothy grin. “And I told you to call me Uvo,” he reminded me.

“Oh sorry,” I paused as if I was tasting the name on my tongue and liking it. “Uvo.” Kuroro’s arms tightened again and I looked up at him to see his suspicious look complete with a raised eyebrow. He silently asked me what the hell I was doing.

I smirked a bit just for him and turned back to continue chatting idly with Uvogin.
“How are you feeling?” Paku cut in to ask and I smiled sheepishly at her.

“A little worse for wear,” I told her mildly. “I can’t really walk, I tried earlier but I almost ripped my stitches doing it.” I faked a wince like the memory was painful.

“I told Kuroro shooting cannons at you was too much,” she sighed and patted my head like a mother would. I put my head down to hide the victorious look at the accusation and anger in her voice. That’s right feel bad for me, turn against him.

“And I told you to rest,” Machi reprimanded lightly. “You shouldn’t try getting on your feet for at least a week, okay?”

“Got it,” I nodded. “Thank you again for taking care of me.”

She gave me that odd look again and nodded her head slowly accepting my thanks.

“He’s acting weird,” Nobu whispered to Uvogin who only replied with another laugh and the throwing of his arm around him.

“Very weird,” Kuroro hissed and pulled me tighter and I yelped louder than necessary to express my pain.

“Kuroro! Dear lord do you not see how injured he is?” Paki yelled at him. “Can’t you just be gentle for even a day? Give him here, I’ll carry him if you can’t handle it,” she demanded and Kuroro glared at her. He looked down at me again and I winked at him. He growled and shoved me in Paku’s arms roughly.

“Shes right Kuroro, you can’t just throw him around in that condition,” Machi told him, when I gave a little moan of pain that bordered enough on real that she turned on the captain as well.

“Are you okay little spitfire?” Uvogin asked me crowding in like a protective shield.
“I’m okay,” I summoned a few tears to the corners of my eyes, like I was trying to stay strong and not show my pain.

“He’s fine,” Kuroro glared at me and I scrunch away from him with a little whimper. Uvogin stepped between us almost subconsciously. Good, I pegged him for a protective type. If I continue with the weak act he shouldn’t be able to resist trying to help me.

Kuroro turned away from me stiffly, I could practically hear the wheels turning in his head as he thought on the situation I was trying to create.

I tried to pretend that I had nothing to hide and continued talking with Uvogin and Paku, acting perfectly to my role.

Before long we were sliding up to the larger ship and a makeshift boardwalk was being lowered for us to trade ships. Paku and Uvogin walked across first, my weak body still tucked uselessly in her arms, she gently handed me to Uvogin when he climbed over the railing first before climbing herself, Kuroro following closely behind.

“Holy crap, did you guys tear out his eye or something?” Phinks asked as he got a look at me, Feitan and Shalnark not far behind him along with the other women, Shizuku, who I hadn’t talked to before.

“No, his eyelid got a cut and I had to bandage it,” Machi answered when she climbed onto the ship.

“What the hell happened?” Feitan looked at me with a detached look, probably thinking of better ways he could have injured me. I shivered at the reminder of what that boy was capable of.

“Harpoon gun,” I answered even if I knew the question wasn’t directed at me. A few pirates gaped at me, trying to figure out how a harpoon could have been involved.

“The little spitfire put up one hell of a fight!” Uvogin added for me, pulling me higher in his strong trunk like arms.

“It looks like you hit him with the ship,” Shalnark looked to Kuroro as he climbed over the railing last.
“It was only a cannon ball,” Kuroro told them in all seriousness. Only a cannon ball my ass, that shit hurt.

Everyone got quiet for a moment and I decided I should probably add something since I needed these people to start trusting me.

“Sorry about the trouble everyone,” I told the eight pirates with a small voice.

Shalnarks and Phinks eyes widened comically and Feitan tilted his head in an unnerving manner.

“Does he not remember anything?” Phink finally asked as he moved closer and took in my ragged appearance from a better angle.

“Oh he remembers,” Kuroro warned and Phinks jumped back as if I was an animal that would lash out at any second.

“Then what the hell is wrong with him? The last time I got that close he broke my nose!” Oh ya, I remember that. I had been spanked as punishment that night.

“Shizuku, Phinks, I want you two to grab Franklin and take the ship we came in on around the boat, offer extra room to any overflow on the other ships. You’ll be captaining that ship the rest of the journey,” Kuroro cut through the small talk and forced everyone back to business. “Shalnark, did you do as I asked?” He questioned.

“Yep I got it all set up in your room.” Kuroro nodded and I panicked at whatever this unknown thing that had been set up was.

“Good, then make the announcement. The queen was found and we are setting course for Kuruta,” he turned to address the rest of his crew. “There will be a meeting at sundown, be ready for it.” Everyone nodded and Uvogin began to walk off with me still in his hands. “Uvogin, give me him!” Kuroro manhandled me out of Uvogin’s arms and pulled my tight against his chest.

“It’s okay Uvo,” I told him with a smile when he tried to snatch me back.
“That’s right, he’s mine I should hold him.” Kuroro spat and it was my turn to raise a brow at him, well that was possessive. He cleared his throat and barked, “Back to work everyone!” He turned away and moved back to the familiar cabin at the back of the ship. He didn’t talk to me as he jostled me around to open the door and slam it shut. He tossed me on the bed rougher than he needed to and I winced when he immediately caught my shoulders and squeezed.

“I know what you’re doing and you are going to stop,” he growled at me. “You will not raise their hopes and then crush them, do you understand me?!”

“I don’t think I know what you’re talking about!” I hissed back slapping his hands away from me. “I’m just the prince with a broken mind seeking any love I can find,” I smirked.

“You think that will work?” He growled moving to the end of the bed in anger. “Playing into their fantasy, you don’t have the temperament for it Kurapika, you’re not a liar.”

“Oh but master, you’ve taught me so well” I grinned evilly as I sassed him.

“Well let’s just see how long you can keep this up eh?” He pulled four chains from the foot of the bed and came back to me. “But a fair warning, once they realize you’ve been lying to them, they will rip you apart,” he whispered clipping a cuff over my right wrist and then my left. I didn’t fight it since I knew I couldn’t move much anyway. He took my feet and cuffed my ankles as well, taking pleasure when I yelped as the silver metal bit into my sprained ankle.

“Don’t you underestimate me,” I warned as he backed away from me again.

“Never,” he took my chin in his fingertips and raised my face to look into my one good eye. He pecked my cheek and left with that.

“Bastard,” I whispered looking down at the newest form of imprisonment. The chains were attached to the end of the bed this time. With it's length I would be able to lay comfortably in any position on the bed but I couldn’t get close to his desk, I could sit in the small area just before the window but no further.

Let the games begin.
Uvogin was yelling some encouragement as Kurapika tried to walk to him across the deck. Paku next to him ready to catch him if he should fall. He was sweating and wincing under the setting sun, his eyes flickering red when the pain spiked every time he used his right leg. He was making slow progress but he was further than he had been just yesterday and even the day before since the others began working on helping Kurapika get back onto his feet.

I was leaning over the rails of the upper deck watching the tender scene with calculating eyes. After two weeks of playing nice, Uvogin was convinced we wouldn’t have to kill the boy and Paku was acting as if she had been given the greatest gift in the world as Kurapika acted for all he was worth.

Machi was still rightfully suspicious but she was slowly giving into those bright smiles and light giggles. Nobu actually blushed the other day during breakfast when Kurapika complimented his hair being down for once, if you didn’t know my relationship with him you could have assumed he was trying to make me jealous.

Phinks and the others haven’t been around much, I think they are avoiding the eventual explosion that is Kurapika and me.

I haven’t touched him in two weeks, mostly because it wouldn’t be fun to fuck a broken bag of bones. If I can’t make him cry because I can make him feel pleasure he doesn’t want, then what’s the point?

Kurapika managed to make it across the deck, panting and wheezing, and practically fell into Uvogin’s arms.

“Good job my little spitfire!” He bellowed, lifting Kurapika up by the armpits to spin him around. The lovely sound of Kurapika giggling and squealing at Uvogin to set him down accompanied the action and I almost found myself smiling at the scene.

He had been eating his meals with the crew and me mostly out of the convenience his little act granted me. While he pretended he was over trying to fight, I didn’t have to work so hard to keep him locked away where no one could see him. At some point I might have to do something about it but for now it’s almost nice to pretend.
Once we reach Kuruta I’ll be on his turf and our game will have to come to a spectacular end. What he didn’t know is I held the trump card, he may be able to hide his anger for the loss of his people behind a singular hatred for me now, but once he can account for what the others had done that night it might not be so easy.

It’s almost a shame. When he is like this I could let myself believe that Kurapika wanted this, wanted to be a part of my crew, my life, but I know it could never be like that.

Kurapika was like the graceful and tame tiger inside a zoo’s locked cage: beautiful, so magnificent you could almost convince yourself to buy it. And when you lean in too close, desperate just to brush that glossy main, you fall in and that beautiful tiger mauls you to death.

This is why I cannot succumb to Kurapika’s games, this is why he must die. He will never stop trying to kill me and eventually I will slip and fall, and that’s when he will strike.

I simply cannot allow it.

“Land ahoy!!” Feitan yelled from the crows nest, my head snapped up and there it was. The greenery of Kuruta slowly came into view in the beautiful sunny day. I released an embarrassing squeal, jumping up from where I was stretching my muscles with Uvogin, and ran to the bow at full speed.

“I’m home!” I yelled, taken in by the moment of seeing its beauty once again. It had been five years.

As we got closer Uvogin and Paku joined me and I leaned as far as I dared with my bruised ribs, smelling the sea air unique to my island.

“It’s beautiful,” Paku breathed as we got so close you could start to pick out buildings in the distance. My island must be ten times the side of Ryuuseigai, the people could live comfortably here for ages.

“Yes it is,” I said back to her, I was beaming, eyes red in joy. The ships turned around the island to
a newly rebuilt harbor and before long the ship was docking and I was sprinting for the boardwalk.

“Let’s go!” I shouted in a childlike happiness. Uvogin laughed and snatched me up before I could get too far, and hoisted me onto his shoulders.

“Hold up there spitfire.” I giggled. “You and Kuroro get to ride in style so you should wait for him.” Oh yeah, that’s right. I shook my head and reminded myself that Uvogin wasn’t my friend, I’m not a part of this crew. Just because Kuroro has been treating me nicely, and the crew was more fun than I anticipated didn’t mean I could lose focus of my goal.

I had only just healed from many of the injuries Kuroro had caused me, all except the bruising on my ribs had faded, and I was already allowing myself to fall for the fantasy.

“Ride in style?” I asked Uvogin once I snapped back into my innocent persona.

He grinned and waited for Kuroro to join us, only raising a brow at me being settled over Uvogin shoulders like a child.

“That’s right Kuroro prepared something special for today.” He gestured me to look forward and I spotted the large open carriage on the renewed cobblestone road, attached to beautiful black horses.

“GYPSY VANNERS!” I basically screamed and wiggled my way off of Uvogin’s shoulders to get closer to the horses I hadn’t seen for years. Gypsy vanners were indigenas to Kuruta, they were the royal horse. I had only just begun to learn to ride when it was all stolen from me. I sprinted to the beautiful beasts to marvel at them.

“They’re beautiful, were they wild?” I felt stupid the second I asked, no one had lived here for five years, of course they were wild.

“Yes and very sweet from what the builders told me,” Kuroro answered and I turned to see him looking at me with that expression again, the one I couldn’t quite place. He kept looking at me like that whenever I smiled or told a story or sometimes when I found myself dozing off on deck ever since my grand escape.

“Well yes, the Kuruta had treated them well for years,” I smiled softly when I looked back to the beasts, just wonderful. I reached out and patted one’s neck wishing I had something to give it.
“They were the royal animal since the beginning.”

“Come on, let’s get to the castle,” Kuroro wrapped an arm around me and I looked around. Citizens were beginning to disembark the ships, taking maps and trying to find their way around to whatever property they had purchased. I nodded and stepped up on the carriage, the crew getting on as well as Uvogin took the reins with a victorious smirk. I should have guessed he’d want to drive.

The buildings had been repaired, nature that had overgrown was cut back, and surprisingly they kept the tribal cut-from-stone look to the buildings, but everything was bright. Vibrant colors of blues, pink, reds, and violets painted every stone. Flags and the newly crafted kingdom symbol hung over head. The new symbol of Kuruta seemed to be a mix of Kuruta’s ship and sword and the Ryuuseigai spider and skull.

“Look!” I yelled pointing out a ivy covered fountain. “That’s where I first met my best friend as a child, our parents thought it would be best if we met outside of castle walls.” The others looked at the otherwise unimpressive founitan. I looked around as we crossed a beautifully carved marble bridge to spot the inlet where my father had given me my first sailing lesson, and I told them all.

I continued to point out landmarks that would mean nothing to anyone else: the place I tripped when I was nine, the house I spent almost everyday, the rock I crashed my first small river vessel on, everything about my life before all this was still here in a time forgotten.

The others were quiet besides a few question here or there. Kuroro was staring at me again and I tried to laugh off the sudden awkwardness. It’s not like they could have just realized that the people here had lives and we were human right?

“Kurapika” Kuroro whispered leaning into my space and I stiffened before forcing my body to relax for the show of it and leaned into him as well. “You’ll join us for dinner tonight Alright?” He looked over his crew with a callulating look. “Like a family dinner”

Everyone got excited at the prospect of a dinner all together after a month and a half on the ships, separated and eating publicly with the rest of the crew and citizens.

“Sounds fun” I confirmed. What the hell are you planning Kuroro?

He sat back with satisfied smile, and I buckled down for whatever kuroros counter attack is. I
knew he would strike back eventually but I was still feel the tingle of fear run up my spine. Tonight the game changes again.
Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

Wild carrot seed- an old form of birth control.
Prisoner sickness- what Stockholm syndrome use to be called.

The polished marble and stone of my childhood home was beautiful in the sunlight, ivy clutching basil crawled up the white walls, ever roses that bloomed for a full year looked like rubies around the courtyard. The scent of roses mixed with the lavender my mother had planted to celebrate my birth.

My heart skipped as we pulled in close to the large white oak and silver doors of the palace. The third king, Kuriku the Bright, had built this palace during the years of prosperity she created that had lasted eight generations. She was also the king that closed our borders to the outside world, horrified by the wars and conflict by the other kingdoms. I used to think she had made a mistake but after being out in the world I believe she did the right thing.

Kuroro exited the carriage first and offered his hand to me to help me down, as our game demanded and I answered in kind. Taking his hand, I allowed him to help me out of the carriage as I took in the familiar scenery.

“I’m surprised you had them keep the overgrown look of nature,” I commented. The Kuruta people had always loved nature, we built our homes between the lines as not disturb the natural order. It seems the Tyuuseigai people decided not to change that small thing.

“Yes well, Ryuuseigai has never had the opportunity to have a garden as wondrous as this,” he began as he took my arm. “So I figured there was no harm in starting good habits now.” Well it would seem Kuroro and I had one thing in common, that is an odd thing to realize. We both had a deep respect for nature.

“Thank you,” I whispered. If I’m going to die, then at the very least these people won’t scar my birth place beyond recognition.

“Shall we head inside?” He asked with a hint of excitement and I snapped myself out of my daze to remember that these were the people feasting off my people’s wealth. I can’t slip here.
“Yes let’s go,” I mumbled and walked beside him towards the heavy open doors. Maids and servants were beginning to approach the castle to begin their work and explore their new home. Excited chatter filled the sweet air and I smiled as the words of my grandfather floated through my head.

“Air like saturated honey dripping from the clouds,” I mused aloud. “Kuruta provides everything to be human, so we provide the humanity.” Kuroro gave me a funny look at the quote but I ignored him, I’m too focused on the happiness of the people as they gazed in wonder at the jewel that is Kuruta.

“That’s pretty Kurapika, is it a quote?” Paku asked me as she joined us at Kuroro’s side.

“Yes, my grandfather in his coronation speech. It became something of an anthem to my people in the years following,” I told her quietly. “Like a phrase to say we have everything we need to be kind, so be kind.”

A few of the pirates seemed put off by the phrase and we all lapsed into silence as we passed through the front entrance of the palace.

My hair whipped wildly around as I took in every familiar archway and pillar, only slight changes here and there. Like the new iron cast throne sitting where my grandfather’s used to and the twelve smaller silver thrones to the side like seats of parliament would be, each individualized to the members of the high crew. My eyes glanced over the unchanged queen’s throne, a beautifully carved piece of silver and living tree mingling together like it was only natural, uncaring of the place that I would have to sit and watch the world change without my input.

A group of maids passed us, seemingly lost and becoming a little frantic to get to wherever they were going.

“I’m sorry your majesty but do you know where the kitchens are?” The leader of the girls asked Kuroro seemingly avoiding even looking my way.

“It’s down that hall, take a right out of the dining room, and there should be a servant hallway straight to the kitchen on the left.” I told them without thinking. The girl sent me a withering glare and I almost jumped in surprise. Feeling awkward, I couldn’t stop the flow of ramblings that began to pour out of my mouth. “Paio and I use to sneak off that way to the kitchens, we would steal little pastries and try not to get caught by mama Jona.” Everyone was giving me a weird look and
coughed awkwardly and finished. “She was the head cook, and scary when we tried to take more pastries then our mothers allowed.”

“Thanks?” The maid that first asked the question took me in a sceptical tone. “Let’s go girls” she whispered to her companions and left me blushing furiously in shame.

“You really know this place like the back of your hand. huh?” Paku asked and I nodded quietly, trying to make the red in my face leave me.

Kuroro snapped his head to her as if he just realized something and an alarmed look crossed his face. He looked down at me with that alarmed look and I could see the wheels turning in his head.

“Like the back of his hand,” he muttered and that was the end of it, we continued on.

As we arrived as a group to climb the stairs, Kuroro laced his hand through mine. I jumped but didn’t pull away. “Everyone is going to explore and pick out rooms for themselves, but I have a surprise for you.”

“A surprise?” I asked in suspicion, I tended not to like Kuroro’s surprises.

“You’ll like this sweetling,” he whispered close to my ear and I tried desperately not to flinch away from him while the others were still watching. “If you’ll excuse us, we shall retire to our rooms until dinner,” Kuroro called to his crew as he pulled me up the stairs at a hurried pace, my heart was trying to crawl up my throat and dread filled me at the idea that Kuroro was going to start raping me again.

I held onto that fear as he lead me up the stairs and hallways of my childhood home, memories in every doorway about to be forever tarnished by pain and humiliation.

“Kuroro, please,” I found myself whispering, my heart trying to beat its way out of my chest. Please not here, I could tell where he was taking me. The room my father and mother had shared, my grandfather had given him the King’s chambers when his wife died even though my father would never wear the golden crown. It had been a room full of joy and happiness when I was young, the queen's chamber it was connected to had remained empty, my parents preferring to sleep together until I was born when they made it a nursery and then just my room.
“What do you want, my little sweetling?” he asked coyly refusing to stop are fast pace towards the place he would truly ruin me. “We’re still in the hallways, are you sure you want to drop your love struck act so quickly?”

“Kuroro, not that room,” I ignored his snide comment in favor of just one request. “Any room but that one please, something has to stay sacred!” My voice raised a bit but I still only spoke in the barest of whispers.

He chuckled, shaking his head like I’d made a bad joke. “The King not sleeping in the King’s chamber? Oh Kurapika, you are becoming more and more deluded.”

“Kuroro there are plenty of rooms just as nice, some that are even bigger. Kuroro please, it’s my parent’s room.” He finally stopped and sighed before turning back to me. He took my face in his hands.

“Kurapika, yet again you’re wrong,” he whispered softly, pulling me forward to meet his height and he brushed his lips against mine. “It’s my room now.” I growled throwing myself away from him and wiping my lips furiously.

“You never change,” I grumbled under my breath as he started moving again, taking my hand in his to continue us forward. “You’ll always be a sick bastard.”

He laughed but didn’t say anything more as we approached the King’s chambers. He opened the door with a flourish then bowed to me sarcastically and gestured for me to enter.

Hesitantly I stepped into the room, my first observation was how everything was different, Kuroro favorite color had made a startling comeback. The once white, cream, and sky blue room was now decked out in purple, black and the dark mahogany color of stained wood. Blackout curtains blocked out all light, cutting off the beautiful view of the city and forests that surrounded the palace.

The room was the complete opposite from the bright happy place of my childhood, now it felt stifling and haunted. I could almost hear laughter echoing off the walls in a bone chilling way.

The room was just as big as I remember with marble flooring, a black rug now covering the area around the bed, it was a gigantic bed. Of course Kuroro’s new favorite chains were attached to the foot of the bed and of course the chains couldn’t reach either the desk or the wardrobe. I would
only be able to sit and wait on the bed like a good ‘pet’.

“I noticed you were living in the Queen's chamber before, so luckily you don’t even have to move,” he hummed, leading me over to the connected door that opened into the Queen’s chamber.

“Oh, so you don’t need me to warm your bed at night?” I hissed. “I would have thought you’d be too afraid of freezing with that cold dead heart to let me have my own bed,” I snapped at him.

“Is that an invitation into your nice warm bed sweetling?” He raised an eyebrow at me, a playful smirk stretched across his ridiculously handsome face. Sometimes I catch myself thinking that if he wasn’t a phycopath I might actually like him. More so in this time of fake peace between us.

“You wish,” I growled pushing the door open to step into the room and immediately froze. The room was exactly as I left it. Although it had been cleaned and dusted everything was the same. The walls were still a brilliant blue, with yellow bursting stars and orange spiraling dragon birds painted in flight against the blues.

I was nine when my mother painted this room with me, it was such a bright spot in my memory. The laughter, the giggling, the playfulness everything about that day was joyous. I brushed my hand down one of the beautifully designed dragons, my mother had been a talented artist, it’s what my father had fallen in love with, the woman commissioned to the palace and the prince who would never be king. They were a national love story, my mother the country’s sweetheart.

“That I do,” he whispered almost soft enough to stop me from hearing. He cleared his throat and walked deeper into my room, eyeing knick knacks that had remained undisturbed since the day I snuck out all those years ago. “I figured you’d like somewhere that is just yours, your old room seemed like the perfect place,” he stated, picking up a framed jeweled cloth, the jewels were placed in such a way to create a picture of Pairo and I smiling in each others arms sitting on the king’s thrown when we were three. “I hoped you might find some semblance of happiness over the next year.”

“So that is my life expectancy?” I asked with a blank face, I knew he’d kill me eventually.

“Yes that’s right, you have a year left to live so I’m allowing you to have even the smallest of happiness before then.” He turned me back towards the bed but my mind was whirling with this new information. What Kuroro didn’t know is the prenup was serious when it spoke of a child born of Kuroro and I. When he does kill me, Netero will come and reveal the truth and in the end Kuroro will lose. “I have one last surprise,” he called pulling me from my thoughts.
He pulled the white canapé that surrounded my bed aside and my worst nightmare was revealed. Sitting on the bed was the polished shining Queen’s crown, a spiderweb of silver making a three pointed tiara encrusted on the edges in rubies, tiny silver chains dripping in diamonds connected to the base of the crown. The interlocking chains would act like a cape, creating a halo of light when sunshine hit the diamonds and refracted into colorful beams.

“I must say your people did know how to make an exquisite piece of jewelry,” he rubbed his hands over my shoulders.

“Where did you find it?” I asked with a fearful whisper. This could be a problem.

“It was in a safe down in some catacombs below the palace, my builders found it and were nice enough to clean it up for you.” The crown seemed to glare at me as my mind reached for a viable way to counter this attack Kuroro was throwing at me, and he didn’t even understand that he was attacking.

Alright I’ll have to get myself some kind of birth control, I only have to hold out for a year. Then he’ll kill me and Kuroro will have to vacate my island.

“Why don’t you try it on?” He grinned against my ear, and his hands smoothed down my arms.

“No, I’m not the Queen yet.” I made up a quick excuse, if he tried anything while I’m wearing that and I don’t have some kind of birth control yet then I’ll lose. “It would be inappropriate,” I finished, hoping he’d buy my lie.

“You’re no fun,” he scoffed. “You might as well get some sleep before dinner,” he muttered moving to leave me in peace.

I glared at the crown and the crown glared back. As the hours ticked by I had plenty of time to think of ways out of the tricky situation I had found myself in. My best hope was to somehow break the crown, and trust me I had tried but this crown wasn’t made by the gods for nothing. I had tried ripping off the chains, smashing it against the marble flooring, even using one of my fountain pens as a makeshift crowbar to tear apart the delicate looking webbing but nothing had worked!

I’ll have to see if one of the maids or the crew could get me some wild carrot seed then. I sighed and stood from the bed to continue pacing once more, irritated that I couldn’t even rip one ruby
from its place on the crown.

A knock sounded at the door and I called for them to come in while still deep in thought.

I turned and raised an eyebrow when I spotted Paku instead of Kuroro. I gave her a small smile and looked back at the crown determinedly.

“I thought you would be sleeping, we did have a rather long journey,” she started as she stepped into the room and looked around the painted walls and lovely trinkets with a small smile. “Your room is lovely.”

“Thank you,” I murmured. “I couldn’t sleep,” I continued before turning to her completely. “Paku, do you think you could do something for me?”

“I can’t help you escape Kurapika,” she answered immediately. I laughed lightly and waved my hand like it was such a silly statement.

“No, not that. I just need something and I can’t tell you why I need it.” I tried to act like I had nothing to hide. She raised a sceptical eyebrow at me, waiting for me to continue. “I need wild carrot seed,” I finally admitted.

“Wild carrot seed?” She asked slowly like I had lost my mind.

“Please, I told you I can’t tell you why but trust me, I’m not planning anything bad with it,” I begged hopefully. If she knew about the prenup she wouldn’t give it to me. I can’t explain this without explaining the crown and I know none of them would help me if they knew.

“I mean, I don’t see the harm in wild carrot seed,” she sighed before looking up at me to joke. “Just don’t go asking me for apple seeds or bitter almonds next, okay?”

I laughed hollowly. “I have no use for cyanide, Paku.” God I could use some cyanide though, I’d be gone so quick from this place.

“I’ll see what I can do, alright?” She smiled at me and motioned for me to follow her. “How much
“Do you need?”

“Enough to last me a year,” I deadpanned and she turned to look at me with a weird suspicion look.

“Okay?” She spoke softly this time and she fully turned to me. “Are you feeling alright?” The way she asked made me understand that she thought I was slowly going crazy. I guess she isn’t wrong, but the threat of pregnancy was real and I understand that the others won’t understand. They’re gonna think I’ve completely broken down.

“I’m doing just fine,” I smiled at her and took the lead towards the main dining room where I assumed they would set up their private dinners. Paku will get me my birth control and in a year from now I’ll be gone, the high crew will mourn me and hopefully turn against Kuroro, then he’ll discover I’m the winner here. Oh Kuroro, I’m going to take everything from you, now to make the people love me.

The rest of the crew was already at the table when Paku and I arrived, it hurt my heart to see Kuroro sitting in my grandfather’s chair. Laughing and talking with his crew as my family used to.

“Little spitfire!” Uvogin called when he spotted us coming through the doorway. The other pirates looked over at us as we entered and I almost shrank away under the multitude of gazes, but I held my ground and walked casually over to the chair left of Kuroro, while Paku took the right of Kuroro.

“Finally my right hand and my bride have arrived, tell me sweetling did you sleep well?” Kuroro asked me, picking up a wine glass and sipping at the scarlet drink inside.

“I couldn’t sleep,” I answered honestly as a servant girl came by and placed a plate piled high with food and filled my wine glass for me. I was so preoccupied with reading the emotions on Kuroro’s face that I barely registered the resentment and revolution on the girls face as she served me.

“Why is that?” He asked twirling his glass slowly.

“I was excited to go through my things again, that was a thoughtful gift by the way, thank you,” I murmured before looking at tonight’s offerings. My plate was messy, like whoever put it together was angry at me. I shrugged because food is food and began to cut into the nicely cooked steak and
dragged it through the mashed potatoes.

“‘You’re very welcome sweetling,’’ he smiled and finally put down the glass to pick at his own food.

Uvogin immediately called for my attention when Kuroro didn’t speak again. He launched into a story about the time he took on five ten son ships by himself and even bit through a man’s head. I grimaced but in the end decided to tell him how impressive I found it. He grinned widely at me for the compliment and Feitan took the opportunity to tell me of his most proud moments of battle. A few of the others shared stories and I lost myself in the moment and even told one of my own proud moment when my first strategy played out the way I wanted it too.

We chatted and boasted all the way through dinner, eventually the fear of Kuroro who had remained silent through it all began to uncoil. I relaxed and let myself be part of this family for the night. Maybe I could really enjoy my last year on earth?

“Those are fantastic stories,” Kuroro cut in, his voice like a knife destroying the peace that had settled over us all. “Some of our greatest battles were mentioned, well except for one,” his voice settled over the table and I noticed Paku tensing, and a sad expression overcoming Uvo’s face.

“Feitan, why don’t you tell Kurapika of the time you carefully slit out the eyes of every child that could have inherited this island?” My enter body violently jerked and I jumped back away from the table, my head whipping over to stare at Feitan in horror. All of those kids had been younger than me. “Sit down Kurapika!” Kuroro growled pulling me back into my chair. I came down hard, everything in my freezing up.

“Ya I did that,” Feitan confirmed. “Before we knew the heir we wanted had up and disappeared of course.”

“The oldest couldn't have been more than eight!” I whispered, horrified. Kuroro picked up his wine glass again and twisted it in between his fingers.

“Machi, Phinks, and Franklin, didn’t I have you three lead the charge to murder the citizens in their beds? And then you all swept the countryside looking for any survivors?” He leaned back and sipped at his glass, watching as I tensed at every word spoken. None of the pirates even had the decency to look ashamed. “Nobu, you took care of the army, chopped off their heads in the night.” Nubo coughed and straightened at being called attention to.
“Oh and Uvogin,” he called, a smirk pulling at his lips. “You were a demon that night, everything that moved you bashed the head in of. Oh and do you remember that child at center of the city as we marched towards the palace?”

“Kuroro!” Paku yelled slamming down her hand, shaking the table. My vision flickered red but I shoved it down.

“You remember him too, right Paku?” Kuroro hummed at her. “Brown hair, dark skin, yelling about protecting his King? What a little Queen he would have made!” Kuroro grinned at me as I began to sob instantly on recognizing who they were speaking of. My eyes burned red.

“Paio,” I whispered into my hand, gasping and sobbing.

“Uvogin I remember how fun it was for us all to watch you kick him into that fountain until he was nothing more than guts splattered on the pavement. That’s right, it was the fountain you showed us Kurapika.” He looked to my tear stained face and grinned at the lost, blank look I must have on my face.

“Uvo?” I looked up at him, I can’t believe I liked him.

“It’s battle Kurapika, things happen.” He tried to reach towards me but I jumped from the table, frightened and disgusted.

“Don’t you touch me!” I screamed at him. “He was a child and you’re as much of a monster as he is!” I pointed at Kuroro who looked so smug about my plans falling apart.

“Then there was Paku,” Kuroro continued and my eyes snapped to her’s, begging her to not be revealed to be a monster.

“Kuroro, stop you made your point!” she asked desperately. Obviously there was something she didn’t want me to know.

“Oh for a moment she dropped her dispassionate personality completely Kurapika, you should have been there,” he spoke directly at me as I stared at Paku. “You know she was very excited to be a mom to you, and when we didn’t find you she actually flew into a rage and began to beat your mother’s corpse. I personally theorized that she was simply mad that your mother could carry a baby to term but she could not.” He grinned at me as I gasped in horror at the image of her beating my pregnant mother’s corpse. “Quite tragic really.”

“Demons all of you” I whispered and backed away, tears dripping in the marble floorings. “None of you even care about human life do you?” I accused. “DO YOU?!”

“Kurapika,” Kuroro called as he stood from the table and moved to approach me, I stepped back, throwing up my hands.

“No! Not tonight, don’t any of you fucking touch me!” I yelled at him. “You want to rape me? Fine! You all want to pretend I’m here willingly for the next year and that you’re doing this for your people and not for your selfish ass selves? Okay, but not fucking tonight! You all just stay the hell away from me!” I was huffing and panting when my speech ended.

“Oh sweetling, you’re adorable when you’ve deluded yourself,” Kuroro laughed and grinned at me as I sobbed into my sleeve and turned to run back to my room. “Sleep well!” He called mockingly with a laugh and tossing the rest of his wine down his throat.

“Damn it Kuroro, I was having fun!” Uvogin pouted as he watched the distressed boy flee the room. Everyone watched honestly, everyone mostly held an indifference about it except for the few that had gotten to know Kurapika over the long sea journey.

“Yeah, he was kinda fun without all the spit and fire,” Nobu whined, his hair still down ever since Kurapika had complimented it being like that. “You couldn’t have let him drag out the happy bride act a little longer?”

“No Nobu, any longer and he might have grown confident enough to try another escape,” I sat back down at the table, satisfied. That had gone better than I thought it would.

“Kuroro!” Paku snapped at me, her eyes angry. “You just had to act like that? He was open, you could have charmed your way past his defenses!” Out of everyone she seemed the most upset by
the fact that Kurapika now knows exactly what kind of monsters we all are.

“Paku, you like everyone else, knows Kurapika will be dead in a year. Let’s not make this hard on ourselves by getting attached to a dying pet.” I found myself snapping at her as my mind whispered, ‘you just hate sharing him, you’re the one attached’

“I realize you feel we have to kill him, but if you tried to make him happy, he could grow you like you!” She begged hopefully.

“Kuroro,” Feitan called to me. For a moment I took everyone in and they seemed to be emulating the upset children of fighting parents. I looked to him, prompting him to speak. “I’ve induced prisoner sickness before in my torture experiments, if you want him alive I could give you some tips,” he suggested.

“And what makes you think I want him alive?” I asked with a forced chuckle.

“Because you want him,” he deadpanned. “It’s obvious, you're acting like you always do when you find treasure you want to hoard.” I say up straight and looked around the table to see everyone was giving me the same knowing look.

“I know how to induce prisoner sickness Feitan,” I sighed. “And it wouldn’t work with Kurapika, he’s too headstrong, he’d never truly fall to it” I sat back sadly and looked back to the hallway the little angel had disappeared through. “It’s disturbing that I’ve taken everything from him and yet he still fights me with every breath, I would need to take away something worse, break every wish to leave me but I have no idea what to take from him”

“Well can’t we try?” Surprisingly machi was the one to speak up. “I rather liked him”

“Ya he’s a fun kid” Uvogin nodded.

“Then enjoy the time you have left with him” I sighed and turned to eye the rather silent Paku, she looked upset but resigned, it not like any of this was old news to any of them. I had let them all know when kurapika would die and exactly what he was doing are first night of our journey too kuruta.

Kurapika has lost from the very beginning.
My eyes were red from crying all night, my face must have been pale as the wedding dress machi was fitting me into.

This was the last dress fitting, tomorrow I’d be married. Tomorrow I’d be the queen of a country I was suppose to be king of. I cringed every time machi’s fingers brushed my skin, I don’t want any of them to touch me.

“Kurapika?” Paku called and I ignored her, I don’t feel like talking to any of them. I watched her clench a fist through the reflection in the mirror before she tried again. “I got that thing you asked for, it’s in your room” I wonder is she got the wild carrot seed so fast because of guilt or actual care for me. She willing to let me die so it’s not like she cares for me.

“Okay” I answered.

“Kurapika,” she called again hopefully and even machi pauses in her sewing to wait for what she was going to say. “Sometimes humans do things, that they don’t realize are mistakes at the time” she finally said and tried to step forward. I could laugh, like killing off everyone I ever cared about, and beating my mother’s corpse was just a mistake.

“And sometime mistakes are so big to ever move past” I growled at her and turned away. I was right in the beginning, their all monsters.
Chapter 11

I sighed as I overlooked the city from my bay window, you could see moonlight dance over the calm ocean in the distance. This morning is my wedding day, Kuroro was merciless, choosing to use Kuruta traditions to further show ownership over me.

Kuruta weddings start at dawn, the bonding of two souls corresponding with the rising of the sun. Kuroro was going to make me perform the ritual rites Pairo would have lovingly done for me, now I felt sick at the thought of this morning.

“Kurapika?” Paku tapped on my door. “It’s time,” she called opening the door, holding the beautifully crafted dress with the help of Machi.

Nodding my head I began to strip, uncaring at this point. It’s not like they hadn’t seen me naked with all the fittings and being hung up on a mast, god that feels like a million years ago.

Machi and Paku took my silence in stride with solemn looks as they helped me into a cream shift, Paku began to brush my hair away from my face. A few of Machi’s personal servants came in with grim faces and what must be cases of make up.

The girls put down the cases and stepped aside, waiting for their orders.

“Alright let’s start with makeup.”

I looked like a fairy. My makeup was done expertly, my face looked like it was made of glass. Glowing white flawless skin with a touch of blush across my cheekbones. My eyelids were outlined in gold, three drops of silver under each eye with a bronze sunny glow to capture my eyes that would stay red from the eye drops until the end of the ceremony, as tradition dictates.

The dress was white with touches of sage green, silver and gold, the sleeves hung off my shoulders daintily and the back dipped down to reveal the newly touched up tattoo. Delicate folds of lace and silk flowed from the tight waist down to kiss gently across the floor and around my pointed feet. The heels were white, decorating my skin in small hanging silver chains and lace around my ankles.
Pakui had even placed a piece of lace around my thigh for my wedding night and I couldn’t even be angry about it. Embroidered cloth hugged my chest and showed off my slim collarbone. My hair had grown to my shoulders and it was now pulled back away from my face in a halo of yellow blond braids.

“You look stunning Kurapika,” Paku gasped as she turned me away from the mirror to place a veil over my head, the thin material ghosting over the braids and caressing my shoulders as it framed me in a white curtain.

“Like a lamb to the slaughter,” I mumbled numbly between dusty pink lips.

Machi and Paku had no rebuttal to that.

“Just leave me,” I hissed at them. “I need some quiet before I’m led to my death!” They looked conflicted, like they wanted to say something, before Machi took Paku by the shoulder and they left me alone.

I turned back to the mirror to scrutinize my appearance, I had always leaned towards looking more feminine but right now even I could buy that I was actually a girl. Albeit a very flat chested girl.

I ran my white, gold tipped, fingernails over my porcelain cheek. I wish I could rip the dress to shreds, scratch the makeup off my face and hide in my closet but unfortunately it’s my wedding day and I don’t even want to imagine the punishment Kuroro would think up if I ruined his plan today.

Someone knocked at the door. “I told you to leave me alone!” I yelled at the door, my teeth grinding. Can’t they just give me a moment!

“I never could curb that temper of yours,” Netero’s voice called good naturally as he opened the door.

“Netero,” I whispered as I stepped back, shame coloring my face. Here I was the adopted prince of the Hunter Empire, Crown prince of Kuruta, in a wedding dress with a tattooed back about to be given to probably the worst human alive.

“You look beautiful son,” he entered the room slowly, his hands up like I was a frightened animal.
“You’ve always been lovely but you truly look royal today.”

“Yeah, for a prisoner,” I snapped at him, crossing my arms and turning away from him. “What do you want anyway?”

“I wanted to see my son, Kurapika.” He stepped closer, clasping a hand on my shoulder but I flinched and moved away again. He seemed shocked by the action. “Are you okay?”

“Am I okay?” I gasped and shoved him away from me to stomp around the room uselessly. “Do you have any idea what that man has done to me?” I cried, trying not to actually cry, I don’t want to ruin my makeup. Or maybe I do. Who knows, I’m just the ‘crazy’ queen.

“I’ve had my suspicions, I’ve seen the way the men in my castle have looked at you for years,” he mused, brushing at his bread. “It’s why I added that insurance in the prenup so he couldn’t take your land completely.”

“You mean so you can take my land!” I screamed at him. “You know he’s going to kill me eventually Netero! You were just looking out for your own interest, it was about time you showed your true intentions for taking me that night, huh?”

“Kurapika!” He snapped at me and I flinched again, expecting to get hit. He paused and calmed himself. “What could I have done my son?” He sighed and reached to take my hand and I let him.

“You could have fought for me, I knew I was just a political piece, but I at least thought you’d fight for me,” I told him my voice getting quieter as my misery set in.

“Kurapika,” Netero pulled me to sit on the bed. “As awful as it is there is nothing I can do. Your people are gone, and you are not my heir,” he held my hand in both of his. “You are a singular person, and starting a war for you would have lost lives. I’m sorry, but your freedom isn’t worth the loss of life.”

We were quiet for a long moment as he rubbed his thumb over my palm and I took in what he said. From a political view I guess I would be very unimportant to the Hunter Empire, I wasn’t even really their prince.

I nodded mutely, it’s not like I really had anything else to say. Netero got up, leaving me alone on
the bed. “I’ll be here for you through this Kurapika. I’m sure if it’s you you’ll find a way to survive,” he walked to the door and I couldn’t hold back.

“Kuroro is going to kill me in a year,” I told him my voice sharper than steel. Netero froze, his back to me. “He told me himself.” He stayed silent and I waited, maybe for a miracle.

“I’m sorry Kurapika.” Netero didn’t turn back to me, like everyone else he was abandoning me to this fate. “I will make sure Kuruta is returned to her former glory, and that you’re buried here,” he promised me.

He moved to the door and the knot in my throat kept me from saying anymore. I guess I really am doomed.

“Oh King Netero,” I heard Kuroro’s voice from outside the hall. I snapped out of my twisted thoughts to pay attention to whatever alpha male battle was about to go down.

“Hello King Kuroro, congratulations on your wedding and relocation,” Netero replied diplomatically.

“Thank you,” Kuroro answered with the same level of diplomacy. There was a chilling silence for a few moments before Kuroro spoke again. “Well it’s time for me to collect my bride, I hope you enjoy the ceremony.”

“Oh King Kuroro,” Netero called and the shuffle of feet stopped and I waited, hoped he would do something to get me out of this. “I hope you realize the treasure you have, and I’m not speaking of the island,” the footsteps continued down the hall and I stood and brushed out my skirts. “Congratulations again, King Kuroro.”

“Of course.” Kuroro’s voice crashed over me and I realized I had moved closer to the door as I eavesdropped on them. Turning quickly, I moved to the window and tried to calm myself, the sky was just starting to lighten and the sun would be rising soon.

“Wow,” I turned to see Kuroro standing at the door with a strange look on his face, just staring at me.

“What? You’re the one that orders me to be dressed to the nines every day, my appearance
shouldn’t be a shock to you,” I griped with an exaggerated eye roll.

“What, I can’t tell my bride how beautiful he looks on our wedding day?” He asked coming closer to me. I crossed my arms, leaned against the wall, and waited for whatever crazy thing he was going to do. “Well you look ethereal this morning my sweetling, soon to be my wife.”

“Kuroro, just do whatever evil thing you are planning and let get this over with!” I sighed, the sun hasn’t even risen and I’m already exhausted.

“My aren’t you the picture of a blushing bride,” he muttered sarcastically.

“I’m sure you wouldn’t expect any less from your prisoner wife, my lord.” I matched his tone and raised an eyebrow, still waiting.

“I have a few trinkets for you,” he finally seemed to snap out of whatever spell his was in and approached me completely. “I found a few things in the royal treasury, things you might actually like.”

“Trinkets?” I rolled my eyes again “What you trying to do now Kuroro, charm me? Don’t you think it’s too late for that?” I huffed and pulled myself off the wall.

“Sweetling, you belong to me, if I want to spoil you then that what is going to happen,” he whispered and I scoffed. “This is for you,” he snapped his fingers and Shalnark entered the room with a large chest, he looked me up and down with a nod of approval. He opened the chest and I gasped when I saw the royal jewels or at least some of them, laid out all pretty on a velvet pillow.

Kuroro picked up a dainty white gold choker, designed to look like vines and red polished flowers. He gestured for me to turn and clipped the necklace on for me in an exaggerated manner.

Next he picked up matching earrings that decorated up the entirety of my ear in metallic vines and blooming flowers. He went to remove my one dangling earring I alway wore and I jerked away.

“No, not that one Kuroro,” I told him. Somewhere in my mind in knew that if Kuroro wants to take my earring, then he will.
“Don’t worry you can have it back tonight” he whispered and I screwed my eyes shut as he pulled the hook out and clipped the new earring in.

“Now for the final piece of this masterpiece.” He lovingly laid his hands on my shoulders, turned me around, and led me to the bed, sitting me down and bending down on one knee to kneel in front of me.

“To help you stand tall today, my sweetling,” he smiled up at me and grabbed one of my ankles, pulling me off balance.

“What the hell are you doing?” I gasped when he clipped a weighted cuff to my ankle. He grabbed my other leg and I tried to pull away but like always, struggling was pointless.

He didn’t reply other than a dark chuckle and clipped the other cuff around my ankle. He stood and pulled me back up on wobbling feet and five inch heels.

“Now you are perfect,” he whispered as Shalnark scoffed and left us alone. “Now let’s get married,” he grinned and prompted me to take his arm.

“Let’s get the worse day of our lives over with already,” I hissed at him and he frowned softly at me and stopped us before we left the room.

“Kurapika, remember to smile,” his hand tightened on my arm. “Because if anyone gets the slightest idea that you aren’t the happiest little bride today, there will be hell to pay tonight, got it?”

I ground my teeth and took a deep breath before forcing myself to lean into him and a smile to pull at my cheeks.

“There’s that beautiful smile.” He led me out of the room and I stumbled with the weights on my ankles, forcing me to grip onto Kuroro in a desperate manner. I must look weak walking like a newborn lamb. The metal rubbed against my skin and I think he purposely didn’t polish the metal so it would hurt me. The man must hate me as much as I hate him, he sure loves to hurt me.

The hallways were decked out and the maids bustled around, trying to get last minute details. People stopped to look at me and Kuroro as we passed, heading to the ballroom where guests were waiting to witness the lost prince marry the pirate king. Kuroro was dressed nicer than I’d ever
seen him dress, he actually looked like a king instead of a dirty pirate.

He was dressed in what looked like a general's uniform. It was dark black with purple detailing and silver buttons. A scarlet sash was draped over his shoulder and tied at his waist, his hair was slicked back to show off the tattoo on his forehead and the globe earrings he normally wears. I had to wonder if this was the new uniform design for the military.

Netero met us at the ballroom door and he bowed to Kuroro and I, we returned the bow.

“King Netero, are you going to take your seat?” Kuroro asked with a dangerous tilt to his voice.

“Yes of course, I just thought I’d see my son,” he ground out the words my son and then smiled tightly. “Before he becomes queen,” he took my hands from Kuroro and held me tightly. “You stay strong, I know if the chance ever comes you’ll be a brilliant queen with that incredible mind and big heart of yours”

“Thank you Neter-“ I stopped. “Father, thank you father.” I decided to leave Netero with something good to remember me by. Pain flashed across his face and he gave me a watery smile.

“I’ll leave you now my son, I’m excited to see the Kuruta son rise on your union,” he told me and left us, purposely ignoring Kuroro before slipping into the ballroom.

“Get over here,” Kuroro grumbled and pulled me back to my place by his side. “Smile,” he hissed in my ear, a smile on his face for the servants benefit.

I smiled twistedly at him he nodded in satisfaction and led us to the ballroom door.

“No to begin our married life.” This is it, the world is about to change for me again.
The scent of basil assaulted me the second the doors opened and string instruments began to play, the sounds dancing in the air.

The man would put basil in the flower arrangements, it was appropriate since in the language of flowers they did mean hate. The room was beautiful in the early morning light, drapes of gold embroidered cloth hung from the rafters and flowers grew from every corner. Sunflowers, _false riches_, and _forsaken_, mixed with the flowering basil leaves.

Just like I remember the wall facing the rising sun, which was just peeking over the horizon, was completely made of glass, the famed work was different now, Kuroro’s new kingdom symbol was beautifully welded into the original framework, the glass a rainbow of colors.

Everyone rose and turned to face us, whispers hushing as the new king and queen of the island entered. I spotted Queen Mito rising in her best dress near the front, Gon clasping her hand at her side, looking sad and forlorn. I couldn’t see Leorio but it would make sense that a simple guard wouldn’t be invited to the ceremony. Netero stood next to Mito who had a fallen look. My eyes caught on electric blue eyes staring at me with a curious look.

He didn’t pity me, and he barely even cared from the emotion in his eyes. I idly wondered who he was and why he was standing next to my improvised family.

Kuroro began to pull at me and I stumbled forward, having to grip onto his arm again, new Ryuuseigai citizens whispered about their clumsy queen, theorizing on my air-headedness. Gon looked around with wide eyes, confused at the state of my reputation.

We made our way to the windows, an arch of sunflowers waiting for us at the end of the aisle. The older man in vintage pirate attire stood waiting to minister the wedding. Again I wondered what his significance was.

“His name is Gyro,” Kuroro whispered to me as we walked down the aisle. “He is quite the infamous pirate, been around longer than me, he has been dedicated to finding us a new island for years.” I looked over the man suspiciously and I had to wonder if he helped pick my island to be massacred.

“I can’t believe there are more of you,” I whispered back.
“But only I get you my sweetling, and after today everyone will know it,” he replied as we reached the minister. I think my ankles were bleeding and I winced through my smile as I stumbled again and I thought my leg would break if Kuroro hadn’t caught me and pulled me close. “Don’t be falling for me yet,” he chuckled as the crowd awed.

Lord he is testing the boundaries of my acting skills right now.

“Go screw yourself,” I hissed back under my breath. Gyro raised a brow at us with a quirk of his lips.

“Would you like me to start?” He hushed are heated glare at each other.

“Yes Gyro, please start,” Kuroro told him releasing me so we could stand straight in front of Gyro. Gyro straightened his jacket and removed his wide rimmed captain’s hat.

“My lords, my ladies, and my dear citizens of Ryuuseigai,” he began with a grand sweep of his arm. “I am honored today to preside over our benevolent king’s wedding.” Oh yeah, sure benevolent, maybe in another life. “He has dedicated his life to saving our people and taking care of each and every life on this island now!” He only cares about himself!

Gyro gave Kuroro his full attention and gestured for a young boy holding a gilded crown on a velvet pillow over close to my side. “Do you Kuroro Lucifer swear on your flag that you not only take upon this crown and your betroth’s hand out of duty, but also out of love and mutual respect? Do you promise to care and listen to not only your queen, but your people as long as you may live?”

“I do,” Kuroro answered with no hesitation. Gyro’s eyes shifted to me as the little boy held the crown out to me.

“My queen, if you would do the honors.” I mentally flinched, this had been my least favorite part of the rehearsals, I would have to crown my tormenter. Kuroro sure liked to twist in the knife.

Taking a deep breath, I took up the spiked silver crown, iron and gold swirled into the workmanship and an obsidian cross at its center that glittered purple in the light of the slowly rising sun. Kuroro tipped his head at me, his eyes mocking me and I had half a mind to throw the crown onto the ground, but the pirates stationed around the room full of innocents kept my anger
I laid the crown on Kuroro’s silky black hair as he recited his well rehearsed lie. “I swear myself to you my queen, in life and death to be tied together in fair and justified rule.” I almost gagged at the idea of being tied to this monster in the afterlife.

Gyro turned to me as a different child approached Kuroro with the queen’s crown on his pillow. “Kurapika Kuruta, do you swear on your flag that you not only take upon this crown and your betroth’s hand out of duty, but also of love and mutual respect? Do you promise to care and listen to not only your king but your people as long as you may live?”

I hesitated, looking out at the crowd as they looked back with a mixed bag of reactions to this life changing moment. Kuroro was giving me a hard look when I turned back and my blood ran cold as I was suddenly expected to promise myself verbally to a demon.

“My queen?” Gyro asked with a steely tone and I took a breath, calmed my racing heart and signed my own death certificate.

“I do,” I tried to say as proudly as I could, I will not break here.

“My king if you would do the honors?” Gyro spoke to Kuroro as I kneeled down, bowing to my king and husband, Kuroro took the queen’s crown in hand. The veil of silver and diamond chains jingled in the silence and the light reflected off of it in a rainbow.

“I swear myself to you my king,” I began when I felt the cold metal graze over my exposed back. “In life and death to be tied together in fair and justified rule.” The crown fit perfectly, magically adjusting itself to my size.

I stood on shaking legs again, holding in tears and trying to fake happiness. Kuroro and I turned to face our crowd as Gyro proclaimed, “New Ryuusrigai, I give you your king and queen, you may kiss the bride!”

Kuroro pulled me close, and took my chin between a thump and forefinger, he pressed his lips against mine as bells rang, people cheered and the sun finally rose past the horizon.

“Long live the king!” One citizen shouted and the people began to chant, throwing petals over us.
as we made our way out of the ballroom just to move to a different ballroom in order to host a reception. This was going to be a long day.

The reception was a dream, placed expertly in the only ballroom with a balcony and a path into the gardens. Because the wedding took place in the morning a long table of breakfast foods sat in the far corner for guests to help themselves and enjoy at round tables placed all around the edges of the room, the center left open to dance. A band played in the corner across from the food but close enough to the open glass doors so that anyone admiring the gardens could hear.

I felt sick, too sick to pick delicately at the crepes or melon cups that were being passed around. I was well and truly trapped now, there would be no rescue party for the tyrannical king’s wife.

“Kurapika!” A light hearted voice called from the crowd, the voice pulled at my heart and I felt the need to run from Kuroro’s side and find the little boy I knew the voice came from.

“Gon!” I turned excitedly around, searching for the bed of green/black hair and amber eyes. I spotted him approaching me from behind, walking with a jittery energy only a child who wanted to run but couldn’t would have.

Ignoring every lesson in proper behavior I ever had, I leaped towards him, my single minded need to get to him winning out against my unbalanced steps. A grin swept across his face when he saw me leap and took that at his cue to drop the princely behavior.

“I missed you!” He cried out the second he was securely in my arms. Ryuuseigai citizens stopped when they witnessed their queen rub heads with the small prince, ruining my hair in the process.

“I missed you as well, Gon,” I whispered to him, my arms tight around the pure little thing. No matter what I know, I had done right by him and that’s all that matters. Every choice between me or him was already decided in my mind.

“Wife, who is this?” I cringed when Kuroro called me and gently placed Gon back in the floor.
Before I could even open my mouth, Gon was stepping forward with the most hateful glare I had ever seen on his face, he put out his hand for Kuroro to shake as his little shoulders shook with his buried rage. “I am First Prince Gon Freecs of the Whale Islands, guardian brother of prin-Queen Kurapika,” he presented his full title, only stumbling over my old title in the little speech.

“He’s my adoptive brother Kuroro, technically now your family,” I hissed out in case he got any funny ideas.

“Aw yes, Kurapika speaks lovingly about you, it’s an honor.” He took Gon’s hand and they both squeezed, sizing each other up. Gon was normally a very loving boy, he didn’t care what crimes you had committed, only that you could enlighten him on a new way of thought, but now he seemed so angry. He was enraged for me. “I was sorry to hear King Ging couldn’t attend, it’s sad that your people have only a weak regent and a child leading them.” Kuroro smiled politely, his words dripping venom.

“At least we’ve no need to kidnap just to provide for our people, Queen Mito actually knows how to rule,” a growled voice cut into the conversation. My eyes widened when Leorio stepped up behind Gon, his protective instincts for the little prince apparently killing his concern for his own life.

Kuroro dropped his hand and eyed Leorio with the same scrutiny someone would appraise a dung beetle. Kuroro looked between the knight dressed in the green and blues of a Whale Island royal guard and the look of frightened concern I was sending towards him and raised a brow. He scoffed and shook his head.

“Be done with this quickly wife, I have important dignitaries to introduce you to,” he turned with a snap. “You wouldn’t want to upset me would you?” He called as he left us.

For a single moment we were silent as the fear melted away, leaving me wary and borderline shaking. I turned to Leorio with a red hot glare.

“Are you trying to die?” I snapped at him in a hushed whisper. Looking around to make sure no one was of the wiser.

“What?!” Leorio shouted loudly in the most obnoxious voice, now I remember why we fought all the time when we first met. “I was defending Gon! I WAS DEFENDING YOU!”
I grabbed his sleeve and yanked him down to my height to wag a finger in his face. “Good defend Gon but do not get of kuroros shit list, for once listen to me and just stay out of his way Leorio.” He gave me his ‘I’m gonna do what I want’ face and I growled and yanked him down closer. “Leorio, you aren’t like me or Mito or Gon, you aren’t royalty. If you piss off Kuroro enough he could kill you easily, or he’d take out that anger on me so for once just shut up and hold in your anger.”

“So I can’t do anything to the bastard that’s been hurting you?” He hissed back. “You think I can’t see how exhausted, terrified, and worn down you are under all this fluff?”

“Yes don’t do anything, Leorio, I’m doing to best to keep you all out of his psycho-path!” I growled under my breath. “The least you could do is not antagonis the tyrant” I sighed and stepped away, looking down at Gon who’s eyes glazed over in misery. I rubbed his hair before taking his hand. “As much as I loathe it guys he is my husband now, and if I can be a buffer between him and the ones I love then I’ll do it always”

“You shouldn’t have too!” Leorio yelled at me. Him nodded along and I smiled hopelessly and pulled them both into a hug.

“I love you guys, I’m so glad I got to see you just one last time” I whispered to them. I could tell they both wanted to argue but my small sniffler and the tightening of my arms around them kept them quite.

We hugged for a moment before a clearing of a throat made me pull away. For a moment I was afraid it was one of the high crew come to drag me away but instead I found Mito waiting with a small smile.

“Oh Mito” I cried pulling at her dress in a desperate act not to cry.

“It’s okay baby, I’m here” she soothes her hands under the chains of my crown and her touch feels healing against my skin. “Kurapika listen to me now, I know how you’ve protected Gon” she whispered into my ear. “But he can’t touch him now, so if you see your chance baby go. Please run, you have suffered enough, don’t worry about us just go okay?”
“No mito, he’ll kill you, he’ll take Gon I can’t leave him” I whisper back fearfully. Gon seemed to hear us and cut in softly.

“No pika, Kuroro can’t do this to me anymore, didn’t you hear about the new law?” He asked with sad eyes.

“What? New law?” I asked curiously looking between three sets of slightly guilty eyes.

“The recognized nations got together, we were concerned that with this marriage more of the youth would be forced into arrangements by unrecognized nations” Mito explained slowly. “So we reformed the universal law so that the tying of a nation can only happen once in a generation” Mito smiled sadly. “I know it doesn’t save you but there would be no second chance for King Kuroro and ryuusaigai kurapika”

“That’s . . .” I paused trying to understand exactly what this meant for me, if Kuroro couldn’t remarry outside of his country again it meant that if I died without a child he would be doomed to be a voyaging nation with no land, even if I got away before I’m legally out of neteros protection and made it to the hunter empire I could have the marriage annulled under his protection. I’d lose my people’s land that way but I’d be free. No one would be able to help me or Kuroro could just accuse them of kidnapping me and invading, starting a war in the process and I’d never get out of the marriage but if I got away myself, I can claim asylum. “That’s wonderful Mito” I smiled genuinely.

Mito grinned at me and pulled me into one more hug, Gon hugged me at my waist and even Leorio joined in. “You’re so strong, you can do this, my love” Mito whispered.

We pulled apart and I glanced over to see Kuroro giving me a stick eye, his foot probably tapping in impatience.

“I should go but we can talk more later okay?” I smiled at them and didn’t wait for their complains. I wobbled myself through the crowds, my legs felt shaky but for the first time in months I felt real hope in me. I could slit my own throat tonight and Kuroro couldn’t touch Gon the way he has me.

I smiled politely as I past many, many well wishers on my way to Kuroro side. He raised a sceptical brow at me, sensing that I had a plan burning inside my brain. My ultimate revenge would be the day he realizes I’m the winner in this game of risk.
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

This was over due so extra long chapter for you guys!!

Kuroro pulled me to his side and leaned down to press a kiss to my temple.

“I see you had the guts to lie to me,” he hissed against my skin.

“What do you mean?” I asked, trying to keep my composure.

“I asked you if I was your first kiss, and from the look of that knight you lied to me,” he growled as he wrapped an arm around my shoulders and held the scruff of my neck. To anyone else we looked happy, almost cuddling. “Now I’ll ask you one more time, should I kill him?”

My eyes flew to see Leorio escorting Gon around the room and Kuroro’s hand on my chin brought my eyes back to his. He raised a brow at me, waiting for my answer. I shook in my shackles, my mind filled with images of Leorio being tortured to death in the most horrific of ways. The faint clinking of precious fine china caught my ears as the guests noticed our ‘intimate moment’.

In a desperate attempt to prove that Leorio was no threat to him, I smoothed my hand over his chest and around his shoulder, gently pulling him down to meet me halfway in a slow and searing kiss. “You shouldn’t lower yourself to killing a simple knight Kuroro, did you forget you’ve already won?” I asked back in the most sultry tone I could manage in this situation.

He chuckled at my desperate move and tightened his grip on my neck. “You’re right my sweetling, the worst torment would be getting a taste of you and knowing you can never taste again.” He pulled me in for another kiss and I kept the small smile on my face with painful dedication as the guests cheered for the ‘happy couple’.

We pulled away and he smirked at me, letting me gain some small space between us. “That’s my good boy,” he murmured as he began to lead me around the room again. I focused on the pain in my ankles to keep me grounded in the storm of misery currently raging in my chest. Kuroro forced me to a tall man with striking red hair and an odd suit that included a short jacket and puffy pants.
“Hisoka, I’d like to introduce my lovely wife, Kurapika Kuru- oh sorry, Lucifer,” he chuckled purposely messing with my name to remind me that even my name was a brand now.

“Wife, this is Hisoka, the captain of Ryuuseigai’s renegade pirate ship, The Joker.” He introduced us smoothly, the red head leered down at me in an unsightly manner, his eyes traveled over my exposed shoulders and the curve of my waist in a way that made me think he was imagining eating me. He licked his lips and I shivered, involuntarily leaning into Kuroro’s side. As the saying goes, ‘better the devil you know’.

“Uh, nice to meet you Captain Hisoka,” I started putting out my hand to shake his after a moment of hesitation. Hisoka took my hand and pulled, bending down to kiss lightly over the back of my hand. I shuddered feeling every one of my hairs stand on end.

“The pleasure is all mine your majesty!” The way he spoke made me feel like he was mocking me. I tried to pull my hand away but he tightened his grip and kissed at my hand again. He tried to kiss further up my arm but I painfully wrenched my hand back into my possession.

“So,” I tried to rub away the feeling of his lips in my skin, it felt much the same as the feeling of Kuroro touching me that very first night. “Is Hisoka why you have one more chair in the throne room then you have high crew members?” I asked conversationally.

Hisoka laughed along with Kuroro. “No, no sweetling,” Kuroro smothered his laughter and my cheeks reddened to the color of my eyes, how does he always make me feel like a massive idiot? “Hisoka is too much of a backstabbing prick to be part of my crew, that’s Gyro’s seat. He’s just a bit of a recluse.”

“Oh,” I paused not really know how to respond to that. Why was a backstabbing prick even invited? “Uh.” I hesitated awkwardly and waited for the two to stop staring at me and change the subject.

“Yes, Kuroro hasn’t trusted me since that little scuffle with the Ten Dons about three years ago. I’m here mostly for my fiancé, first prince of the Zoldyck,” he grinned suddenly and became determined to find the man he just spoke of.

“Illumi!” He waves over a tall man with long, dark hair, pale skin, and wide, sinister eyes. The man joined our little group and looked me over with dark eyes, it was like he was picking me apart and deciding how he would cut me down if he had the chance, but to be fair he did the same to Kuroro
and his soon-to-be husband.

Hisoka and Illumi immediately tangled up into each other’s arms and I got the feeling that these two were definitely hell’s true power couple. Kuroro was just the devil who stole my soul mercilessly and beat me down until I conceded.

“Wait, just wait,” I stepped forward slightly, forgetting my earlier fear. “You are a notorious renegade pirate and engaged to the First Prince of a country that is known for being hired out for war?” Okay I can see why they’re here now, if this man becomes king then you’d want a good standing with them.

“Yes, Illumi’s parents decided it was time to strengthen their ties with the world and now he and his brothers are all engaged.” Hisoka grinned and stepped close to me then pointed behind me. “Ones even getting cozy with your little friend!” I turned around to see the white haired boy walking determinedly behind Gon now. He seemed to be in some kind of argument with Leorio and obviously winning over the temperamental man.

“Gon is getting married? To a Zoldyck?!” I turned again to try and wrestle myself out of Kuroro’s hold so I could find out what the hell Mito was thinking! That family was literally raised to kill and lead armies.

“Not until they’re of legal age of course,” Kuroro hissed pulling me back to his side, hoping to end my struggle to leave his side.

“Oh, let’s call them over!” Hisoka began to wave at the little white haired boy and he spotted Hisoka, visibly cringing before grabbing Gon’s hand and dragging him behind him over to our group.

“Big brothers . . .” He glared at the red head. “Hisoka.”

“Aw cute! Little Kil are you still mad at me?” Hisoka cooed at the little white haired boy, apparently named Kil. Odd name.

“Are you still a fucking creep?” the boy spat with no royal decorum. I balk at his complete lack of princely mannerisms, Gon seemed to try and calm the other boy and I could hear Leorio calling for Gon somewhere in the background.
“Oh Kil,” Hisoka just laughed as his brother glared at the little prince.

“Um hello?” I called putting out my hand to the little prince. “It’s nice to meet you, I had no idea my little brother was even engaged,” I stated giving a small disapproving look towards Gon. By now Gon could tell when I’m about to lecture him on proper manners and the introductions that must be made.

“Oh sorry Pika, I wanted to tell you!” he started but stopped when I held up a hand and he gulped, his head bowing because he knew he was in trouble.

“Gon how many times must I coach you on the way you must act? If you are to be a king and apparently an ally to the Zoldycks, you need to hold yourself in a respectable manner and leave nothing for interpretation. If I hadn’t lived with you the last five years I could have thought your error as a slight against me,” I explained with a wagging finger in his face. “This is how wars start when you deal with prideful countries, I can’t be there to hold your hand through these things anymore, you have to start acting like the royal you are.”

“Well Kuroro, you’ve certainly caught a prim and proper one haven’t you?” Illumi stated, his first real contribution to the conversation. I ignored them and raised a brow at Gon, he took the hint and pulled the blue eyed boy close to him and bowed to me.

“My brother, Queen Kurapika Lucifer Of New Ryuuseigai, I’d like to introduce my fiancé Third Prince Killua Zoldyck of Zoldyck,” Gon said perfectly, Killua gave me a small bow and looked me over with interest. I kept my face perfectly blank through the introduction and didn’t react to Gon saying my new name and with ease.

“I didn’t think it was possible for anyone to control Gon before now,” Killua told me with a small smirk. Illumi glared at his brothers response, as it went against polite conversation.

“Heaven knows Mito tried!” I quipped back with a smile. Sure he wasn’t proper, but he seemed nice enough, and he spoke his mind. Anything less and he’d be running ragged after Gon and his antics.

“It’s a pleasure Queen Kurapika, Gon has had only wonderful things to say of you,” he ground out respectfully under the watchful eye of his brother. It seems Whale Island’s long history of wayward royals was going to be continued.
Kuroro squeezed my side, indicating he didn’t like being left out of the conversation. I turned to him and tried to keep up the act of loving him but I think my smile came off as a pained grimace to everyone involved when the shifting of my legs caused the metal to bite into my torn skin.

“And of course my husband Kuroro right?” I stressed with aching cheeks from all the fake smiles. Killua gave me another odd look and he nodded, putting his hand out to Kuroro.

Kuroro shook his hand lightly and exchanged his pleasantries. I shivered when I noticed Hisoka’s stare locked on me. His eyes glance at my feet hidden beneath my skirts and the spot of blood on the edge I doubt anyone would notice unless, like this creep, they were paying too much attention to me.

His smile at my obvious pain made every bone in my body freeze. His golden eyes rolled over me one last time before he called for Kuroro’s attention. Kuroro looked to him curiously and Hisoka whispered something in his ear. Kuroro laughed loudly, calling the attention of the entire room to him as he slapped Hisoka on the back.

“No way in hell Hisoka!” Kuroro continued to laugh as Hisoka joined in. They calmed and Hisoka took Illumi’s arm, bidding farewell and congratulations. I watched them leave, catching some of their conversation.

“You already have so many toys my love,” Illumi whispered to Hisoka as they walked away. “Do they not satisfy you?” He laughed.

“It was worth a shot, Kuroro is fickle and I thought I could have his scraps when he was finished, especially when the scraps are so pretty” he shot back his eyes, leering at me one last time. My heart jumped and I leaned back into Kuroro. At the very least he wouldn’t be giving me to that monster in the end.

Kuroro oddly leaned back into me, wrapping his arms securely around me. I looked up at him to see he was smiling. The expression was the same content look he’d had after the sounding incident, I tried to pull away some now that Hisoka and Illumi were gone but Kuroro tightened his grip and his smile dropped slightly.

He turned to me with a thoughtful look before he scoffed and turned away, keeping me tucked under his arm anyway.
“Well lovely to meet you Prince Killua and to get another chance to speak to you again Prince Gon, congratulations on your engagement,” he told the two small boys, obviously dismissing them. “Kurapika and I are going to chat with some other dignitaries so I guess we will see you around.” He bowed to them, taking me with him and he turned us to leave without ever giving them a chance to say goodbye.

How rude.

The day was full of congratulations and idle chatter, my ankles were complaining loudly when Kuroro finally led us to the long table where lunch was set out for us. I couldn’t eat, the speeches were making me sick. I could feel my stomach acid building in the back of my throat as people stood to talk of our relationship, comparing us to soulmates, chatting on and on about how we were made for each other.

I smiled sickly at the crowd as the high crew members stood telling the guests stories that never happened, telling them that it was love at first sight and more fairy tail nonsense. I was used to people commenting on my feminine looks and beauty but I had never resented my looks more than I did while listening to so many speech’s raving about my beauty. The only one to mention my mind was Netero, and here I was thinking I had been demoted to a dumb blonde.

At the very least I was seated and my feet could rest, how the hell do girls walk in these heels? After a torturous session of speeches it was time for the dances. Netero was called forward and he helped me out of my seat to lead me to the dance floor.

“You look like you're in pain son,” Netero whispered as we walked. Kuroro took Paku’s hand and joined us on the dance floor.

“Yes, manacles on your ankles do begin to hurt after hours of standing,” I answered back softly as he twirled me around. I stumbled and he immediately pulled me back into his arms. He supported me more and looked at me sadly.

“He's been keeping manacles on you?” He asked me, shooting a glare at Kuroro around my head, he looked back down at me with a wounded look.

“Oh no this is new, he’s a smart man. As I’ve heard so much about today, very inventive, he’s always thinking of new ways to make my life hell.” I forced a wistful tone in my voice, smile still planted, my demeanor that of a dead man in front of a firing squad, nothing left to lose.
“I can see your mind working my boy, please don’t do anything stupid,” he told me, his fingers clutching at me as if he was trying to keep me bound in this moment, a moment where I’m still breathing.

“Me? Do something stupid? Never!” I laughed in a fake manner. The time came for Kuroro and I to dance together. Our first dance and then Kuruta tradition dictates that the rest of the day I will go with my husband into the king’s chamber to have what should be our first night together. Although it didn’t start before the sun set.

Kuroro cut in just as I knew he would, honestly he let me dance with Netero longer than I thought he would.

“Thank you King Netero, I’ll take it from here,” he smiled taking my hand and pulling me firmly into his chest. Netero hummed before going to stand by Mito. Kuroro grinned down at me, the music changing to a slower, deeper theme.

“This will be our song,” he whispered into my ear softly as he began to lead me through the dance. I was awkward not only because of the heels and shackles on my feet but because I had always been the man when I learned to dance. “It’s an old song from Ryuusaigai, beautiful just like you.”

“Great,” I ground out between my teeth, trying not to let my act slip.

“You’ve been doing well, I didn’t think you were such a wonderful actor,” he laughed as he forced me to twirl. I stumbled a little but managed to spin back into his chest.

“Well I’ve got to keep the tyrant happy when he has so many hostages,” I whispered to him as he swayed us in time to the music.

He grumbled something indistinguishable and turned me again.

The dance ended with no further conversation and as the guests clapped and cheered for us, dread filled my stomach because I knew what was about to happen.

Just as I thought, Kuroro suddenly swept me up into his arms and the crowd laughed and whistled,
calling to the newly crowned king to have a wonderful night with his new bride.

“It’s time for us to head upstairs,” he called out to the party. “Enjoy the rest of the reception!” He quickly turned and carried me out of the room, not stopping when pirates and high crew members patted him on the back as he walked.

“Kuroro, I can walk,” I complained as soon as we were out of sight.

“It’s customary to carry your bride to bed,” he answered back casually. He frowned down at me for a moment. “Wrap your arms around me,” he commanded me and I glared at him.

_Wrap your legs around me_

“No, there isn’t anyone around anymore. I have no reason to act like I like you,” I hissed at him, crossing my arms. He stopped and glared back at me.

“Well I guess I’ll need to plan an execution then,” he threatened as a smirk overcame his face.

“What?” I breathed my eyes widening.

“Well you have been talking to the maids lately. Didn’t I tell you I’d kill anyone you spoke too?” He asked and I gasped, realizing I had completely forgotten about that order. In fact I had been so preoccupied with my last ruse I hadn’t even thought of Hail. “In fact I don’t think you were allowed to talk to that knight either, I’m sure I could find a way to accuse him of something and have him killed.”

“No! You can’t, leave Leorio alone!” How does he always know how to beat me?

“Then you know what I want.” His stare was heavy and I gulped before uncrossing my arms. I paused for a moment, my mind running through all my options and I realized I only had one. I wrapped my arms around his shoulders, intertwining my fingers at the base of his neck. “See, was that so hard?” He asked with a condescending tone and I looked away.

“For the rest of the night I want you to keep up the act, alright?” He began to walk again, heading
straight up the stairs and to his chambers. “Let’s pretend tonight,” he finished in a whisper and I almost didn’t believe he’d said it.

“Pretend all night?” The broken whisper escaped before I could stop it. Could I really pretend to be happy for the rest of the day and all night?

“Yes, let's be a happy couple for the night.” We finally reached the King’s chambers and the open doorway looked like a black hole, sucking in all the light and happiness. Much like Kuroro himself.

He carried me in with little effort, his hand on my exposed back, goosebumps rising and speeding up my heart rate.

He kicked the door shut and placed me on the bed. He smiled down at me before leaning down and flipping up my skirt. I gasped and pulled away on instinct only for him to catch my foot with a chuckle.

“Don’t be so jumpy, it's not like we haven’t done this before,” he smiled lovingly at me as he slipped the high heel off my foot. What is he trying to prove? He’s confusing me.

He took my other foot and slipped off that shoe as well. He held my foot and lifted it up and kissed the top of my foot.

“You have beautiful feet,” he whispered. What the hell? He stood and sat next to me on the bed with a pleased sigh then laid down flat on his back. I stayed hunched over awkwardly twirling the edges of my skirt. I stared determinedly at the blood dripping onto the floor from my ankles.

“You like books?” He suddenly asked making me jump.

“Umm?” Well that was unexpected. My mind raced trying to figure out what situation I was in, what he wanted from me. “Yes, I like books,” I finally answered.

“What genre do you like?” He asked, again something personal. Why does he suddenly care? I was silent for a long time, long enough that he began to speak again. “I myself am partial to history and sometimes mythology if I’m feeling up to it.”
“I like mythology as well, history I’ve often enjoyed if I could get my hands on it,” I answered honestly, still trying to figure out his game.

“Ah yes, you lived on an isolated island for a long time. I forgot,” he mused and suddenly sat up, I jumped again. “What’s your favorite food?” He asked brushing my hair away from my neck.

“Ah I’m not partial to anything, I’m not picky,” I answered cautiously.

We were silent for awhile, the air even felt awkward.

“Let’s play a game,” he suddenly stood and walked to the curtains, letting in the light.

“Aren’t we already playing a game?” I asked with real heat behind my words before fear struck me. Oh shit, I could kill someone with my words, what am I doing?

He chuckled slightly. “I wouldn’t call us getting to know each other a game, dear.” I breathed a sigh of relief when he didn’t get angry but when I looked up I could see the warning in his black eyes, don’t push him.

I gulped and tried for a smile. “So what game were you thinking of?” I asked in the sweetest tone I could.

He relaxed slightly and pulled a table away from the wall and grabbed a velvet bag. “I was thinking chess, you do know how to play right?”

“Netero taught me a bit when I was younger, but he refused to play with me after a while so I’m a bit rusty,” I told him honestly. I got up from the bed with a wince. “Walking in heels all day is pretty painful,” I forced a laugh quickly to explain the drop in my smile.

“Yes I suppose,” he chuckled as he set up the pieces. “If Netero refused to play you I doubt this will take long, but I’ll think of something else after to occupy our time together.” He smiled at me as I sat down. “I could teach you a thing or two if you like?”
“Sure,” I smiled back taking my pawn in the center of the board and moving it two spaces forward. “Do house rules allow that?” I asked quietly, knowing some didn’t allow the pawns first move to jump a space.

“Why not?” He grinned, before moving his opposite pawn forward. “We’ll play however you want.” God he’s way too happy right now.

“Then let’s play.”

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“Check mate,” I called, watching his baffled expression in fear of retaliation.

“You said Netero refused to play you,” he finally managed to say, looking over the board in a mix of wonder and confusion, like he was trying to pick apart every move to see where I’d won the game.

“Yes, I started beating him when I was fourteen so he stopped playing me,” I said quietly, not wanting to snap him out of his trance. “Netero is actually a sore loser,” I tried to joke.

“Let’s play again,” he suddenly stood and began to reset up the board. We had been playing for an hour already, but apparently Kuroro is also a sore loser.

He set up the board and gestured for me to move first even though he lost and he should go. I could almost laugh at the childishness in the action.

I took my knight’s pawn and moved it one space to open up my bishop to move while also leaving a space open to move my knight.

“A good opening move,” he commented lightly as he moved his queen’s pawn forward two spaces. “You never did tell me what your favorite food was.”

“I guess it would be boiled creme custard,” I paused as I remembered my mother making me the dessert, sharing with me lovingly while we giggled. “I like it with caramel dribbled on top,” I told
him as I moved my next piece. He looked up at me a bit startled and chuckled lightly.

“I didn’t take you for a sweet-eating type.” Moving his pawn forward he grinned a bit at me. “Coincidently that’s my favorite too.”

“Oh? I honestly expected you to be the endulgent type,” I told him lightly as I brought my bishop forward to the center of the board. The setting up of the board was always my favorite part, the strategy, the shows of force, the perfect setups for traps the other doesn’t see until it’s too late.

“I guess I am a bit, tell me why do you like it?” He smiles easily at me, taking his turn without looking at the board. He trying to distract me, not an original strategy but an effective one, on someone else maybe.

“It was the first thing I ever learned to make, my mom and I used to sneak into the kitchens to make it together.” I smiled sadly as the happy memory flashed through my head, I could never go back to that time. Two hours passed with Kuroro asking me personal questions as we slowly set up are own traps for each other. I answered each with a growing confidence in the situation, if Kuroro wasn’t going to immediately force me into the bed and torment me then who was I to stop him? It’s not like I could make my situation worse by telling him these little things anyway.

“Check,” I called as I moved my remaining bishop into position, my trap was set and Kuroro didn’t seem to see it as he moved his queen to take the bishop. With a confident smile, I took the queen with my knight, trapping his king with nowhere to go, placing the final nail in the coffin. “Check mate.”

Kuroro again looked baffled, up till this moment I had been running from him which pulled him into a false sense of security. Without this trap, he would have won in only three moves but strategy was something I excelled at, and apparently my view of the board was better than Kuroro’s.

“How in the. . .” He trailed off as he got up to look down at the board in complete confusion. I got the feeling he hasn’t ever lost before and definitely not twice in a row. “But. . .” He stammered out before glaring down at his king like it was the object’s fault that I was better at the game. He can’t use threats in chess, he can’t hold the pawns’ lives over me. This was pure and apparently I out maneuvered him when I take that power from him.

“Maybe we should stop?” I tried, feeling a change in the energy of the room, should I let him win?
“No, we’ll play again,” he demanded and began to set the board. Still he took black as if I hadn’t beaten him. He was a good player but he rushed at the end, stopped playing ten moves ahead when he saw his goal, that’s his undoing. He gestured for me to move and this time I moved my knight first, placing it in front of my bishop’s pawn instead of behind like our second round. “We’ve been having trouble with our plan for our military since we only have pirates, what would you do sweetling?” I jumped at the question, excitement running through me. I knew he is only trying to distract me, but the possibility to get my ideas for ruling out was too tempting an offer.

“Well,” I began, as we played I adamantly talked of my ideas. We started with military and Kuroro asked questions here and there as we moved on to schools, emergency protocols, and environmental protections. The game lasted three hours as I barely paid it any heed, going easy on him this time. I was almost sorry to announce check in three moves as I knew it would mark the end to his letting me discuss royal affairs. He sat back with a frustrated expression.

“It seems I’ve been thoroughly beaten,” he mused with a hint of anger in his voice.

“We could play again?” I suggested hoping we could continue the conversation since we never got to property divisions, but he shook his head.

“No, I think you’ve proven your superiority in chess.” He forced a chuckle as he stood to gather the pieces back into the velvet bag. “Although I believe I deserve something after being crushed in my favorite game,” he grinned suddenly. I froze, the creeping fear of endless rape and tears sliding over my shaking nerves.

I looked up at him, waiting for whatever commands were coming.

“How about a massage?” He smirked as he walked to the bed and sat with his back facing me and began to strip his shirt. “Rub my shoulders will you?”

Befuddled and nervous, I stood with no further comment and approached him from behind. My stomach growled lowly, only audible to me but it forced me to remember I had skipped both breakfast and lunch. My fingers quivered as I stepped up behind him. I paused with my hands raised, I didn’t want to touch him.

“Come now, nervous jitters only get you so far,” he called lightly but I heard the warning in his voice. A nervous bride has outgrown its charm.
I breathed out a small calming breath and laid my hands over his shoulders. He relaxed and let out a long sigh as he relaxed back into me. Finally I could relax the fake smile on my face and glare at the monster I was now married too.

“A little harder dear,” he murmured in a relaxed tone. I bit my tongue, biting back any remark I might yell at him and pushed my fingers into the muscles of his shoulders. The tension slowly slipped out of him as I worked knots out. This close to him with my hands right next to his vulnerable neck, thoughts began to swim through my head. Thoughts of grabbing his head and snapping it or plunging a knife into his jugular.

It would be so easy to just end him with one strong twist, but reality was a brutal force. If I killed Kuroro on our wedding night I’d be enemy number one to the Ryuuseigai people and I’d be at the mercy of eleven people who mostly hate me. Kuroro is a nightmare but at the very least I only have one tormentor right now. Kuroro knows how vulnerable his position is, and he went into it willingly, this was a show of power after his defeat in chess.

“That’s perfect,” he whispered to me, his eyes slipping closed and I could see his content smile as he head fell back. I glared at his relaxed face as he smiled up at me. His eyes opened and I quickly schooled my face into a more happy look. “You are perfection itself,” he grinned at me as he suddenly pulled my head down and gave me a surprise peck on the lips.

He laughed at my baffled expression, suddenly catching me by my armpits and rolling us over. I squealed and he chuckled as he ended up on top of me on the bed, propped up on his arm, he smiled in a sappy sickly way.

“The sun is setting,” I gulped as he looked down at me with an intense stare.

“Yes it is,” he whispered back, somehow his face getting closer to mine.

“We should watch it,” I tried again to escape the moment. “It is our first sunset as husband and wife.” I hoped he’d take my bait, in no way do I want to share some special giddy, playful kiss with him from some deranged fantasy of his.

“Yes, that sounds lovely.” He suddenly stood, taking me with him as he pulled me to the balcony, I felt like a child’s favorite doll. I’m pushed and pulled by a reckless child, just waiting for the day when that child finally grows bored of me and leaves me alone.
He opened the balcony door and led me through into the warm evening air. He pulled me in front of him and wrapped his arms around my waist, I was forced to lean my back against his bare chest.

“Beautiful,” he murmured in my exposed ear and I wrinkled my nose in disgust. I wish I could just push him from the balcony in front of the celebrating people below. The streets were packed with the people who couldn’t be at the wedding partying in the streets, cheering for their newly married king.

I yelped when Kuroro’s hands started to wander over my hips, his lips suckling at my neck, pushing aside the chains of my crown to get better access to my neck.

“Ah!” I gasped as his hands began to gently pull at my dress. “Kuroro! People could see!” I tried to struggle out of his grip but he tightened his arms around me.

“Just watch the sunset my love” he whisper as he pulled at the laces at the small of my back. I jumped nervously and looked over the people. We were pretty high up and no one seemed to notice us but I still didn’t want him to strip me naked in front of everyone.

“But Kuroro-” I tried again but he cut me off.

“Be quiet and they won’t see a thing,” he chuckled as he finally pulled the last of the lacing loose.

He licked up my neck to my ear and gave it a nibble then pulled me closer and my eyes widened when I felt just how excited he was.

I watched the sunset, squirming as he pulled down my dress exposing my chest to the world, his fingers pulled and rubbed at me nipples. I tried to hold my breath and simply take the torment.

A harsh nip to my neck made me gasp, I could feel his smile against my skin. I shivered involuntarily as the sun began to fade behind the waves, I wish I was drowning in those waves.

I whimpered when his nails lightly brushed down my chest, over my stomach and pushed at the bundled cloth around my waist. The last of the light was fading when the dress was dropped around my ankles, Kuroro spun me around and captured my lips in a searing kiss. His tongue immediately took up shelter in my mouth as he yanked me all the closer and began to grind his clothed pelvis against my unprotected skin.
I did my best to pretend, to forget, for the sake of Leorio and the maids who didn’t deserve Kuroro’s wrath, but I could feel myself slipping as he fondled my naked body in front of his entire kingdom like some archaic claiming ritual.

“Let’s go inside,” he broke the kiss to whisper to me. I gulped, lowering my head to nod. This is all I could do at the moment, take his hand and be led to bed. A sheep for the slaughter. It didn’t matter that I was a living breathing person, that’s what everyone was treating me as.

Kuroro led me to the bed and crawled on first after stripping himself of his pants, deliberately keeping eye contact with me to be sure I watched the show. I noticed the plates of food that should be our dinner set up on the table, again I remembered how hungry I was.

“Wife,” he suddenly called and my heart leaped. “Come here, we can eat later.” I looked to him on the bed, he was laying on his back, his arms behind his head and his member standing at attention.

I felt awkward as I let go of my hope for food and got into the bed with him, my only clothing the crown that could significantly hurt my chances at winning this game we were playing. I moved to remove the crown, hoping he wouldn’t say anything about it.

“No leave it on,” he commanded and my entire being froze. “I want to look up at my queen while you ride me.” He grinned, unashamed by the blunt statement.

“Ri-ride you?” I cursed the nervous stutter as I practically vibrated in fear and apprehension.

“That’s right, I’m always in control in our bed,” he mused as he reached for me. I barely kept myself from jumping off the bed, that certainly wouldn’t go over well. “I thought you’d like the change.” His grin was cruel and I realized this was yet another show of power. He took my arm and dragged me on top of him and straightened my crown on my head.

I flushed a deep scarlet color all the way up to my ears when I found myself basically on his lap, my knees on either side of his hips and his member bumping against mine, the most mortifying thing was how hard I was myself. I will never get over my own body’s betrayal even if I know that it’s just a natural reaction.

He lay back down and raised a brow at me, that brow screaming at me to get a move on.
“I don’t-“ I gulped again trying to clear the terror from my throat. “I don’t know how,” I admitted my blush only growing darker, matching the alighted color of my eyes, still red from the tonic they’d put in them before the ceremony.

He smiled sympathetically, reaching up to brush my cheek in a caring gesture. “You’re adorable,” he chuckled. “You’re flushed all the way to your chest, it’s alright to be nervous this is our first night as a true king and queen.” I knew he knew that I wasn’t nervous, I was petrified of him, but for some reason he was insistent on this sham. Who was I to question a crazy man?

“Just lift yourself up and lower yourself onto me, you’ll do fine,” he explained to me as I tried my damndest not to flinch away from his touch.

With unsteadily movement I placed my hands on his stomach and lifted my body up, spreading my legs as I did. I almost slipped and impaled myself on him when he suddenly spoke.

“You’ll want to stretch yourself out a bit if you don’t want to tear, it has been awhile,” he chuckled and I wished desperately for the oils that would make this easier. Better yet, I wished for him to just disappear.

I took a calming breath and balanced myself on my spread knees and reached back to my entrance hesitantly. I kept my head down, not wanting to look at him as I was forced to shred the last piece of my pride.

I couldn’t hold in the small flinch when his hands were suddenly touching my face, directing me to look at him right as my first finger sunk into me.

I whimpered pathetically while he grinned maliciously at me. “I forgot to let you know earlier that I want not one tear tonight, understand?” I nodded immediately as he slipped back into his happy groom persona. “Good boy.”

I gasped as I pushed another finger into my opening and he took the opportunity to shove a finger into my mouth, his other hand playing with my nipple. A moaned slipped out of my mouth around his wet fingers as I brushed that secret place inside me. He kept eye contact as I fucked myself open on his lap. We had barely started and it all felt like too much already. I felt full and ready to fall into a panic attack at just the thought of the lengths Kuroro would push me tonight.
It was one thing to have him take me, but to force me to give myself up seemed the ultimate torment.

“That’s good, you’re doing so good for me,” he whispered encouragements to me as I scissored myself, desperate to at the very make this easy on my body.

His fingers massaged my tongue and I gagged around them as he pushed them in, matching the pace of my own fingers in my entrance. My nipple felt raw as he rubbed it to attention, pinching and pulling on it. He lifted himself up enough to take it in his mouth, swirling his tongue around it as he kept brutal eye contact with me. His fingers picked up the pace, assaulting my mouth and his hand took mine to force me to match the speed.

I gasped and writhed against him, somehow this felt more invasive than any other time. His mouth left my nipple with a satisfied pop and he laid back again taking my hand from my opening and taking my hips to guide me to his erect shaft.

I hoped he would just thrust up into me and be done with it, but his hands left my body and I knew he was going to make me do it.

I steeled myself to the task at hand and tried to slow down the world spinning off its axis around me. With a determination not to throw up all over his chest, I began to lower myself into him. I managed to hold in my gag at the first touch of his shaft against my burning hole but had to take a shaking breath to begin to impale myself on it.

I hissed at the intrusion and realized I was already sweating from the brief fiddling we had done. My skin felt too hot, and I couldn’t seem to breathe properly.

For a moment I let myself hesitate, I was so close, too close to a break down. I needed to remind myself exactly why I was playing this game.

I am doing this for Leorio’s life, and the lives of the maids I had put in danger. If I must be a sheep for the slaughter then I will be the last sheep of this slaughter. It may be misguided but maybe this is just my fate, to be the barrier between Kuroro and all the good people of this world. If I can save these people tonight my sacrifice might just be worth it.

With my resolve stabilizing in my mind I took a deep breath, relaxed as much as I could in this situation and began to press myself down onto him again.
With harsh breaths coming too frequently to be normal, I managed to push myself as far as halfway onto him. I stopped, feeling a sob building up in my chest, I took the moment to smother it.

“That’s right, you're almost there,” he whispered to me. I squeezed my eyes shut and dug my fingernails into the tender flesh of his stomach but he didn’t seem to mind it, I think he likes it. “Only a little more my love, just a little more,” he sounded breathless, his voice taking on an airy quality.

Slowly I started pressing down again, wishing this could just be done with already. “God your so tight,” he exclaimed as in a moment of impatience, his hips snapped up and I cried out in sudden pain. My eyes flew open and my head snapped back, my back arching and I was thankful that he didn’t just start thrusting up into me, only buried himself deep inside me and settled back down with a hum of pleasure.

The sob came rearing back with a vengeance at the sickening pain writhed inside me with a grudge. I tried to push it down and physically had to curl my back and bury my head in his chest, my hands now clutching the blankets as I held onto the sob, biting it back so painfully my rib cage shuddered.

“Shh, I know I know,” he whispered petting my hair, pulling it free from its braids in another confusing caring gesture. “It’s so painful, I know, but the hard part is over,” he continued as my shoulders jumped up and down, shaking fiercely. I had to squeeze my eyes shut so hard I was afraid my eyes would pop out of my skull.

When the pain eased and my breathing calmed to the heavy pant it was before, I raised myself up again and looked down at the villain who had turned me into a captive casualty. Once again he was looking at me with that possessive, intense stare he gave me and the rest of his treasures and I almost cried again.

With a shuddering breath, I placed my hands on his stomach again and raised myself with a hiss, my vision blacking out for a moment when his shaft rubbed against that bundle of nerves again. This position seemed to be made to rub against it constantly.

I fell back into him at full force when his hand clasped around my own leaking member. I gasped, my eyes flying open to meet his yet again. For some reason I couldn’t look away from the look in those black eyes.
His grip was light, teasing me, only moving when I did and eventually I found a rhythm. I bounced on his lap, gasps and moans finding their way out of me at every movement.

There was no urgency, no desperation in the actions, somehow it made it more intimate. He watched every lustful look on my face, listened to every moan at his leisure. When he’s had enough and he was close to climax he suddenly hiked us up the bed and latched onto my ignored nipple with his month again. His hips began to move at an unforgiving pace as I cried out in a feeling I couldn’t even decipher anymore.

His hand gripped my member harder and he hastened his pace there too, trying to push me over the edge. The chains clinked in the darkness, accompanied by our haggard breaths in a symphony of carnal desires.

He growled lowly as his fingers crushed my hip bones, forcing me up and down on him. “Oh Kurapika,” he moaned, his nails drawing blood. “Tell me you love it, that you love me.” The world went spinning into the sun and I felt everything breaking as his hips continued to slap against my thighs. I felt at a loss of what to do, I could barely comprehend what he’d just asked of me.

“Now!” He growled, his pace getting faster and he slammed me down with a force great enough to break me. I gasped in shock, a bolt of both pleasure and pain vibrated up my spine.

In a moment of desperation I did as he commanded. “I-I love it,” I cried, the pressure in my chest building and I was almost unable to hold back my tears anymore. “I-I-I lo-love you!” I screamed, needing to pacify the beast I had married. It seemed to push him over the edge as he latched onto my throat and bit into my skin while pressing his thumb into my foreskin.

“Ah!” I suddenly cried as my body violently shook, my toes curled and my knees went weak and I covered his hand in white cum. He roared, partially in triumph but mostly in climax. His hips didn’t stop as he fucked me through his orgasm, his seed spilling into me and I couldn’t hold on anymore.

My throat quivered around my whimper and a solitary tear rolled down my cheek.

His happy smile melted away, giving way to a vicious snarl. With his dick still buried inside me, he flipped us over in the bed violently.

I yelped in pain and looked up at him, looking for anyway to take back that one tear.
“How hard is it to follow one god damn order?” He growled at me his face twisted in the darkness.

“I’m so-sorry,” I tried, feeling the usual tremor of fear run through me. “I didn’t mean to, can’t we just pretend it was a happy tear?” I suggested. Hopefully he could go with that, I don’t want to be the reason another person dies.

“No, you’ve ruined it,” he sighed, his face dropping back in the collected mask he normally wore. I was left so cold at his words, he almost seemed disappointed.

Without warning his hips began to move again, I gasped and shoved at his chest, How in the hell is he still hard?

“Kuroro please we just-“ I stopped not wanting to say we’d made love but saying the truth would only make the situation worse. “-I’m sore!” I finished, figuring he could fill in the blank himself.

“Well I’m hard and you’re my wife. Would you like to stop and make your punishment worse?” He smiled condescendingly at me and I drew back, he immediately began to attack my sore neck again.

“Punishment?” I asked, hoping that the tear wouldn’t be used against Leorio or the maids was the best I could do.

“That’s right; you disobey, you’re punished. Have you forgotten already?” I shivered when he suckled on the skin behind my ear. “Now I’m gonna give you a choice, seeing as it it our wedding night.” He chuckled as he slammed particularly hard into me and I cried out in pain. “I want you to choose who dies my pet.”

“What?” I yelled again, trying to push away from him. “No you can’t do that! I won’t!”

“Then I guess I’ll kill them all,” he told me with a shrug. My eyes flared red, flashing around the darkness of the room.

My mind raced a million miles a minute and finally I decided to draw my trump card.
“I’ll kill myself” I snapped at him, lifting my chin in pride. Well the most pride I could muster with him inside of me.

His movements froze, which I expected. It was the hard slap across my face that almost broke my neck that I didn’t fully fathom.

“I think we know what will happen if you do that, hm?” He growled at me as he yanked my face back to face him. “If you dare do something so stupid. I will take that little friend of yours and-“

“You can’t marry him anymore, Kuroro,” I cut him off with a commanding tone I hadn’t been able to use in awhile. “I know about the new law! Ah!” I gasped at the end as he began to thrust into my with vigor.

“Me not being able to marry him doesn’t put him out of my reach, pet,” he spat the name at me and he grinned at my baffled expression. “If you kill yourself little pet, then I will dedicate my life to hunting down everyone you’ve ever cared about, starting with cute little Gon.”

“You wouldn’t dare!” I hissed at him, but in all honesty I knew he would. In response he thrust into me, aiming right at the bundle of nerves inside me. My overstimulated body arched and I released a moan that was almost a scream, for a moment I couldn’t even breathe.

“Are you sure about that?” He licked the tear trail up my cheek and over my screwed shut eyelid. “So are you going to choose, or should I plan an execution for, hmm let’s see, 38 people?”

I gasped as I realized the absurd amount of people he was willing to kill in order to make me submit. I stayed quiet, my entire being empty and cold.

“Come now, I’ll make this easy. The knight or one of the maids?” He grinned down at me, waiting for me to choose who was going to die.

As much as I didn’t want to send a random maid to her death, the thought of Leorio’s dying scream was too much to bare.

“Please don’t make me choose,” I finally begged him. If Kuroro chooses then he’s the monster,
but if I choose then I’ll be sending a part of my soul to hell.

“Fine,” he snapped his hips slapping into mine and I gasped, grabbing into his shoulders and digging my nails into him. “The knight then,” he said with finality.

My eyes flew open and I screamed in orgasm. “No!” I yelled over and over as he continued to move inside me.

“THEN CHOOSE!” He roared at me as he finally came, for the second time spilling his seed.

“A maid!” I broke down in tears, heavy sobs racking my chest. I threw my arms over my eyes and turned my upper body away from him and just cried. Finally he pulled out of me and I curled my body up, tucking my knees into my chest as my sobs grew in volume.

It only got worse when I realized the crown wasn’t coming off, it had attached to me and it would only come off when I was pregnant. My entire body shuddered with each gasping breath. I felt like I was being suffocated, like my mouth was full of cotton but that might be because all the liquid in my body was pouring out of my eyes.

“Shh,” Kuroro whispered above me, petting my hair. I peeked up at him to see his sickly content smile. “Calm down, that’s a good boy, you’ve been a good boy,” he cooed down at me.

“Leave me alone,” I begged between sobs. He tsked at me, pulling my leg away from my chest and back onto the other side of his hip.

“Leave you alone? We’re not finished are we?” He asked as he pulled my arms away from my face as I sniffled pitifully.

“You’re not done yet!” I yelled at him, sick to death of him touching me. Using me for his pleasure, please just let us be done with this.

“Not even close.” He laughed cruelly at my crying face. “Let’s go another round, eh?”
My vision was swimming when I woke up, everything was fuzzy and unbalanced. Honestly I felt half dead already. My chest felt heavy and empty all at once, my entire being ached.

Looking down at myself, I felt nothing as I took in the many bruises, hickies and bite marks. My neck was just one gory mess of a forming scab.

The light shining into the empty room was a mockery of happiness that brutally stabbed at my eyes. The god of light probably hated me now since I had sent an innocent girl to her death.

Yet guiltily I was relieved it wasn’t Leorio, I know it terrible but how could I choose a Ryuuseigan over kind, loving, gallant Leorio? How innocent can they be anyway?

I loathe myself for the hatred, self pity, and selfishness that was beginning to consume me. I could almost feel my identity slipping away, revealing a creature that could only think of its own survival. I’m suppose to protect the people I love and the innocents I can see in front of me but more and more I almost find myself wishing for their deaths for being a reason why I’m in this hell hole.

What do I do with myself when Kuroro finally hollows me out? I don’t believe I’ll even be considered human then.

I tried to pull myself up but my vision blurred until I was almost blind and a sharp pain shot up from my rumbling stomach. I fell back with a pained hiss and just stayed there, wallowing in self pity.

My legs had felt numb, my ankles are probably infected and Kuroro couldn’t even bother to take the shackles off when he left me alone in his bed. My hips refused to take any of my weight after a night of being stressed to the limit, I didn’t know it was possible to ruin a body with sex.

As I looked at the familiar ceiling, running my dry swollen tongue over my teeth, I seriously contemplated biting it off. Netero would probably protect Gon, right? It wouldn’t be my fault if a monster was released to do what monsters do, right?
Kuroro probably wouldn’t be back for ages, I’d bleed out after only a few minutes and I’d be free. I pushed my tongue forward, past my teeth and pressed down gently, testing the pressure. I could do it, I would be gone and Kuroro could live the rest of his life knowing he’d beaten the life out of his one hope for saving the people he was so willing to treat as pawns. If I only just bite a little harder. I can do it, I can control my own life. He’s taken every power away from me but with just one bite I would take it all back. So what if he goes on a killing spree? It shouldn’t be my fate to chain down the demon, why must I take care of everyone? I’m going to do it. I’ll be free, I deserve that much.

A sharp knock at the door interrupted my moment and the energy washed out of me. I suddenly felt so tired and broken, more than ever before. What the hell am I doing?

“Uh. . Come in?” I called, my throat drier than I thought. The few words making me cough. The door opened and a stone faced girl walked in with a silver tray filled to the brim with food. My mouth watered at the sight and my stomach growled loud enough to start an earthquake. She determinedly refused to look at me as she walked briskly to the table and sat the food down with a stiff, “Good morning.” I didn’t say anything as she stepped back from the table and turned to me.

We stared in silence as I held to covers up to my chin and waited for her to leave. She raised a brow at me before her chest swelled and she dropped her entire respectful demeanor.

“Okay, I get you’re not happy or something, but like it or not you’re my queen now and I’m your personal maid,” she stated and my eyes widened, personal maid? I can’t have a personal maid, how do I avoid talking to her? “So, if you drop the whole bratty-not-talking-thing then I’ll be civil as well and maybe we can be friends one day okay?” She gave me the smallest of strained smiles and I remained quiet, trying to think my way out of this.

I tried for a smile as well as I sat up, keeping the covers over my bruises and bites. I nodded once I got myself situated. She huffed and rolled her eyes.

“You know what? No!” She stomped her way over to me. “I am not leaving this room until you and me are on speaking terms and you stop looking at me like that!” I tried to back away, clutching the blanket to my naked skin. She grabbed the sheets and a tug-of-war began.
She was strong and had better leverage than me, within a minute she ripped the blanket off of me. I squeezed my eyes shut and waited for her reaction to my abused body.

She screamed suddenly and I cringed at the expected result of this encounter.

“Oh my god you’re naked! I’m so sorry!” She apologized suddenly and my eyes popped open to see her turning around with an embarrassed flush.

She continued to babble apologies as I scrambled for anything to cover the damage Kuroro had caused last night before she put it together.

“What the hell . . .” She breathed, still turned away from me. I could see her picturing the brief glimpse of me she had seen and was picking out what was wrong.

She spun around with a boundless confidence and grabbed my arm, her brow furrowing when I flinched away from her. She pulled me close to her and I cried out in panic but she insisted on taking my face gently in her soft hands and study me.

“What happened. . . How. . . ? Oh god your face, are you okay?” She stuttered and reached for a question before settling on the one she deemed most important. Her eyes fell on my injured ankles with the heavy shackles, her eyes widened as she took in the amount of blood and puss spread on the sheets. “Oh god,” she began to chant.

“How long have these. . .?” She trailed off slightly to wipe at the growing wetness in her eyes. “Who did this to you?” She suddenly asked and I was there to witness the full glory of realization slide over her features. It could only be Kuroro, there was no way that Kuroro couldn’t have seen these last night, no way he didn’t approve.

She met my frightened eyes and we shared a moment of complete and open understanding and then the door slammed shut.

“Kurapika.” My eyes snapped to the figure standing behind her. We both jumped and she spun around, instinctively stepping in front of me like a shield.

“How’s your majesty,” she growled as she took in Kuroro, blocking my view of him but I got a glimpse of Shalnark standing by the room with a dark look. “I’ve never once thought bad of you,” she began,
her voice angry and harsh. “But what the hell have you been doing to him?!”

Silence fell in the room and Kuroro tried to step around her to get a look at me but she bravely stepped to block his view of me yet again.

“Can’t you tell? I punished him since he yet again disobeyed me.” His voice held an amused tint but I could tell he was becoming annoyed with her.

“Punished?!” Her voice was a hair’s breadth from a scream. “This is torture! He looks like you have beat him endlessly! He saved our people, how could you treat him like this?!”

“How do you think I got him to save our people? Did you think he wanted to be here, with people that has shown him nothing but animosity since the moment he walked off the boat?” he mused lightly and Shalnark chuckled from behind them.

“Not to mention we did slaughter his people, if we didn’t kidnap him we’d be under water now,” Shalnark told the room and I saw the girl tense up.

“You mean I’ve been living, gossiping, and walking the halls of the place where you massacred a country all while I talked bad about a boy you’ve been beating and ra-rapeing?!” She bent over and seemed to gag. “That’s sick, this is sick!” She yelled at Kuroro.

“Kuroro what are you doing?” I finally asked, confused on why he’d just explain everything to her. He was the master of lies, couldn’t he just talk me out of this again?

“Did you forget Kurapika?” He sidestepped the maid quickly, shoving her aside and stepping up to the bed. “For crying last night, a maid or your knight was going to die.” He leaned down and grinned at me, glancing at the fallen maid who was staring in shock at the man she used to believe in. “You chose the maid.”

“God, please stop killing people!” I croaked at him.

“You made him choose?” She whispered in horror, completely ignoring the fact that Kuroro just revealed he was going to kill her on my order. “You’re sick!” She spun around suddenly and dropped to her knees to take my hands on the edge of the bed.
“Kurapika,” she called in a watery voice, and Kuroro let her with an amused smirk. “I’m so sorry.” My eyes widened and watered as I gripped her hands back. This Ryuuseigan was apologizing to me, when just a few minutes ago I was trying to convince myself she basically deserved this. “You don’t deserve this and I wish my king didn’t abuse you so, please stay strong, okay?”

“I’m sorry,” I whispered on repeat as Shalnark calmly walked over to the tray of food.

“It’s okay, this isn’t your fault,” she whispered to me and it only made the tears come worse. I sniffled and held her hand tighter in my clammy hands. “You didn’t do this.”

“I did, I chose you, I’m so sorry!” I let my head fall against her hands as Shalnark threw the silver tray on the ground. The clatter of breaking china was accompanied by a loud shout.

“POISON! Guards come quick, she’s attacking the queen!” He screamed and the thunder of boots rushing down the halls could be heard from outside. The maid I didn’t know the name of sobbed softly and squeezed my hands back.

“My lord, you must protect the queen!” Shalnark shouted as Kuroro slowly unsheathed a sword at his side.

“It’s okay,” she said her last words with a shaking smile as Kuroro thrust the sword through her chest. Her breath left her with a wheeze, her eyes almost popping out of her head. Her face dropped and the bloody tip of the sword protruded out of her chest, almost touching me. Blood splattered on my face as for yet another time, I watched someone die and couldn’t do a damn thing about it.

The door flew open on its hinges, smacking the walls with a bang just as I began to scream. I wailed loudly as her fingers went slack in my grip and Kuroro removed his sword to quickly snap into the character of a loving king. The sword clattered to the ground as he quickly took the sheet and covered my bruised body and folded me up in his arms.

“Oh my love, did she hurt you?” He called loudly so the room could see him being concerned for me. “Oh, your beautiful face, does it hurt a lot?” His voice was laced with concern but I could hear the underlining of mirth in his voice.

“You killed her,” I yelled struggling in his arms, only for him to tighten his grip and coo at me.
“I’m so sorry you had to see that.” He hugged me into his chest as the guards snapped out of their shock and began to gather the dead body of the maid and ask Kuroro if I was alright. “Were you scared my darling?” He asked one last time, not even waiting for a reply before he began to yell orders at his guards.

“Too many times has my wife been the target of assassination! From now on I will be in charge of his meals, and he isn’t to go anywhere without supervision!” He commanded and his guards nodded along with Shalnark who looked immensely satisfied with his work.

“Yes my lord, we should have watched over the Queen better.” they bowed, ashamed with themselves. Honestly they were doing pretty good considering they used to be pirates.

“No I’m to blame,” Kuroro bowed his own head and I could spy the hideous smirk playing on his lips. “I was so busy with trying to arrange peace treaties and keeping you all safe that I wasn’t here for him in his hour of need.” The guards and more importantly the maids outside the door mooned over Kuroro. Whispers began to rise outside about the care and consideration of the king. I withdrew into myself, leaving the loud atmosphere of the room.

“I hate you,” I whispered as he buried my head into his chest and began to rock me like I had just gone through something traumatic, every day with him was something traumatic. The saddest part of this was I was beginning to become numb to death.

What will become of me?

As soon as the guards left, the maids promised to clean up as soon as Kuroro calmed me down, and Shalnark had left the room with a skip in his step Kuroro began to laugh. He let me pull away from him as he laughed a deep baritone.

“Oh it’s priceless how you lose every time,” he laughed loudly. I cringed, my head killing me, my stomach growled incessantly, my ankles making me wince at every movement.

“Very funny, could you take these damn things off me and get me some damn food now?” I grumbled.

“No”
“What the hell do you mean by no?” I gasped out at him, was he seriously not going to feed me and take these shackles off of me?

“I mean I’m not taking off those shackles, you’ve been bad so they stay on. As for food, I don’t believe you’ve earned the right to eat tonight,” he hummed happily, reaching over to play with a piece of my hair. The me of three months ago would have slapped his hand away and it sickened me that I felt petrified to do it now.

I remained quiet, my mind swirling into a vortex that was just shouting how hungry I was.

“Now let’s get you dressed, we have dignitaries to say goodbye to and if you’re good, I’ll let you sleep in the queen’s chamber tonight.” He wiggled his eyebrows at me and I gaped at him.

“You’re making my bedroom a reward? You can’t, it’s mine!” I yelled at him, feeling the life rush back into me. His eyes glinted with anger and he was pinning me to the bed in a moment.

“Everything is mine! I own that room, this castle, and your life! Don’t you be getting a big head!” He growled down at me. My breathing grew rapid and I glared at him in spite. “You want to be defiant? Fine be defiant, I’ll show you what that gets you!”

He stood rabidly and stomped over to the dresser he pulled a drawer open, grabbed something and slammed it shut.

“What are you doing with that!” I yelled when he held my earring up menacingly.

“Oh this? Nothing at all” he took the end of the earring in his other hand and tested its strength with a few small tugs to it. I watched it all with wide eyes and my heart in my throat.

“No kuroro, please that’s very precious,” I tried, hoping that he had punished me enough for today.

“Then maybe you shouldn’t be so defiant,” he hummed as his face dropped into an emotionless mask and he ripped hard at the tiny metal chain. I yelled in horror as the chain gave way, some of the links popping off and going flying, one even hit me in the face.
“No!” I cried out and felt my arms go limp as I collapsed onto the bed. I couldn’t feel anything except my boundless misery, but that’s all I could feel lately anyway. He’s broken something irreplaceable now, does he hate me so?

“Stop crying and take this to the room I ALLOW you” he threw the ruined earring at me and I grabbed at it desperately. I held it close to my chest with a small whimper. “Get up, I told you to put that in your room, do you want me to do worse?” He asked me with a heavy step at me.

I hung my head and pushed my weak body out of the bed. I yelped in pain when my feet touched the cold marble and the metal bit into my skin again. I sniffled and wiped at my eyes, keeping the broken jewelry tight in my grip.

Kuroro watched me with a satisfied look as I limped to the door that connected the two rooms. Kuroro came around to open the door for me in a misplaced display of gentlemanly kindness.

Shakingly I entered the room. The world must hate me.

Kuroro tapped on the dresser indicating that he wanted me to place the ruined thing on display. I could have been dead, I could be bleeding out right now. That sounds infinitely better than being here right now.

I laid the jewelry down with watery eyes.

“What is this” Kuroro hummed as he walked to the bed to pick up a leather bag that was conspicuously places in my bed. I ignored him, my eyes glued to that price of myself Kuroro had brutally destroyed.

I looked over to him when he began to laugh maniacally. He was literally looking into the mysterious bag and literally shaking from the force of his laughter.

“That old man is really losing it” he called, slapping his knee. I limped over to see the bag was packed full of cinnamon thrown leaves. I gasped and grabbed for the bag only for Kuroro to pull in away and raise a brow at me.
“You want this? You’re a man this will do nothing for you” he laughed as I went to grab for it again.

“I like the taste and it’s a gift from netero!” I cried, god I need that birth control tea leaf.

“Alright, because it’s hilarious to see you lose your mind I’ll even have hot water bright up for you” he laughed into his hand and began to leave me. “Shalnark will be up soon with it so drink your womanly tea and get dressed within the hour” he left the room briskly and I fell onto the bed heavily.

I may have secretly won this battle but I was losing myself slowly. My eyes drifted to my earring and I curled up on the bed and let myself wallow in misery and hatred.

I want to die.

Chapter End Notes

Not my best chapter but things are going to heat up pretty soon. We’re getting close to the turning point in the story.
Chapter 15

The first month of my glorified imprisonment was silent, if not a little painful. Almost everyone was busy with getting the country together and getting used to their new titles.

The first day Kuroro had forced me into a frilly pink dress that covered the shackles on my ankles. As we’d said our goodbyes to the dignitaries and guests from the wedding, I held onto Mito and Gon for longer than necessary. I only stopped when Kuroro cleared his throat roughly, telling me silently that my time with them was over.

Netero had kissed my forehead and held me close for a minute, whispering into my ear to ask if I got his present, I nodded and whispered my thanks back to him.

Hisoka had surprised me with an unwanted hug where he encased my body in his arms and squeezed our body’s flat together. I yelped half in fright and half in pain, the lack of food was already causing me pain.

Kuroro had pulled me from his arms with a whispered threat and the day wore on.

As I said it was silent, most of the high crew simply ignored my presence except for maybe four of them. Uvo took the time to take me on carriage rides around the island and even offered me a wedding gift. The beautiful gypsy horse was all white with pastel colored ribbons braided into his mane. I had squealed happily and hugged Uvo tightly.

Paku has brought me to her new house and I was incredibly happy to know my friend’s childhood home was in good hands and I could see it as often as I wanted.

Then there was Machi who had been happily creating my wardrobe for me. She did give me an odd look as I sat in the corner drinking my cinnamon thorn tea but didn’t comment. Machi and I had an odd relationship, we both just appreciated the company and silence of each other, we didn’t need to talk to each other.

It was with Machi that I began to notice it, the whispers. The maids that bustled around kept a four foot distance from me. All of them avoided eye contact with me and I even caught a few sending withering glares.
Everything had mostly stayed the same, the high crew that liked me were nice, the ones that didn’t ignored me, and Kuroro was keeping up with his new favorite torture of making me pretend to like our nightly routine, but the maids’ new loathing of me was different.

The whispers I could hear on the fringe of every conversation were painful, heart crushing. They whispered about how cruel I was, how Kuroro must just be protecting his people by taking over my care. How I was apparently framing the maids and having them killed out of some weird revenge scheme. The rumors only grew more and more until I was nothing but an evil queen.

At night Kuroro mocked me, whispering about how everyone had abandoned me and how I was left in his possession, how nobody really cared for me.

Most nights Kuroro made me walk naked, my legs shaking from exhaustion and pain, back to the queen's chambers. It was always a relief to slide into my own sheets and curl into a ball, rocking myself as I repeated what I was still alive for. I’m stopping a war, and I’m beating Kuroro. Only 11 more months to go.

The morning I woke up halfway through my second month in this hell hole, I woke with a smile. Kuroro was holding court today, I could finally do something for the people of Ryuuseigai, repay the debt of three lives.

I threw off the covers with vigor and pulled my bandaged feet off the bed, the chains Kuroro attached to the bed posts rattled as I moved around my bedroom to grab one of the light blue dresses Machi made for me. The blue made my eyes pop and looked beautiful against the silver chains of my crown.

I pulled on the dress and fixed up my hair as nicely as I could with the crown attached to me. My skin looked sickly and my stomach gave a low rumble from the scraps Kuroro had served to me last night.

Food had become a hit-or-miss: sometimes Kuroro had a good day and so brought me full meals and others he was angry and spiteful, bringing only the scraps from his plate.

I slipped on some blue shoes with small heels, wincing a little at the action, and waited for Kuroro’s morning wake up call. It normally included a forced kiss as he handed me whatever he brought me for breakfast before he delivered me to whoever he had watching me for the day.
Today I wouldn’t just be dumped on someone to entertain, today we were holding court. Finally, ruling a country.

I sat excitedly on the bed just waiting for Kuroro to come and get me. About an hour later judging by the empty feeling of my stomach, Kuroro opened the door, gingerly holding a tray of bread crusts and a half empty cup of orange juice.

A scraps day, yippie. Kuroro’s going to be difficult to be around all day. Kuroro shoved the tray into my hands and I looked over the pitiful offerings. It looks like it used to be French toast, the syrup he had poured over it was soaking the bread and it seemed to be dissolving a bit. I wonder how long he waited to bring it to me.

“Eat up, I’m busy today so I do not have time to play with you,” he snapped at me, his eyes glaring down at me. I nodded a little, too happy at the prospect of the day and began to eat the offered food. It doesn’t matter if it’s soggy, cold, and half eaten, I should be happy he brought me something while he’s in such a shitty mood. Some mornings he didn’t bring me anything at all.

“Done, lets go,” I called and placed the tray on the bed, jumping up and standing in front of him readily. He raised a brow at me but didn’t ask and led me out of the room.

He matched my pace with me whenever people could see us but Kuroro seemed more upset than normal today. It almost made me want to ask him what was wrong, almost.

It took me a moment to realize we weren’t heading to the throne room. My shoulders hunched as dread filled up my stomach but still I hoped, the queen has to be at court, right?

“Umm Kuroro? Aren’t we going to court?” I asked him hesitantly, my voice small and scared.

He stopped and looked at me, his eyes cold. He seemed to become even more upset at my question.

“I will be going to court, you will be going to the library. Shalnark is doing some research for me in there so try not to disturb him.” He grabbed my arm and yanked me forward, the force of it causing the shackles on my ankles to slice through the bandages and into my flesh. I bit back a yelp.
“But don’t you want me to sit in court?” I tried. “It would surely look better to have your queen by your side in there!”

“Just shut it!” He snapped at me, looking down at me like he wanted nothing more than for my existence to be wiped from the earth. “You’re going to the library and I don’t want to hear another word about it!” He snarled at me.

Kuroro yanked me the rest of the way to library harshly. I zipped my lips shut, just happy that he didn’t hit me this time.

Fighting back the tears and sorrow from my own forced uselessness, I let myself be thrown in the library with little fight on my side. Kuroro pushed me into the first chair he found. Shalnark didn’t even turn around as I was forcefully shoved into the chair and then an angry Kuroro stomped out of the room.

Shalnark gave a cruel laugh to himself as he continued to pick through the sacred books of my people.

I sat in uncomfortable silence as I fought back tears, I had been so hopeful this morning. And now that was all over. I couldn’t even make a difference.

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Irritation filled me as I stomped away from the library. Last night I had dreamed of my kingdom, Kurapika compliant and beautiful as he stood by my side and I had woken up to a defiant queen that I’d have to kill soon.

I had had a plan! I was going to break Kurapika as a twelve year old, raise him to be the perfect queen, then adore him night and day and now? Nothing could ever be that way. Kurapika had been raised to hate me and he’d never be the queen I’d dreamed of.

For a moment during my wedding I had thought I could still groom Kurapika into a suitable queen, but yet again Kurapika made me realize that it’s never going to happen.

Kurapika was raised with a supreme mind, it had proven to be unbreakable and I don’t know what else I can do to break him.
Yet I seem to have a hard time accepting that in my mind. I didn’t want to kill him but the longer he lived, the higher the chance he’d find a way to bring my kingdom down.

He had to die, so why was I so angry about it?

“You know you’re just a puppet, right?” Shalnark commented after almost an hour of silence between us. I don’t know what Shalnark hated so much about me, but I was surprised he managed to hold himself back this long.

“I-“

“Oh, did you think he’d actually take you to court?” Shalnark began to laugh cruelly at me and I sunk down a little further. “Just face it sweetie, at this point you’re just a sweet piece Captain is keeping around for some extra fun until we can all wash our hands of you”

“Uvogin-“ He interrupted me again.

“Doesn’t actually care about you!” He laughed again. “Like I already said, you’re a toy they’re all having fun with. It’s all a spoiled little prince like you is good for.” He mocked as he rose from his seat to approach me with a malicious grin.

“You’re nothing, so don’t go thinking you have any power here.” He patted my head condescendly and I wanted to sob.

‘Broken,’ my mind screamed at me.

‘Just a broken toy,’ it hissed as Shalnark seemed satisfied with his cruelty of the day and left me alone, going back to whatever research he was doing.

I want to die.
Hours slipped into days of melancholy like the droning ticks of the grandfather clock in the castle dining room and before I knew it, another month had gone by with only small moments of happiness to break up the misery.

Most nights I laid awake, just staring at the ceiling, the only peace I was still allowed. My room had become my sanctuary once I learned to simply ignore the broken earring on display on my dresser.

I didn’t mind the cruel, badly hidden laughter of the crew when they saw me drinking my tea, I pretended I couldn’t hear the mocking. They believed I was going crazy and they laughed. I can’t say I’m surprised, none of them actually care about me, I’m just the broken toy.

Dark bags hung from under my eyes and my skin had started to take on a sickly quality, rough and so pale you could see my veins.

Good, Kuroro could barely look at my shriveled ugly appearance now. It was the only pleasure I was allowed in our private game of risk.

In the last month Kuroro seemed to be taking out even more anger on me, the rape became less for his pleasure and more to harm me as harshly as possible. Food became a rarity, if not an oddity normally coupled with a particularly horrible night in bed.

If I cried or made any sounds to indicate that I did not enjoy it Kuroro wouldn’t even finish, just kick me off the bed to sleep on cold bruising floor and made to stay there.

Most mornings I woke freezing and sore.

Another development was the lack of use of my name. In bed I was *whore or slut*, in public I was *wife or queen*, in private I was *pet or dog*. Sometimes when I was aloud in my room at night I would whisper my name until I fell asleep just so I could hear it aloud. It was like this that my hellish days continued but it would only get worse from here.
Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

Everything is down hill from here

I had only just slipped on my boots and pulled my coat over my shoulders, it was early fall but it seemed winter was going to be brutal this year.

Considering how Kuroro was feeding me lately, almost nothing at all, I assumed I’d be dead before the New Years. I wasn’t complaining about it. I couldn’t really see the point in trying to escape this anymore, if I ran Kuroro will just chase me and torture me yet again. Besides, what kind of life do I have even waiting for me if I do get away?

The Ryuuseigai people hate me, so if I escaped their king they wouldn’t follow me. I’d most likely end up right where I started: a puppet. Netero would move in to control me and my country. Excuse me, Kuroro’s country.

I was just trying to focus on the things that made me happy: my room, my library privileges, my carriage rides with Uvo, my days in with Machi, and my beach visits with Paku.

Moving from the room, I didn’t expect to see Kuroro today. He’d been avoiding any and all involvement with me for about a week now. Most days he just dropped a tray containing a few scraps in my room and left me to my own devices. I would normally wander around until someone invited me to hang out with them, all excluding Uvo who normally planned the carriage rides a day or two in advance.

The hope to not see my tormentor was dashed the moment I stepped out of my room. Kuroro stood in the hallway, dressed and obviously waiting for me.

“Oh... Kuroro,” I awkwardly greeted, not really knowing how to greet him in general.

“I heard Uvogin was taking my lovely wife out again, I thought I’d join.” He smiled charmingly for the maids bustling past. They giggled and glared, we ignored them.
“Oh, great,” I ground out slowly, trying to maintain this weird peace between us.

“Then let us go.” Kuroro held out his hand and like a good pet I took it, walking with him down the hallway.

Uvogin was pleasantly surprised when Kuroro arrived with me, ushering us into the carriage.

“Alright Kurapika, we’re going to the south side of the island today!”

Chrollo seemed to nod his head as he absorbed the information Uvogin gave out. I watched with rapt attention as he casually sat back in his seat and began to watch the scenery.

“That sounds great Uvo.” I smiled politely as townpeople began to pass and glare at my carriage. I didn’t pay it any mind as Uvogin began asking about my book.

“If I know you, you were up all night with your nose buried in it huh?” Uvogin grinned at me and I couldn’t help but laugh.

“Yeah, you know me. I wouldn’t even notice the sun come up if breakfast wasn’t delivered to me.” Uvogin laughed and I sat forward to chat idly with him.

“Like you wouldn’t miss that door!” He grinned slyly at me and Kuroro suddenly perked up.

“Door?”

Uvogin laughed a bit and waved away Kuroro’s question.

“I had to save poor little Kurapika from an attacking door, you really had to be there!” Kuroro frowned and on reflex I flinched away from him, my happy attitude immediately evaporated as I remembered Kuroko’s presence.

“You don’t say, seems I missed a rather nice moment then.” The tone of voice Kuroro used sent a shiver down my spine, but I quickly tried to shake it off as Uvogin began to speak to me again.
I giggled when Uvogin pulled the reins back and forth to make the carriage wobble, I leaned forward to hold onto his tree trunk thick arms.

“Careful or you’ll crash us into the disappearing wall again!” I joked not unkindly, referring to a few weeks ago when Uvogin had thought we were going to crash when he thought he saw a wall but it turned out there was no wall.

Kuroro perked up again and cleared his throat at me. I sunk back down into my seat and tried to ignore the icy glare he leveled at me but sadly I could already feel my weak body beginning to shake as my heart began to race. He’s angry.

“What are you two talking about?” Kuroro asked, his voice in that slightly deeper baritone that happens when he’s is holding back from punishing me.

“Oh it’s nothing, you’d-“

“Have to have been there,” Kuroro finished as he slipped his hand into mine and held it too tight. “I was unaware how close you two had become.”

I pressed my body down in my seat, recognizing when my day was about to become worse but Uvogin just laughed loudly, his knees bouncing with his movements as the carriage rocked down the cobblestone street.

“Yeah! Kurapika and I are best friends by now, right Kura?” Uvogin looked back to grin widely at me and I couldn’t help the small smile I immediately gave him back.

“Kura eh?” Kuroro hummed as he stared at me coldly.

It didn’t matter what I did, he’d never stop hating me would he? He just wanted to watch me suffer, it must kill him that anyone treats me better than him, that I like someone better than him.

It was psychotic the fact that he equally hated me, wanted to hurt me in every way possible, and he also wanted me to want him, he wanted to own me. Doesn’t he understand that he already does? Can’t he just let me die in peace?
“Kura, I had the kitchen make you some snacks for the ride! Eat! Eat!” Uvo urged as he gestured to the small wicker basket.

Kuroro beat me to the basket and opened it to look over the light pickings of cucumber sandwiches and a glass bottle of honey mead, there was even a small bag of pulled roast chicken.

My stomach growled, the light wind seemed to blow right through me. It wasn’t hard to tell that I had lost massive amounts of weight and even that small amount of food held within my tormentor’s hands looked like a feast.

Kuroro smirked at him and held out one of the tiny sandwiches to me.

“Open up my queen,” he smiled tightly at me. Holding out the food delicately, like the pomegranate from the myth of Persephone and Hades. I was so afraid to do as he obviously wanted. His eyes narrowed when I began to shake, my hands gripping at my coat over my blue dress. “Come now, your husband is trying to be nice.” The warning was obvious.

Leaning forward, my eyes wide and barely holding back my fear as I let Kuroro feed me, his fingers brushing over my lips.

I unconsciously licked the bread crumbs off my top lip and looked up at Kuroro’s dark eyes cautiously. He frowned angrily and sat back again after handing me the basket.

“Feed me one, wife,” he muttered in a barely restrained growl. Apparently this wasn’t going how he wanted and that’s never a good thing for me once we get to the bedroom.

Remembering everything that normally helps me avoid worse punishment, I smiled prettily and grabbed out one of the sandwiches and pushed myself closer to him even as acid rose in my throat.

“Here you are, dear,” my voice shook along with my hands as I held up the sandwich and he opened his mouth, licking at my fingers as he pulled the bread between his teeth. I flinched at the contact and I would have been certain he was a demon if I hadn’t seen that his teeth weren’t pointed.
“Thank you my sweetling.” The pet name caused me to freeze, he hadn’t used that one in awhile. I suddenly couldn’t breathe. It was like I was still on Ryuuseigai and the ocean was swallowing me up, the water damming up my throat and smothering me. “Oh my poor dear, you’re shivering. Come, I’ll tuck you into my coat.”

I felt my chest seize up as he pulled me to him and wrapped his large coat around me. He rubbed his hand up my arm, the hand that held me down, choked and raped me.

I can’t breathe, I can’t do this anymore. One tear managed to betray me.

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I watched from the carriage as Uvogin sat with Kurapika at the cliff side, talking adamantly with him and making him giggle and smile. Kurapika would never smile like that at me even though both Uvogin and I killed his people. Yet here Uvogin was, forging a bond and even having inside jokes with *my wife*.

What was so different between Uvogin and me? We have both committed a sin against him, he should be able to move past it and just live with me, maybe come to like it someday, but still he looks at me with only fear and gives his affections to someone else.

*I am not jealous*

Shaking my head I turned my attentions back to the two as Uvogin began to walk towards the cliff, yelling something back at Kurapika that was making him laugh until suddenly Kurapika stopped laughing.

“Uvo! Stay away from that cliff!” Kurapika suddenly yelled out and ran forward to pull Uvogin away from said cliff. I decided to approach then.

“What is wrong?” I asked as Uvogin followed like a chastised puppy.

“That cliff is all sandstone, it is extremely dangerous! It could collapse under the slightest weight! Sorry Uvogin, I almost didn’t recognize it in time.” Kurapika explained as he rubbed Uvogin’s arm. He’d never touch me willingly, he barely does when I force him.
“Thanks for the warning Kurapika.” Uvogin smiled at the boy and I watched the lovely small smile grow on Kurapika’s face.

I need to get over him, I need to kill him before he infects me completely. But I can’t kill him with how he is now, I can’t kill him with that beautiful smile on his face and those steely undaunted eyes staring me down.

I need to break him into dust before I can sweep him out of my life. First things first: I’ll have to speed up the process of adopting a child. Anyone will do, a boy if possible, as young as can be found since he’d have to become accustomed to a new mother once I can replace Kurapika.

It will all work out.

And yet . . . That smile.

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I sighed miserably as we pulled back onto palace grounds. Back to being ignored, back to being silently abused day in and day out. Maybe I’ll sit with Machi today, apparently Kuroro is holding a banquet soon and she’s making me a new gown. God I hate dresses.

No, I’ll go to the gardens I decided. It’s not like Machi will have time for me anyway.

Uvogin pulled the carriage up to the front doors and a stableman immediately coming forward to take the reins to return the carriage and horses. I should go visit FreeBird, my horse.

I stepped out of the carriage when Kuroro offered his hand and he threaded his fingers through mine, keeping me in place by him.

“Well Uvogin, that was enjoyable,” Kuroro thanks the man, his tone keeping him from walking off. “But there will be no more of these carriage rides, in fact Kurapika is no longer allowed to leave the castle grounds without me.”
My stomach dropped and I stared at the man wide eyed. This was worse than him making me pretend to love him as he raped me, he was taking away one of my only sanctuaries!

“Everyone understand?” He asked, but he knew neither of us would be able to defy him. “Good.” He bent down to kiss my cheek and I closed my eyes to resist flinching. Then he just walked away without a care in the world.

Can’t he just leave me to die in peace? Must he keep me in constant hell?
Chapter 17

I followed Kuroro inside after Uvogin gave me a helpless shrug and I tried to smile and told him that maybe we could just walk the gardens together from time to time. I knew it was stupid to care so much about being around someone that helped massacre my people, but it was the only thing I had. Otherwise I’d be all alone, I don’t want to be alone.

I wandered into the halls, not really knowing where I was going as I went about. The shackles barely bothered me anymore, the skin had become calloused and dark from scarring. I was used to them now.

Phinks rushed by towards the dining room where Kuroro had disappeared to, he bumped my shoulder and yelled back a simple apology. I barely noticed, too lost in my own thoughts, I didn’t even notice that I ended up following Kuroro.

A crash woke me from my stupor and I looked up to see that in his rush, Phinks had knocked over one of the Kuruta relic vases and its delicate body had shattered on the floor. My eyes focused on the vase for a moment, feeling a soft sadness at the lost of it before sudden fear shuddered down my spine.

My eyes snapped to Kuroro who had been drawn to the loud noise and I could see the evil intent swirling in those deep, black eyes.

“Wife, clean it up,” he suddenly called and my hands began to shake from just his tone. I rushed forward, this is punishment for something and I’m not eager to make it worse by dawdling.

“Okay, Okay,” I whispered, trying to calm myself as I carefully pulled out the largest piece of glass to act as a bowl as I began to pick through the pieces. A large jagged piece of glass slid across my palm, stinging and screaming at me to pull my hand into the safety of my chest but I couldn’t. Not with Kuroro’s dark eyes pinning me down, watching the display in amusement.

Small shards of glass bit at my fingertips and tiny droplets of blood tainted the white-gold marble of the floor until I had every single piece accounted for.

“That’s a good wife, now go put it by the earring.” He wants me to put it in my room?
“But-“

“Now,” He said with finality and with weak legs I did as I was told.

I dropped a trail of blood as I tried to hold back tears. I made for the quickest route to my room, perfectly aware that Kuroro was following me.

The broken earring on my dresser taunted me like a ghost every night and now I placed the ruined vase next to it. My room was becoming almost like the ruins of a tomb: broken artifacts and crushed dreams.

Kuroro took my shoulders the moment the bloodied glass was out of my hands to turn me around. His lips were on mine just as quickly.

For the first time in weeks, Kuroro’s lips devoured mine, his tongue thrust into my open wet cavern as his hands pulled me closer. I didn’t jump, I didn’t react at all besides the mild surprise. I let Kuroro have his way and just to end the torment, I kissed back because I knew that’s what he wanted. Kuroro slowly pulled away from the kiss, his hands still groping my bony body as he did.

“I believe I once told you that someday you’d enjoy this part of our relationship,” he whispered. It hit me like a slap in the face and was enough to force me to remember exactly who I was.

My hand snapped up to slap him but he caught my hand and for once he wasn’t angry. No, he was amused. He grinned maliciously at me and pulled my struggling hand to his mouth and licked up my bleeding palm, his tongue digging into the flesh grotesquely. I whimpered.

“Won’t be long now. Don’t worry my little toy, it will all be over soon.”

That’s right, I’m going to die soon. Why fight a battle I can’t win? Apathy and death is how I win the war.

I let my eyes fall to the floor and the emotion drained from my face, no hatred and no pain. Nothing.
Kuroro didn’t seem to like that considering the tightness that became apparent from his grip on my wrist. A stiff moment of silence passed between us before he released me and I was able to tuck my hand into my chest.

“Don’t be late for your fitting in an hour, you need to look your best for your own birthday party.” He turned away with that and I felt frozen to the floor.

My birthday.

In a week I’ll legally be an adult and completely independent of Netero in all sense of the word. I had a sinking feeling that my life was about to become much, much worse.

Another swell of panic ate at me as I wandered around my room, grabbing for anything that would stabilize me. The bed did nothing for me and so I pushed off it, gasping and feeling sobs build from the bottom of my chest. My vision began to swim as I tried not to curl into myself on the ground and reached out with my good hand to grab one dusty shelf that I had never been able to reach as a child. I hung on it for a moment, putting more and more of my weight on it with each second. And suddenly I felt a little better, like holding onto that shelf somehow normalized me.

I began to breathe deeper and with a more even pace before I finally stood on my own two feet and stared at the shelf that was maybe a foot over my head. I remember my father putting that up a few years before Ryuseigai had attacked, he had said something about it being there for safety. I couldn’t reach it then, and no one had ever placed anything on it before besides the one bejeweled picture of Pairo and me. Maybe just the memory of it helped.

Turning away, I decided I needed to calm down and get my head back in the game. I had planned earlier to go to the garden and I would. Moving over to a small piece of shredded cloth, I wrapped my hand quickly and left the room bloodied and all.

I avoided being seen as I ran through the halls to the gardens. I passed a few of the pirates but they didn’t seem to see me. The gardens were bright and secluded, shrubs of lavender and trees made a virtual jungle. I walked to the far back of the garden where a small stone bench overlooked the ocean under a willow tree that wept for my loss. I ran my bloody fingers over the bark and almost felt like crying again but I had to be strong, I had to endure this.

I let myself finally fall to my knees and crawled under the bench like I used to do as a child and just numbly watched the ocean. I didn’t cry, just held myself as I began to whisper my name, feeling myself forget who I even was anymore.
“Kurapika... Kurapika... I am Kurapika Kuruta and I am strong,” I whispered to reassure myself as my eyes slowly shut and I feel asleep.

I sneezed again from the dusty archives of the catacombs. The Kuruta people had the opposite problem most countries had: they wrote too much about their history and unfortunately for me, they wrote almost exclusively in metaphors and tall tales.

The stories were interesting, I’ll give the people that, but really? These stories were ridiculous, and they wrote them as if they were real. Tales of ghost horses, magic crowns, and glowing horned rabbits that come to the innocent and healed wounds ran through my head.

The ghost horse was particularly interesting, it was all about the pet horse of a prince from long ago. The prince was poisoned from some outside source which apparently forced the king to close the borders of the country. After the young prince's funeral the horse had died, as if it didn’t want to live without the boy and in the years following, people began to see the apparition of the creature haunting the roads around the castle.

The horse apparently hunted down and haunted the citizens that had been responsible for the young prince's death until they killed themselves. Now the legends spoke of the horse as a protector of innocence, haunting the roads in search of those that would do harm to children and the royal family.

That pretty much proved to me that the ghost was a fake, none of us who literally have royal blood in our hands have seen any ghost horse.

The magic crown was the funniest. The story went a little like this: two clans before the monarchy began were sealing a treaty with a union between the red eyed clan’s son and the silver moon clan’s daughter but apparently the younger brother of the girl was in love with the red eyed prince. The boys begged their parents to allow them to marry but were denied because they couldn’t have children. On the night of the wedding, the moon boy cried to the sky, begging the gods to give him a way to be with his love.

When the moon goddess saw the love the two boys had for each other, she crafted a crown from the stars and then sacrificed one of her own red eyes to edge it with rubies. Then the story just skipped past any explanation of what exactly this crown did to the boys being married, his inability
to create a child for some reason no longer a problem.

The Kuruta needed to get their heads out of the clouds. A loud neigh echoed through the underground tunnels and my entire body stiffened before I relaxed and laughed at myself. I’m spending way too much time down here.

“Shalnark!” someone yelled down the catacombs, it sounded like Nobunaga.

“Yeah?” I yelled back continuing to look over the picture of the rather familiar crown.

“Has Kurapika been down there?” he asked and I looked up. Had that pitiful child finally tried to run again? I knew there was no way he was done fighting, just like I always tell Kuroro, there is no way he’ll ever truly obey us.

“No, I would have heard him!” I yelled up finally.

“Okay! Keep an eye out!”

I went back to what I was doing with Kurapika in mind now, that was the queen’s crown. That thing was older than I thought. I traced the edges with my eyes before turning away. I wasn’t supposed to be looking for folklore anyway, I was suppose to be finding all the records of past kings and queens. How the country was run before us, that sort of thing.

Moving back to the horribly boring records of kings and queens I sighed, these royals were all so good, none of them ever did anything interesting. Beruta the first king and his queen Doran created the fishing trade. King Kuriku the Bright closed the borders and brought prosperity in a time of drought on the island, her queen Sara was known as the child of the moon because of her giving nature and loving personality. . . There were a lot of same sex kings and queens . . . And I still haven’t found one record of adoption.

My eyes traveled back to the open book depicting the moon goddess’s crown. I needed to examine that crown, it had to do something if there was so much lore surrounding it.

Stepping away from the makeshift work area I headed up from the catacombs and back into the secret library entrance that was no longer secret. It had been a few hours since Kurapika had been claimed missing, so surely by now they had found him.
Due to amazing timing, it just so happened that the shivering Kuruta was walking by the library to the king’s office gave as I headed out. He looked worse for wear, I could tell he was afraid of whatever promised punishment he had gotten for trying to run away and there were bags under his eyes. Not to mention the way his dress hung off him like he had lost a little weight. Oh poor little royal, not so spoiled anymore, huh?

My eyes lit up when I saw the crown was still on his head. I hurried forward, reaching out with the intent to snatch it from him.

“I’ll be borrowing this!” I announced as I grabbed the edge and yanked it off his head. At least it was suppose to come off, instead his entire body followed with the crown and he came tumbling back at me. In shock I let go of the crown as Kurapika’s body fell into mine and I braced myself to fall. Only Kurapika was not very heavy, a stiff breeze would probably drag him away so I barely stumbled when he crashed into me with a startled yelp. “What the hell?” I breathed when he turned to look at me, shocked and scared.

I reached for the crown again, wanting to confirm that it was somehow bound to his head only for the boy to turn tail and run.

________________________________________________________________________

My heart was beating out of my chest for a multitude of reasons: first I was shaken awake by Kuroro and a handful of guards from where I was sleeping under the stone bench and now Shalnark has managed to figure out something about my crown. Does he know? Why did he even try to take it in the first place?

I had already been shaking from the promise of punishment for apparently starting a panic when I went ‘missing’ and now I had to worry about Shalnark potentially ruining my chances of dying soon.

Kuroro has that look on his face that meant he wanted to strangle me but had to hold back because we were in public when he had woken me. Some of the guards were the pirates that understood that I wasn’t just their queen but their prisoner. But most had no idea of the torment I had been through and Kuroro played up the worried and concerned husband. He had hugged me close to his chest and spoke as if he had thought I had been hurt. He was only worried that I had managed to kill myself.
He had whispered into my ear to meet him in his office as he had a few things to do and had the guards escort me back to the castle.

This event hit far too close to home. I remember a day when I was only nine, I had fallen asleep under the same bench and I had woken up to my father lifting me up in his strong arms. My parents whispering how worried they had been, they thought I had fallen prey to the crumbling cliff side. When they had brought me into the bustling warm castle, maids and guards had ran to their side, asking me if I was alright and wrapping me in blankets.

Now I had walked myself back to the castle and it felt so cold and empty as maids barely spared me a glance and when they did it was with accusation and hatred. This isn’t my home anymore, I felt so alone. I had been lamenting over this when someone had grabbed at my crown and my weak body had been pulled with it.

Shalnark’s eyes had been narrowed with curiosity and shock, it wouldn’t take him long to figure me out. When he had reached for the crown again, questions I didn’t want to answer not far behind, I had simply ran. I would have to avoid him from now on.

Now I could turn my attentions to the most present problem, my punishment for freaking out the entire castle. Kuroro seemed to be in sadistic mood so I didn’t hold up much hope for myself.

Kuroro’s office, my grandfather's office, was much the same as it had been back in Ryuuseigai. Books lining the walls, a large dark wooden desk and a large chair for himself. I took a breath and tried to steel myself to the horror of having to walk into the space willingly.

I knocked and a dark voice called me in. My shoulders began to quiver like they always did lately when Kuroro was in the room as I stepped in to see Kuroro playing with something on his desk.

“Close the door,” he called calmly. I gulped as I did what he said. His eyes burrowed into me before suddenly he smiled and pulled up a framed picture.

My eyes widened as I took in the bejeweled rendition of me and Pairo as toddlers. I looked between him and it, then began to shake me head desperately. That’s the only picture I have of him!

Before I could get a word out, he commanded me once more. “Strip.”
“What?” He wanted me to strip? What could he possibly want from my battered body?

“Are you going deaf? Strip!” His tone grew deeper and I quickly began to pull the heavy blue material from my shoulders, past my protruding ribs and off my waist.

I stepped out of the dress, my shackled jiggling and carefully folded it up to place it gently on the ground. I’ve been punished once for disrespecting my clothes, I’m not about to make that mistake again.

“Now pet,” he called as I stepped forward, my eyes glued to the incredibly precious picture of me and Pairo. “Touch yourself.”

“Why are you doing this?” I stepped back. Not really understanding why he was holding a piece of my heart in his hands, asking me to touch myself.

“Because I can. Now, I want you to touch yourself and each minute you don’t cum I’m going to pluck one of these beautiful jewels from this cloth,” he grinned at me as I stood shell shocked.

“Wait please! I’ll touch myself, I’ll do anything just don’t-“

“The time starts now.” I stood perfectly still, just staring at him. It’s like my brain had short circuited, fear froze any motion I could have made until he tsked and pulled Pairo’s eye jewel from the cloth. “Get moving, or would you like me to just rip this apart?” He held up the delicate cloth and I quickly grabbed my own flacid dick. I winced at the quick movement, my body complaining at me for the misuse.

“That’s it my little whore,” he grinned at me as I tried to force myself into arousal. A minute was up and Kuroro casually plucked another jewel from Pairo’s face. I could feel my face begin to scrunch up and my cheeks burned red to compliment my eyes.

“Maybe you can’t cum like that anymore, try fingering yourself a bit slut,” Kuroro recommended his grin growing as he pulled off another jewel and I began to feel the ever present tears build up in my eyes.

I took my bandaged hand and reached back and immediately my body responded to my absolute horror.
“I really have trained you well,” Kuroro chuckled as he pulled yet another jewel from Pairo. His eyes were trained on my suddenly very hard member as I began to finger myself open. Tears ran down my face as he continued to pull the jewels, ruining the perfectly crafted picture forever.

“Why do you hate me so much?” I gasped and sobbed on shaking legs as I continued to fuck myself on my fingers. Kuroro seemed to smile at that as he released the ruined picture and stood to slowly circle me. My hands were still moving as his shoulder rubbed against my skin and I cringed at the feeling of the rough fabric on my sensitive skin.

“How could I ever hate you my pretty, pretty pet?” He ran his fingers lightly up my back and I moaned, hating myself for it. My body was touch starved and weak for any kind of attention unfortunately Kuroro knew to take advantage of it. “I’ll let you pick, should I bend you over the desk or would you like me to bring you back to my bedroom?” He asked in a slow slurry voice as his hands took my wrists and stopped me from reaching any sort of climax. I hate that I wanted that. “Well? Or should we just do both? I feel in a rather giving mood tonight and I know how starved you are for our love making, I’ve been too busy to properly care for my little pet,” I shivered and fought my own heavy tears but for some reason I couldn’t seem to abject or fight as he turned me around and pulled me towards his desk.

“Don’t worry this will be fun,” he reassured me softly as he swepted everything off the surface of the wood and laid me over it. I just closed my eyes and hoped he’d be quick, hoped I’d just be gone soon.
I woke up on the cold hard floor of Kuroro’s room, kicked off the bed like a dog you were done cuddling with. Kuroro hadn't been that unrelenting and harsh with me since the very first night.

I slowly tried to move my stiff muscles but it was like the marble had infected me and I had been half turned to stone. I moaned in pain as I uncurled myself, several joints popping at the normally easy movement.

“Ow,” I whispered as a series of cracks rushed down my spine the moment I tried to stretch it.

I needed my contraception... Kuroro had cum more times than I care to remember and I needed my cinnamon thrown tea now before my body had time to force a child on me. I had forgotten to chew the wild carrot seed yesterday, it had been so long since Kuroro had forced himself on me I didn’t think I’d need it.

I slowly stood and moved towards my room only for a hand to grab my wrist.

“And where do you think you’re going?” Kuroro growled at me, he was almost never in a good mood when he woke up anymore.

“I-I was going to get some tea and get dr-dressed?” I stuttered out like a question, keeping my eyes down like a beaten animal.

“No,” he pulled me back and I fell into the bed easily. Immediately I tried to get back up but he wrapped his arms around me. “You missed your fitting yesterday, so I won’t be allowing you your ridiculous tea today.”

“But-!” I paused not really knowing how to change his mind on the point. “Please Kuroro, I did as you asked last night! I did ev-everything.” I shuddered as my mind traveled back to the horror of last night. He’d carried me through the castle naked and impaled on him, whispering about what the servants would think if they saw me. I had held still as he’d stuffed me full with objects that did not belong inside my body, I did everything he’d asked.

“And that is the only reason you don’t have the spider burned into your chest pet, now please just shut up for a few minutes.” He cuddled his face into my neck and I cursed myself silently. I needed...
that tea. Maybe if I can just make it through today without incident I can get back to my tea and I won’t be pregnant. I prayed for that outcome as I listened to the soft breathing of Kuroro as he held me painfully tight. It’s like he was afraid that at any moment I’d just disappear. How could I when he’s so expertly built an iron cast cage around me?

Kurapika had been collected up by Machi for his fitting. Because of the shackles and bruises she couldn’t have any assistance when pinning dresses for him. It was fine since she enjoyed his company, I might have to do something about that soon. Once he’d left I had gotten up, dressed, and headed off to get some work down myself. Kurapika's birthday was coming up fast and it was an excellent opportunity to strengthen ties between other countries and mine.

Out of spite I conveniently forgot to send an invite to King Netero, but I also made sure to invite the higher class that was beginning to rise in the countrmen and of course, community leaders and the like. I needed to make sure the lower class remained happy and content, I didn’t want any slums on my island.

After a few hours of the task of organizing, I decided I needed a break and grabbed a random book. It didn’t really matter since I’ve read them all and headed for the only place I could get a little peace: the stables.

I had quickly grown to love horses, such beautiful and powerful creatures, we hadn’t had them in Ryuuseigai. The Gypsy Vanners of Kuruta were a treasure in of themselves, kind and lovely things. The stables were now my favorite place on the castle grounds.

I snuck in quietly since I didn’t want anyone to find me and climbed up into the rafters to read. The stable master I’d appointed came back and began to sing lightly to the horses and I enjoyed the few minutes of peace.

The stable master stopped singing when the door opened, both of our heads turned to see the newcomer and I raised my brows when I saw my pet walking in with hunched shoulders and a pinched expression. He gave a smile to the stable master as the man hummed and went back to sweeping.

“Here again for your buck, huh?” The gruff man asked and Kurapika nodded as he started gathering brushes and equipment to care for the animal Uvogin had given him a few months back. “And I guess you’re still silent as stone,” the man sighed with an angry expression before he placed his broom aside to leave, as if just my pet’s presence made the space unbearable. “Be quick about
“Hey FreeBird,” he whispered in a sad tone, giving the horse the smallest of smiles, like it was all he could muster up. The horse immediately responded and shoved it's large head into the boy’s arms. Kurapika chuckled as he run his skinny fingers over the beast’s rainbow colored braids. “I know, I know, you must have been lonely. I’m sorry I didn’t come yesterday,” he murmured to the animal.

Once the horse was satisfied that its master had returned, it raised a massive hoof and swung it, as if demanding a brush down and Kurapika laughed. It was so light, like a bell, it filled the space and seemed to lighten the entire place.

“Okay, I see someone’s in a mood,” he joked as he grabbed a brush and dipped it into the soapy water to wash down the animal. “I’ll have to ask Uvogin to take care of you when-” he paused, his face darkening as he bit his lip. “When I can’t anymore,” he finished and I held my breath as my chest tightened.

The horse began to swing its head back and forth, snorting loudly in protest.

“Yeah, I know Free. It’s not what you want to hear,” he sighed as he slowly stopped brushing. “But sometimes you just lose, and sometimes the only way to win is to . . .” I leaned forward, my eyes narrowing. I can’t be allowing suicide talk before I have a child to claim the rights of the island.

“Sometimes FreeBird,” he paused as he began to brush again. “I hope that Kuroro will just push me from the top of the stairs and . . . I’d die and I’d be fr-free,” his voice cracked as he pulled himself up to sit on the short stable wall and laid his upper body over the back of the horse. The beast immediately brought it's massive head back and nozzled its nose into Kurapika’s side.

Kurapika softly laced his fingers over into the animal’s mane and ran his fingernails over the cream colored fur of it's back. You could clearly see the connection between the two, how deeply he loved the horse. I can use this.
The heavy silence broke when Kurapika began to sing, it was soft and in the strange language of the Kuruta and so filled with a bone deep sadness. It sounded like a lullaby.

“Once I had a dolly,

And she cried real tears

And I told~ my dolly secrets.

Little boy, you’re all alone.

Little boy, all alone, oh no~

I . . . don’t . . . Want . . To be . . Alone.”

The language was soft, and curved like water flowing over you, I had always loved the language. Kurapika’s shoulders hunched and I could tell he was crying softly into the beast’s mane. I leaned in, hoping he would sing again but instead he whispered something that made the rage I constantly felt at him spike.

“When I feel like I’m forgetting my own name, like I’m forgetting who I am,” he buried his face into the horse mane as he cried. “So I have to say it to myself. . . Kurapika, Kurapika, I am Kurapika Kuruta and I am strong.”

I glared holes into his unprotected back.

‘That will not do,’ I thought, my eyes focusing in on the horse. ‘But I know how to punish him.’

I left the stables a little bit before the stable master would return after filling FreeBird’s food and water troughs. Talking to him always made me feel a bit better, he made me think of the phantom horse of legend and how that horse loved its rider so furiously that he died to be with the prince. I
The fitting was fine, Machi tried to make light conversation with me and I tried to be polite for her benefit since I know Kuroro has them report back to him and I didn’t need him to get another reason to keep me from my birth control.

Kuroro hadn’t made an appearance since the morning and I was just beginning to feel my racing heart calm as I made my way from the library to my room. I opened the door and froze.

Kuroro was standing in my bedroom, leaning against the window with a look so intimidating, I hadn’t seen the likes of it since he was standing on a beach and I was sailing away.

“Good afternoon Kuroro,” I tried for pleasant conversation, hoping to defuse the walking bomb that he is.

“Kurapika,” he mumbled as he played with a small dagger in his hands. “Kurapika,” he took a step towards me. “Kurapika,” he forced the dagger into the wood on my dresser violently. “You are Kurapika... Who?” he asked with a tilt to his head and my breath stopped. How did he hear that? I was alone!

“Kuroro,” I started my back pressing up against the wood on my door. “Please, you just punished me last night, I can-can’t handle it tonight, please!” I tried to reason with him. He was so rough last night, I can’t do this again!

He was silent as he grabbed up the dagger again and walked closer to me, covering the distance in just two large and oh so composed steps. While I on the other hand was barely managing to stay upright, my body was now completely supported by the wooden door and my knees were close to calling it quits as I tried to curl up into myself and just disappear.

“I only want you to tell me your name, no need to be so frightened,” he whispered gently into my ear and I whispered pathetically.

“Kurapika Luc-Lucifer,” I whispered, hating the name on my tongue. It didn’t feel right.

“Hm...” He tilted his head at me and I cringed, that was never good. “Looks like you need practice,” he whispered as the knife traveled down to my dress and he began to cut it away. I felt so
useless, my limbs refusing to move and I immediately began to hyperventilate.

The moment my body had been bared and the ruined dress hit the floor, Kuroro dropped the dagger. He grabbed my arm and began to yank me into the King’s chambers. My legs wouldn’t hold me and he had to continually yank me up so I wasn’t dragging on the floor. I can’t keep doing this.

He threw me roughly onto the bed and I immediately curled myself into the fetal position.

Kuroro loomed over me and I felt the tears start up again as I began to beg. “Please just kill me, I can’t take anymore! Please just kill me!”

Kuroro’s hand was suddenly at my throat and my eyes widened as he leaned down to hiss menacingly onto my ear.

“You do not get to decide how much you can take!” He took my hands and wrapped a coarse rope around my wrists before moving in to roughly grab at each ankle shackle and clip a chain to each so harshly, my ankles began to bleed from the sharp edges on the rusted metal. “Now what’s your name?” And before I could even get a word out, something large and hard with pointed bumps was shoved unceremoniously inside of me. I screamed and my back arched so far I thought it would snap.

“That didn’t sound like your name now, did it?” The object was twisted with another thrust and I almost seized from the unbridled pain.

“KUR-PIKA LUCI-FUR!!” I yelled against the pain, sobs breaking apart my words. I could feel blood coating the object inside my rectum and my shrieks had no effect on Kuroro. I kept repeating my married name again and again until he had long removed the object from me.

He took my throat in his hand again and I whimpered around the words I kept mumbling, my face was wet and my throat torn to match my ass. Blood dripped from my wrists and ankles and I didn’t even feel like I was still in my body anymore.

“That’s a good boy,” he whispered and took my lips in a conquering kiss. I only continued to whisper my name. His member found my bleeding entrance and with a snap he was buried inside me. My whole body felt numb, I couldn’t even feel the pain anymore as I teetered on the edge of consciousness.
He came inside me once again and my vision cleared for a moment to make me realize I had blacked out. Everything kept going dark as one moment Kuroro was inside me and the next he was untying me and then carrying me. The next moment he was laying me into my bed and tucking me in. Something felt off about my bed but as soon as my head hit the pillows I was out.

I had woken up the next day with fever and my body raw, pain rocketing through every nerve. My bed had been covered in ship tar and sand, my skin had been rubbed raw in my sleep. I woke sobbing that morning, blood covering me and the bed, sand encrusted into every wound.

After a break down, hanging off the small shelf on my wall, I had gotten dressed and headed for the royal baths just hoping to wash away a little bit of pain.

There was an lingering sting from my joints in my hips from being stretched for so long, but it was nothing compared to the shrieking pain of my ass so I could ignore it.

I had almost cried again when guards stopped me from entering the bath, giving some bullshit excuse that the baths weren’t safe and the king was having a bath set up in my room. I had returned to find a cast iron tub filled with icy cold water.

I broke down again as I washed my shivering body, tears and blood mixing with the dark water. It was this morning that I truly began to hate myself but it was the afternoon that I wished for my own death so tenderly that I thought my panic could actually do it.

My horse, beautiful innocent FreeBird, was gone. The stable master’s only answer was that the king had taken him away.

Now a week later, the day of my birthday banquet, Kuroro’s only answer for me was that I would see him again.

Machi was wrapping yellow ribbons around my wrists to hide the scars and making sure the lovely blue dress she had made for me was hanging right on my small shriveling body.
I was standing silently, dead inside already, as I lamented over the fact that Kuroro was no longer content to just kill me slowly. No, now it seemed like he was trying to challenge himself to find the most horrific way to break me down.

I had no reaction when Machi pronounced me prefect for the night, I had nothing to give when Kuroro came to collect me and I could only smile hollowly when he brought us to the banquet hall where the party was already in progress.

Is this what it feels like to be the walking dead? I nodded to conversation, smiled for those that congratulated me, and danced when Kuroro asked. I was like a doll, being eaten alive by my own mind.

At the very least I’ll probably be dead in a month, maybe two.

As the party wound down and guests began to leave, Kuroro dragged me over to say goodbye to each and every one. On the bright side, I’d be allowed to join the private dinner for the high crew tonight, a full meal sounded heavenly to me at this point.

Life seemed to be on fast forward, skipping forward with no context before finally I was seated at the dinner table and Uvogin was talking to me. Babbling on about something I couldn’t grasp at the moment.

Food began to be set out and it smelled divine, I almost passed out just smelling it. A plate was set out in front of me with what looked like roast beef with a side of baked sweet yam. I grabbed up a silver fork and cut into the meat.

It tasted amazing, full of favor and juice. I thanked whatever god still liked me that Kuroro was at least allowing me to eat tonight.

Kuroro leaned down when I was about halfway through the meal and I tensed, looking around to see the crew engrossed in their own meals.

“Do you like it?” He asked in a whisper. I gulped down the mouth full I had been chewing and nodded, keeping my eyes down as I tried not to stop breathing.

“Good,” he moved away and I went back to cutting before he suddenly said more. “I told you
you’d see him again.” It didn’t click at first. The words simmered inside my head as I raised another piece of meat. My eyes focused on the cooked meal, taking in the slightly yellow tinge of the fat and I slowly put the fork down again as bile began to boil in my stomach.

“Is this...?” Kuroro hummed and took a bite of his meat, the fat stretching between the pieces gruesomely. Juices ran down his chin and I gagged suddenly. Kuroro began to laugh as he saw the realization on my horrified face. I forced my chair back with a god awful squeak and stood, my body pitching forward as I began to gag in earnest.

My upper body moved before my feet as I raced from the room, kuroro’s laughter chasing me like hungry wolves, desperately I slammed into the nearest privy and grabbed the chamber pot to hurl the contents of my stomach.

I continued until the only thing left was acid burning my nose and throat, I sobbed into my own bile mixed with my dead horses flesh I had been tricked into eating. The only noise the sound of my tears and a metal clank as my crown fell from my head into the floor.

My eyes snapped up and fell on the disembodied crafted metal. I realized what this meant and began to hurl more. My red eyes glowed brighter as acid slid over my tongue and I sobbed and bailed, ceased to breeze.

I’m pregnant.
Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

It will all come t a spectacular end my lovelies.

I walked docily at Kuroro’s side as he and Pakunoda led the way to the impromptu orphanage. My mind was still reeling from my discovery a little under a week ago. I had cried, sobbed, fell into absolute despair but the worst of it all was the overbearing sadness for the life I carried.

Was it fair to hope for the end of my life when the little life had only just begun to grow? Then at the same time, what kind of father could Kuroro ever be? At best he was abusive, at worst he was the literal incarnation of darkness itself. Another question what the hell kind of mother could I be? We’d raise the most fucked up child, excuse me, HE’D raise a fucked up child. I have zero doubts Kuroro would just kill me the moment the child is born and claim I died in childbirth, although I have no idea how he’d explain that to his people. As far as they know, men can’t have children.

As much as I wanted to die, as much as I wanted to silently slip into the abyss and the lost of so many people from my life, I felt a strange calm after coming to terms with the fact that I was carrying a child. This child was mine, this child was Kuruta and I couldn’t give up. I needed to live for this child. Maybe this isn’t even about the child, maybe I’m just finally realizing again that I don’t want to die. Maybe I don’t want to live the rest of my life, however long that may be, under Kuroro’s thumb.

Kuroro laced his fingers through mine, having been strangely cuddly the last few days. He gets like this whenever he hurts me particularly bad. After the sounding incident, this seemed to be his biggest high as of yet. Normally when he gets like this the abuse lightens for a few days, but it had only gotten worse the last couple days, my room had added six new additions of broken and trampled artifacts, my skin bled from sleeping on the bed so I had started to just sleep on the floor, and I was barely allowed out of my room anymore.

I needed to avoid any kind of punishment right now. As much as I didn’t want to be pregnant, it’s not like I wanted to miscarry.

Kuroro pulled me around like a dog and sooner than I would have liked, we were in the building that use to house the other red eyed children that could have replaced me as king, surrounded by wide eyed children.
The workers eyed me suspiciously, like I’d reach out and push one of the happy, playing children. Kuroro looked around with a small grin, his eyes focusing on the boys and I knew he’d want to adopt a boy. I had always hoped for a girl. I hope I’m carrying a girl.

I zoned out as Pakunoda and Kuroro began to speak to the woman who was apparently running the home. Looking around I wished I could talk to the children, read them a book or just play with them.

“I think I have the perfect boy to become a prince!” the woman exclaimed to Kuroro as he explained his idea of the prefect little prince. “The second we found him, I just knew he was going to be special!” Kuroro pulled me forward as I thought on the idea of the perfect prince.

Ever since the massacre, I razzed Gon about being proper and perfect and I always did everything the way I was suppose to, but I was never like that before. When I was young I challenged every rule, I snuck out and spoke out of turn. On the night everyone died, I had even been sneaking out to hunt for the ghost horse with Pairo, he was at the fountain because of me. I was breaking the rules, being a bad prince, and everyone I loved died.

I shook myself out of my thoughts and focused on the small child no more than four, we were being led to. The boy had black hair and light grey eyes that were so deep and captivating, it gave him an off putting feeling of an old soul.

“This is Soran and he’s very advanced, he’s already reading!” The little boy stood, picking up his book and standing with an air of melancholy in front of Kuroro.

“It’s nice to meet you your highness,” the boy spoke with an intelligence far beyond his age. It’s creepy.

“Hello little one,” Kuroro smiled and crouched down to be on the boy’s level. The boy’s eyes looked over Kuroro before sliding to me and he gave me a small bow. His eyes held the same depth of Kuroro’s, and I didn’t know how I felt about it.

“How long will it take to get all the paperwork done to make it official?” Pakunoda asked in a business-like tone, her eyes wistfully staring at the giggling children. Maybe once the pirates relaxed after my death, she’ll finally adopt a child.

“Well since we are now a recognized country, the paperwork will take longer but only about two
months if I rush it.” The chipper woman clapped her hands in an excited vigor.

“Are you two really adopting me?” The boy asked looking up at me and I saw the first spark of childlike hope in his dull eyes.

I looked to Kuroro, not sure if I was allowed to speak to the child. He nodded and I leaned down, taking in the book on dragons he had been engrossed in.

“Yes sweetie, I can’t wait to take you home. You’ll be a brilliant prince.” I smiled to him and he frowned a bit at me. He looked at Kuroro and my intertwined hands.

“Yeah, I’m sure you are.” He knows.

“Two months will be prefect.” Kuroro smiled and I stood back up as the boy was excused and went back to reading. In two months he’d head to the castle, a castle that I would have just died in. Just in time for the winter festivals.

I laughed along with Nobu and Phinks as the subject of our little queen’s crazed habit of taking birth control. It was completely deluded but I knew something strange was going on. A week ago that crown wouldn’t come off his head, it was stuck somehow! You never saw him not wearing the thing and now I see it off him regularly.

I had scoured the catacombs for information on the crown but there wasn’t anything besides a few legends of its origin. Nothing on what it did or why it suddenly allowed same sex couples in their royal line. I found pictures, portraits of queens dating back over a hundred years, everyone wearing that blasted crown. Men and women, it didn’t matter, they were all queens and everyone had children.

Was it some magical blessing that you were fit to rule? Did it allow your adoptive child that blessing as well? Why were there no adoption records!?

“It must have been that prenup!” Nobunaga laughed into his sleeve. “Seriously! When his mind broke he probably thought he could beat Kuroro by not getting pregnant, not caring if that’s impossible!”
“If men could have children Kuroro would be all over that. We all know he prefers men to women, and he does like the idea of having children!” Phinks agreed wholeheartedly.

I laughed along with them and forgot the conversation as I went back to my records until lunch rolled around.

Sadly no one could bring me food down in my work space, so I had to head up to the kitchens myself. I was only momentarily surprised to see the bratty queen trying to steal food from the kitchens.

I had lived most of my life on a shrinking island, scraping and scrambling for food. I knew starvation and strife and this spoiled little royal couldn’t even handle a few days of missed meals! How pitiful.

“I believe you were sent to bed without dinner, and I know for a fact Kuroro will be pissed to see you stealing food!” I spoke up and the boy jumped, dropping the roll he had been trying to stuff into his skirts.

“I-I ahh,” the boy seemed to fold into himself and whimpered at just the sight of me. I rolled my eyes, he is so dramatic.

“I’ll be telling Kuroro about this, I’m not your friend now get out!” I commanded him and he tried to rush past me, but I grabbed his arm and pulled him back. I stared hard at him and considered asking what the hell the crown did but I knew he would refuse to tell me. Instead I dug my finger into his ribs. He shrieked in pain and I laughed at his dramatics before releasing him so he could run from the room.

I chuckled as I made myself a sandwich and left the kitchen to find Machi leaning sadly against the wall, watching the boy run up the stairs, his hands holding his stomach with a intense desperation.

“What’s going on in your head?” I asked her. It was too bad that she liked the doomed boy so much.

“If he wasn’t a boy…” She trailed off, biting her lip with a frustrated look before she let it go and melted back into her normal expressionless look. “I’d swear he was pregnant.” She shrugged before stealing a carrot from my plate and walking in the direction the boy had fled.
I stayed put, feeling like an idiot. No wonder there were no adoption records! That crown really was magic and the Kuruta was trying to damn them all!

_______________________________________________________

Another panic attack, another day. This one caused by a bout of existential dread and fear for the life being carried inside me, my run in with Shalnark didn’t help.

My breath had come back but I was still hanging on my special shelf since my mind was whirling from my most recent conflict with Kuroro. He hadn’t brought me food in several days, I was feeling weak and faint. I had begged him to bring me literally anything and his only reply was how much pain I’d be in if he found me sneaking food. God, I’m not looking forward to tonight after Shalnark clues in Kuroro to what I was doing, but I needed that food! The crown can only do so much to keep me alive!

I put more weight on the shelf, hating that I’d have to go on a ‘family’ picnic with Kuroro and the little boy Soran. At least I’ll get to eat?

I was already losing more weight, I would last the month if this continued, I’d most definitely die in miscarriage. Which yes would be some form of poetic justice, but how is that my baby’s burden to bare? I should just tell Kuroro, at least I’ll live another nine months and Kuroro couldn’t beat me. But then I’d lose and my child would be raised by a bunch of pirates that murdered its grandparents and people, destroyed our culture.

I needed to breath, I need-

The shelf suddenly jerked down an inch and a click echoed through the empty room. I fell to the floor and just stared at the wall that had now become a door.

-a way out.

I got up as fast as I could and grabbed the shelf to close the door and pushed the shelf back up so that it faded back into the woodwork. No one saw that but me, right? I don’t remember that secret passage and I knew all of them! I had spent my entire childhood looking for every secret hideaway and passage and I had spent my first month here trying every single one for a way out but they had all been blocked or locked!
I’d have to gather food, find a way off the island, get to the Hunter Kingdom and claim sanctuary. I’m no longer a minor so if Kuroro comes for me, I might have to be moved to a holy temple so he’d have no claim over me but at least I’d be safe, fed, and I’d have a chance at seeing my family again.

“I know.” I jumped and turned quickly to see Shalnark standing at my door. He stepped in and shut the door behind him.

“Know? Th-heres nothing to know!” I tried to stand tall, my heart racing as he stared me down. Did he know about the crown or did he just see my newest discovery?

“The prenup was serious, if you die without popping out a baby we all get evicted, huh?” He took a step closer to me. Oh god, he was going to tell Kuroro, I can’t do this for another nine months, he’ll have me under lock and key and slit my throat before I even get to hold my baby!

“That’s ridiculous Shalnark,” I forced out a nervous laugh. “Men can’t have children.”

“Oh but they can, can’t they? If they wear an enchanted crown.” My eyes widened and breath faltered for a moment before he began to laugh. “Don’t look so scared, I’m not going to tell Kuroro.”

“. . . You aren’t?” I whispered.

“No, you are.” I pushed myself up against wall, a little desperate to escape the situation. He grinned maliciously at me and laughed again. “But I’m having fun watching you struggle so desperately, so make it interesting for me okay? But do be quick about it, I wouldn’t want you to lose the baby!” He grinned at me once more and turned on his heel to leave me in my panic.

But if he isn’t going to tell Kuroro then I still have time.
Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

I paced with worry, the first week had been fun as I had told Kuroro little things Kurapika had done to get him in trouble since the man seemed to not even look at the boy anymore. I had enjoyed seeing the weight on the boy’s shoulders increase to a crushing amount as I embellished a few of his sins to make his punishments worse.

But now a month later I was pacing because I was coming to realize I was in too deep. If I revealed now that the Kuruta was pregnant to Kuroro, then I’d be in trouble as well for keeping this a secret for so long. I had expected the boy to run off and tell Kuroro in the first week since it would prolong his life, but the boy seemed eager to die.

Biting the inside of my cheek, I thought on my options. Most included just fessing up to Kuroro and taking my punishment with pride, but why should I? The little brat should have told us about the crown from the start, he’d rather get his revenge on 12 people and displace five million people than just pop out a baby and die with grace!

“Shit, shit, shit!” I muttered as I realized I should have just told Kuroro that day I realized, but luckily a few missed dinners won’t kill the little royal, right? He is rather fragile since he’s been spoiled his whole life. God, Kuroro’s going to execute me if he finds out.

Finally I decided I need to just stop worrying, Kurapika would break soon and tell Kuroro then I wouldn’t have to worry about anything. My biggest problem will be dealing with the brat for a few more months until the baby is born.

It’s not my fault I hate him. It’s his fault for being born with a silver spoon up his ass, thinking he can use and abuse anyone he wants. . . Just like her, they’re all like her.

The pain from gathering everything I need was the hardest part of my plan and the worst part was that all I had was a hunch. A hunch that Chrollo hadn’t yet done anything about the old boats on the Lukso Province coasts. We hadn’t used that part of the island except as a graveyard for retired ships.
It would take three days to get that far. I needed food and dark clothes but I have the advantage of knowing this island like the back of my hand.

I had convinced Machi to make me a pair of trousers and a shirt for sleeping, even played up how cold my room gets in the winter so she’d make them warmer. Shalnark had seen me talking and laughing with her and the next day all my clothes had been taken by the guards, to be brought back to Machi and have added layers put in for “warmth in the winter months.”

The clothes had come back pleated on the inside with a rough, coarse material on the inside, Kuroro had make sure to rub against me at every turn. My skin had been rubbed raw by the end of the day but this was expected from Kuroro by now. What really stung was Machi agreeing to hurt me like this. I wasn’t mad, I was tired and I still had room to smile when I found the bundle of black pajamas, the thick warm material felt good on my skin. I hid it behind the wall with the rest of my growing stash.

Stealing from the kitchens wasn’t working so I devised a new plan. Since the people thought I was a klutz anyway, I began to run into maids. It was only when they were carrying large amounts of food that wouldn’t rot too fast, I’d carefully bump into them, making sure to knock the tray over.

They’d apologize with a glare and while they were distracted I’d sweep my dress over a small bit of the food and wait for them to scurry off before picking up my prize and moving to place my hard won food with the clothes behind the door in the wall. Somehow Shalnark saw every infraction, he was watching me like a hawk. I was given no food on nights Shalnark witnessed me run into a maid. But that wasn’t the only punishment, I was made to sleep on the cold marble floor on those nights as well. I’m just happy Kuroro hadn’t brought back whatever tool he had shoved inside me a few weeks ago.

I did everything I could not to dip into my survival rations and with small bouts of thievery, a month slipped into a month and a half. My body was weak since Kuroro hadn’t allowed me to sleep in the queen’s chamber lately, instead I had spent every night on the cold marble flooring of his room chained to a wall, but I was fueled by the desire to be free. Nothing would stop me from saving my child from the awful fate of being raised by Kuroro!

I hadn’t seen the boy we were adopting or Paku in weeks, but I tried not to focus on the child I couldn’t save because tonight I would escape this awful place.

This time I waited for dinner to start, I wished to have been able to leave in the night but with Kuroro locking me to a wall more often than not, it was impossible. Once Kuroro left me alone to go enjoy his dinner, I jumped into action.
I moved into the queen’s chambers, the place filled with broken relics and nightmares, I didn’t stop for anything, just gripped the wonderful shelf and opened my hidden door. I shut it behind me and I already felt stronger.

I took a moment in the darkness to gather my courage before I bent down to grab the candle holder I had risked a beating to steal. I lit the thing and ran my hands over the damp dingy walls of the passageway I had explored whenever I found the opportunity.

The light danced on the walls as I finally shed the heavy dress, wincing only a little when the rough material dragged against my already bleeding skin.

“Damn,” I hissed as I looked over the infected rash all over my body. Shaking my head, I changed into the soft and lovely warm pants and shirt Machi had made for me as blood began to dot the inside, but I couldn’t care about that now. I ripped at the dress and tied a few ends together to make a rudimentary bag of sorts and stuffed my food inside.

I heaved the bag over my shoulder, feeling despondent since the lightweight of the bag almost knocked my weak body over. Shaking my head I stepped barefoot into the cold tunnel, my light held in front of me. If only I had any shoes that weren’t heels.

Sighing, I headed into the darkness and the unknown. Finally I’d start the most dangerous adventure yet: freedom.

I quickly made my way down the hall, feeling the claustrophobic doom of the area. I was afraid that I’d become lost in the mass of tunnels but I couldn’t fall apart here, so I promised myself I could fall apart once I reached Netero. Just not now.

So I pushed myself forward until I got to the stone spiral staircase and let myself feel the small fear that these stairs led to nowhere for a moment. I’d never been able to explore past these stairs. After I centered myself I put on a brave face, rubbed my hand over my stomach for strength and descended the stairs into the deep.

Every step I felt stronger and my breath came easier. Every step took me further and further away from Kuroro and that was a blessing.

The stairs let out into what looked like it could be a cave, although I could see no light of an exit. The walls were close and I could barely stand up straight without hitting my head.
I crouched forward and began to walk.

I’ll kill him for this.

I sat on my throne, my face most likely set in a glare. You would think he’d learn after trying to sail away the first time: he cannot escape me. I’d find him and when I do he will know real pain.

“Your highness we’ve done as you asked” one of my head guards entered my throne room.

“They burned them all?” I asked with a smirk. Kurapika probably thought he could get away from me by taking one of the old and rotting boats on the other side of the island but he didn’t know that I had already set up guard stations on every side of this island. All it took to get rid of any sail he could have used to escape me was a messaging bird and a few hours. It had almost been seven hours now, it was almost dawn now and every guard in the kingdom was out looking for the “kidnapped queen”.

“Yes every last ship without a captain has been burned into the sea and every captain has been put on alert to watch their ships” the guard briefed me and nodded along. Kurapika wouldn’t be getting off this island without a fight.

“Good, has any of the high crew returned?” I asked as I stood, now that I had confirmation that Kurapika couldn’t get off the island I would be taking my own horse out to search.

“No machi and Uvogin are still searching the south side of the island, phinks is searching the cliffs and beaches under the the castle, Nobunaga is leading a group towards lukso while sweeping the country side and lady pakunoda went south.”

Shalnark returned to the throne room then, his entire being oozing worry, which was strange consisting he had no love for kurapika. Understandable considering what happened to him.

“Has anyone found him? Do we even know how he got ou- taken” Shalnark corrected himself.
“No we haven’t found him yet” I growled. “And no I still have no idea how he was . . . Taken”

If possible the worry increased impossibly more, he twitched in the way he does when he is keeping a secret and I felt my eyebrow raise.

“Do you have something to say Shalnark?” I asked a little gruffly in my annoyance that I had to spend the entire night searching for my runaway wife yet again.

“. . . Um. . No, no I don’t” I stared at him a moment before letting it go, it’s not like Shalnark would help the boy escape.

“Alright then, I’ll be heading out to join pakunoda at the south side” I told the room. Hopefully someone had warned pakunoda about the crumbling cliff side.

I had walked for three hours, the cave Gradually getting bigger until my candle was worn down and the light was flickering precociously. The cave began to get lighter in the next hour of walking and I began to feel my energy wane, my steps almost fumbling slightly.

I carried on anyway, even if my eyelids began to fall and I tripped. Cutting the top of my foot on a rock and smacking my skull against the floor. I groaned quietly, letting go of my bag to carefully hold my head in my braised hands.

I wanted to curl up and just matriculate into the rocks, make this cave my grave but instead I released my head and got the hell off the ground. If I was going to cry I’d do it standing.

I placed both my hands on my flat stomach and rubbed my thumbs over the irritated skin.

“Sorry about that, mommy took a tumble but I’m okay. I hope you are too” I whispered to the barely forming life inside me before moving to grab my improvised bag and heaved it back over my shoulder too continue.
It took another thirty minutes to reach the entrance of the cave. I looked out into the darkness only to rear back when I saw the group of guards riding through. The cave was hidden behind foliage just past the crumpling cliff side, now I know why the tunnel had curved then.

I pushed my back up against the cave wall as they passed my heart racing like a racehorse. I breathed a sigh of relief before deciding I would have to wait before venturing out, the path from the tunnel exit to the forest was too flat to cross with palace guards watching it. I’d wait for them to leave and then I’d make my move.

Moving back into the cave a bit I mourned a bit that I couldn’t lit a fire in the crisp chilly air but in the end I curled up in the dark with my back against the stone wall and reaching into my bag to grab some dried meats and a crusty old roll.

In a few hours I’d make my way into the forest, I know this island better than anyone alive, they won’t catch me before I get to a ship.

They can’t, I have too much at stake.

Chapter End Notes

It’s so ridiculously hard to write Kuroro as this evil overlord of completely asshole-ness and all the torture and torment and then switch over to ‘Switching Perspectives” and write an understanding and mostly kind and caring chrollo. Sometimes I’m afraid of mixing the personalities I’ve developed in this story with the personalities serenechaos and I have made in the other. Anyway had to get that off my chest. Hope you liked the chapter and let me know what you think! Will kurapika succeed in his plan? Or will the evil Kuroro find kurapika and shoot himself in the foot by killing kurapika?
Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

We’re coming up to the game changer. Be ready for it.

I woke what felt like an hour or so later, the pain in my stomach almost collapse-worthy. My hands immediately flew to my stomach with worry and fear that I’d lose my only life line.

“Hey, hey, no it’s okay. Come on, you’re okay.” For the first time I wished for the crown that would keep my child healthy, I was already worried that my stomach wasn’t even beginning to grow, but I figured that it was because of the starvation. Now I was holding my aching midsection with fear that I’d lose the only thing I had left. “Don’t worry honey, I’m going to get us somewhere good real soon and you’ll be fine,” I whispered, trying to make myself believe that too.

Once the ache subsided, I pulled out a slightly rotting apple and some stiff cheese to break my fast and ate in silence. The sky was still dark out but the guards were gone for now.

I hobbled my way out of the cave and carefully looked around to make sure my way was clear before hoisting my bag over my shoulder and breaking into a run over the plains. My bare feet flew over the ground and tried desperately not to trip over my own weak legs.

It felt like a nightmare, one of the ones where safety was just right there and you ran as fast as you can but it just stays the same distance away. It felt like I’d never get there but after what felt like the longest minute of my life, I made it.

I let myself stumble into the woods and lean against a tree to catch my panting breath, my stomach thumping with a dull ache. I wished for the relief of curling into myself but I couldn’t. With one hand on my stomach and another holding my bag, I began to walk under the cover of the trees.

“Sorry I won’t be able to raise you here hon,” I whispered, talking more to myself than any baby that had yet to fully grow. “But you’ll love the Hunter Kingdom. Netero is a little weird, but he’s a good man. He’ll help me teach you chess and I can tell you all about your grandparents!”

I smiled a bit as I thought about all the things I could teach my child. He or she would be one of the last Kuruta and I could spend the rest of my life teaching them about their culture.
“How about I tell you a story?” I whispered as I continued forward. “Once upon a time, the Red-eyed clan loved to sail and the God of the Seas loved them, but they had grown weary of having no home to sail to.” I began the origin story of my people softly as I hiked through the woods, feeling stronger every moment I was free.

“The God of the Sea, having great love for the red eyed people, pointed them to an island he believed to be free of inhabitants, but what he didn’t know was the Silver-moon people lived on the island. They couldn’t sail, so the sea god didn’t know of them.” I stumbled a bit and had to latch onto a branch as I wheezed a bit at the loss of breath.

“The Goddess of Nature loved the Silver moon people because they cared for her splendid garden and rode her greatest gift of the Gypsy…” I choked out a small sob. “Vanner horse. She was not happy about the sea god giving her people’s island to a people she didn’t yet trust and a war broke out between the two lasting four generations!”

“Over time, the Silver moon people and the Red-eyed people formed their own clans and they fought as well. All the fighting eventually began to cause pain to both the sea and the forest, the animals, people, and gods all suffered but at the same time, the red eyed clan got used to their new home. They fell in love with all the nature, looking on with envy at the Gypsy Vanners, it was a paradise but while they could still fish, the silver moon clan were beginning to starve.”

I rubbed my hand over my stomach as I stopped to take a breath, telling the story had made me feel better but walking at the same time it was making me rather winded.

“The Goddess of Nature was so busy fighting she couldn’t restore the forests to feed her people and this continued on until the sea god began to neglect the sea as well. Soon both people were in a state of emergency, but they had fought so long that they didn’t know that together they had the answer to their problems.”

I stumbled again and this time my shoulder slammed against a tree and I slid to the ground.

“Ugh. . .” Slowly I stood again and continued forward. “Sometimes people are like that, they think they have to fight, forgetting to try to talk to each other. That’s how decades long wars continue on so long.” I looked around again to get my bearings and turned towards the north before hiking up my bag. “And then the saint Kuruta of the Silver moon tribe at the young age of fourteen decided that enough was enough.”
“She rode her Gypsy Vanner into the goddess’s forbidden forest with bravery, facing down the goddess to plead for peace. But the goddess refused until the Red-eyed clan got off her land. So the brave girl glared at the goddess and told her to get over herself before she rode away to speak to the God of the Sea.”

“But the girl didn’t know how to sail and so did the only thing she could think of: she went to beg for help from the red eyed clan only to be turned away.” I heard a snap not farl from me and dove into a bush. My heart raced as I looked around in fear that I had been discovered. Luckily the handful of guards didn’t seem to have seen me.

“You think he’ll really try to sail off?” I looked up and recognized the man as one of the pirates that had been on Kuroro’s ship when he had first taken me.

“We burned all the ships he could have used, although I’m surprised anyone would believe someone would want to kidnap him,” the of the men commented lightly, covering up my gasp. Of course Kuroro would think to get rid of every escape route I could have had!

“Yeah, have you notice how sickly he’s gotten? Are they not feeding him?” That’s right they aren’t you assholes.

“Come on, south forest is clear we should report back to the palace.”

The men began to walk out of sight and I cursed. I should have planned for Kuroro to wreck my escape route, I just didn’t think he’d mobilize so quickly. Or at least I had hoped.

“Don’t worry, it’s fine,” I whispered more to myself than anything else as I thought on how I could get off this island. It was a long shot, but there was possibly a boat in the cavern under the crumbling cliff. It was just a legend but as a child I had believed so much that it was there, I could have swore I had seen it at times.

It was most likely not there, but did I really have a choice?

Hitching my bag up, I turned around to back track away from where the guards disappeared. I had to hold in a scream when something sharp cut into my already bleeding and injured foot. Great, now I’m bleeding from both sides of it!
I whimpered as I carefully balanced on one foot to rip the sharp stick from my injured one and continued onward.

“It will be fine, there has to be a ship under those cliffs, it’s part of the legend,” I whispered down at my belly, trying my best to ignore the pain I was in.

“When the Red-eyed clan turned the young Kuruta away,” I began to finish the story of origins. “She didn’t waver, she stole a small sailing boat and tried to sail even though it was dangerous with no training.”

I laughed a bit at the idea of a little girl stealing a small ship and sailing out to meet the sea god with no knowledge of even how to work a rudder. It was said to have been a desperate attempt and the reason that every child had been taught to sail as early as possible.

I began to approach the edge of the forest and I breathed a little sigh of relief. The walk back hadn’t been as hard as the walk in. Well, except for the stick that stabbed me.

I opened my mouth to finish up the story, more so to keep myself calm then anything but was stopped when I caught sight of Pakunoda!

I ducked into the bushes as quickly as physically possible. The woman was walking the cliff side, looking around. Searching.

“Kurapika! Kurapika!” She hollered into the slowly lightening night. Dawn was approaching, and Pakunoda was heading right toward the crumbling cliffside.

Someone had to have warned her right? She had to know that the cliff was dangerous, she had too! But as I watched, she wandered onto the delicate sandstone without fear for her life. She was going to die looking for me if she didn’t turn around soon!

I bit my lip as I watched, I didn’t want her to die despite everything. Yes she helped commit genocide but she was one of the only friends I have had in the last part of my life! She continued forward and I could practically see the cliff beginning to break.

I could let her die, it would be easy to just not say anything and let her fall to her death. It would be one less person trying to force me back into Kuroro’s clutches, not to mention saving her would
give away my location.

Then the cliff began to fall. Pakunoda screamed as she tried to race over to solid ground, the look on her face was desperate. When she jumped for the cliff edge my choice was made, I wasn’t a killer and I wouldn’t be as bad as them!

“PAKU!” I yelled as I raced towards her. She was hanging onto the side of the cliff and her eyes widened when she saw me.

“Kurapika! You should have gotten off this island by now!” She yelled at me as I dropped my bag to reach down to her.

“I couldn’t just let you fall,” I whispered lowly as I took her arm and tried to help her up. I could feel my muscles stretch and snap under her weight.

“Kurapika just let me go! You have to get off the island before Kuroro finds you! He’ll kill you this time!” She begged as I tried to keep her from falling.

“No! I won’t let you die!” I cried out as I gave a large heave to get her over the edge only for the side of the cliff to give way even more. I screamed as Pakunoda lost her footing and slid down the side of the cliff a foot, I desperately clawed my nails into her skin and held on only for my shoulder to pop out of its socket. The pain was burning and I was left with only one arm holding onto her. I whimper and tried to breathe through the pain. “I’m not a murderer, I won’t let go!” I repeated to myself, trying to rationalize the pain with the fact that I’ve taken worse before.

“Kurapika!” Pakunoda cried and I could feel the cliff beneath me begin to crumble as well. “I’m sorry!”

I squeezed my eyes shut, terrified and in agony. “It’s not okay Pakunoda. It’s not. but if we die I want you to know that I do forgive you.”

A unholy crack rang out and I knew that in a moment I was going to fall to my death, but instead a pair of strong arms wrapped around me and another reached down to take my place pulling up Pakunoda.

“You're in a lot of trouble Kurapika,” Kuroro growled into my ear.
Looks like I’ll die either way and I don’t even get to finish the story.
Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

And the climax finally comes. This is the official turning point everyone! Serious everyone needs to understand how hard it was for me to get to this point.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kuroro pulled me up into his arms, being unusually careful of my cuts, bruises, and lame arm. I was so tired that I was almost be happy to be wrapped up in his warm arms, but the dread kept me grounded. I’d be punished, and the scariest thing is I can’t even begin to imagine what horrid things Kuroro would come up with.

*I have to tell him about the baby, it isn’t fair that the child has to die because Kuroro hates me so.*

No! I wanted to slap myself, I will not bring a child into this life! Death is preferable to Kuroro; I can’t imagine the monstrosity he’d create if I gave him a child. Plus with his inclusion in the recognized nations, it would allow him to marry off our child for more power. If he is willing to treat me this way I doubt he’d care about where his own child ended up, at least that’s the monster I see him as.

Kuroro didn’t say a word to me as he ordered over guards to help bring Pakunoda to the castle and heaved me up onto his pitch black horse. I gave a small whimper of pain but besides that stayed quiet under the tension. Kuroro was angry, angrier than I’ve ever seen him. His stiff shoulders and stern face only served to run shivers down my spine.

He’s going to kill me this time, was it odd that I was looking forward to it? Finally this entire experience will be over, I can die and slip into the void and maybe, just maybe, my people could forgive me for the devil’s mark on my back.

The slow trot Kuroro led the horse on back to the castle felt like it lasted decades, my body was shivering violently from the cold and the relief of my upcoming death only made the shivering worse.

By the time we reached the dark castle, I could already feel my soul leaving my body. In my head I said goodbye to my friends, to my improvised parents. I hope that Ging is safe wherever he is and I
was hoping that my spirit will at least be able to visit him, Mito, and Netero. The people that helped shape me after I lost everything, after it was all stolen away. How cruel that Kuroro would finish the job so slowly.

Kuroro carried me into the castle, not a single maid or worker to be seen.

“Everyone is still out looking for you if you’re curious. Even Shalnark joined in surprisingly,” Kuroro told him, his voice in that deep baritone he used whenever he was going to send me worlds of pain that I wasn’t fit to cope with.

It was the first thing he had said to me in awhile, it nearly forced my soul out the rest of the way.

The parallels to our wedding day became obvious, then he had walked me through these halls with my arms around his neck, demanding that I play along. Now he was carrying me with a shoulder out of its socket and there would be no pretending that we aren’t what we are. He walked me right into the King’s chamber, the darkness of its depths still like a black hole where no light can escape.

I was roughly dropped onto the bed and I did my best to bite my tongue. I held my arm as I watched my monster walk to his desk and take a long sip of some amber liquid already poured into a glass on his desk. He watched me from over the rim.

“You’ve caused a lot of trouble again,” his voice made me flinch, I couldn’t even help the rapid movements of my chest as I anticipated tonight’s attack. My death would certainly be painful. “But, you saved Pakunoda.” He sighed and I looked over to him, shocked that he even cared about someone else’s life. “So let’s get this over with.”

His expression as he approached was terrifying but for some reason the weight seemed to slip right off my shoulders. It’s over, it’s finally over.

His hands wrapped around my throat and I didn’t fight it. I smiled as his hands tightened and I felt my lungs constrict. My eyes began to glow scarlet for the last time, I’m not even mad that he’ll be the last thing I’d see. My vision began to black out in the edges and I was reminded of the night I almost drowned, maybe I’ll see the figure that came to me in the water again.

The smile somehow curled my lips farther as it sunk in: I’m free.
The hands on my neck disappeared and my chest convulsed, greedily gulping in air as I coughed and gagged. Kuroro cursed before grabbing his desk chair with a desperate expression and throwing it across the room. I didn’t mind the crash, I was too caught up in the crushing disappointment and my body’s betrayal at trying to stay alive.

Kuroro glared back at me and I really didn’t know what I did wrong this time.

“Wh-hat?” I coughed out with my own glare.

“God damnit,” was his only reply as he marched back over to me and grabbed my arm. Without warning, he shoved my arm back into its rightful position, drawing a scream out of my already burning throat. I didn’t even get time to process everything as suddenly he was grabbing me by the hair, dragging me off the bed and over to the wall. He grabbed up the chains and yanked my arms forward harshly, making me hiss in pain.

The chains locked and Kuroro was already marching away from me, his hands clutching his hair like he was the one about to die.

“Wait!” Kuroro paused. “Finish it, don’t go! Please, don’t!” Kuroro’s shoulders hunched further and I wish I could see the expression on his face. He stepped forward and I began to feel desperate. “No! Aren’t you going to kill me? God damnit, get it over with already! Kill me damnit!” He slammed the door as I began to scream my command.

I stormed out of the room, Kurapika’s demands to die chasing after me like wolves at my back. I don’t understand, I wanted him to die! I wanted to kill him; the idea of gripping his throat and cutting off his air and watching the life slowly leave him sounded therapeutic. Water dripped onto my hand and I froze.

Am I crying? It was too late for regrets, if I was going to try and keep him then it was too late, but for a moment he had that look on his face. The simple curl of his lips and his eyes glowing in that soft light of happiness and relief, it was the same when he almost drowned. Maybe it was because he only shows me looks of terror and hatred, but something about that look made me feel angry, desperate, and so sad. He was relieved to get away from me, to die.

I can’t kill him, I can’t kill him, I can’t kill him; I need to kill him. If he doesn’t die soon, I’m afraid
he’ll steal something from me without my knowledge.

I crashed into my study and slammed the door shut before punching a wall. I screamed into the void of darkness before hitting the wall again, blood splattered onto the marble as I continued. When I finally stopped I quickly grabbed a bottle of whiskey and chose to forgo a glass in favor of downing half the bottle in three large gulps.

No matter how I think about it I won’t be able to kill him, and that was a problem. Normally I talk through these problems with Machi or Pakunoda but they are on Kurapika’s side along with Uvogin. Shalnark was still out searching so my only hope would be my crew that was apathetic towards Kurapika and his existence: Feitan.

I slammed down the empty bottle and stomped from the room to find him, I may have wandered a bit in the search. My mind still running through the latest attempt to kill the boy that has grown to be irrationally important to me. It took about twenty minutes before I finally found the assassin in my stupor.

“Feitan,” I called for the young man casually cleaning his sword.

“Captain, did you find him?” He asked but the look in his eyes said he already knew.

“Yes,” I paused not really knowing how to go about this conversation, it wasn’t in my nature to pawn off my jobs to my crew. I had denied him when he offered to show me a way to keep Kurapika forever and now I’ll have to ask him for help. If I was more prideful I don’t know if I could do it because it felt like I had failed. I wasn’t supposed to have feelings for anything besides Ryuuseigai. “I tried to end it, I was going to kill him tonight.”

“And guessing by the fact that you are here, you couldn’t do it.” Feitan put down his sword and the look in his eyes made my fury at myself rise: it was understanding. Like he knew exactly why I couldn’t finish the job.

“I couldn’t.” I growled, my fists clenching as his face flashed through my mind again, so happy to die.

“Would you like me to kill him?” He asked point blank. “I can make it so he doesn’t even see it coming, it would be over before anyone is the wiser.”
For just a moment I wanted to say no, the idea of sending Kurapika to a remote island where there was no escape and just letting him live flashed through my mind but that was too dangerous. Kurapika is dangerous, I once compared him to a beautiful wild tiger in a cage. If I get to close I’ll find his teeth in my throat. He’ll never stop trying to escape because I have no way to break him. I’ve taken everything away from him, I’ve broken his history in front of his face and forced him to sleep with the ghosts, I’ve done everything possible to break his spirit and yet he still stands against me. I never found the thing that would break him so thoroughly that I could reshape him into my perfect queen. He has to die.

“Give me a few days with him, and I do not want to know when you’ll kill him but yes, please get rid of him for me,” I finally decided.

“I’ll make sure you get one last day with him,” Feitan nodded and went back to cleaning his sword. “And I’ll make it quick, he doesn’t need anymore pain.” Those words almost seemed like a jab at me but in light of recent events, I only nodded and left.

Kurapika would be dead by the end of the week.

I slept on the floor, when I woke up the next day Kuroro hadn’t returned. He didn’t even return throughout the entire day. I was stuck, chained to the wall with no food or water. My joints ached from lying on the floor and my belly kept painfully rumbling. Most distressing of all was the bouts of bone deep pain in my lower abdomen, I don’t want to be alive if this baby dies. It would break me.

The day was boring and I had nothing to distract me from thinking of everything I had lost in my life. My parents, my people, Gon, Leorio, Mito and Netero... FreeBird. So much had been taken and that didn’t only include people. I’d lost my heritage, my innocence, my pride, and even pieces of myself along the way. I felt like an empty shell.

The door opened and I felt hope rise that Kuroro was back to finish me off, but felt my world crash and burn when it was the shark faced Shalnark. He shut the door, locking us in together when it wasn’t necessary, I was already chained to the wall and losing feeling in my fingers.

“What do you think the captain will do when he finds out from me that you can get pregnant, that you’re pregnant now?” He asked with a dark look. He didn’t let me answer, it was rhetorical. “That’s right, he’d make your life a living hell. He’d breed you over and over until he is satisfied and he’d make sure you are never able to see the children or even hold them and then you’ll die,
memory he would control in your children’s minds.” And I knew it was all true.

“But if you told him he might just let you at least hold them, he might let them think of you fondly. He may even let you live comfortably for a few years.” He offered, laying out my choices solemnly. “Either way he will know by tomorrow, so you better make your choice.” With that he turned and left the room, not letting me get one word in edgewise.

I was left alone, staring at the bed, thinking of my future and my baby’s future. If I tell Kuroro he’ll probably ease up on me, I’d be fed everyday. I’ll be treated gently while I held the kingdom’s future within me, and then he may keep me longer. If he wanted more children from me that is. My life would improve for awhile but that didn’t matter anymore, all that mattered was the chance to hold my baby.

I am the sheep for the slaughter, the sacrifice to the demon that is Kuroro. If I am allowed one last wish it would be to hold my child in my arms just once. To ask Pakunoda, Uvogin, and Machi to watch over them with everything they had after I am gone. I want to die but who I am to make that decision for my child?

I have to tell him.

Another night passed sleeping on the floor, my fingers were turning purple at the tips and every muscle felt stiff and exhausted. My mouth felt like a desert, my stomach was eating itself at this point and I hated myself for crying in the darkness of the night. I would have thought I was too empty to cry anymore.

I woke up in the night from the intense agony in my stomach and my joints screaming at me. Sleep was coming sparingly and everytime I woke up I felt more tired than before.

My mind wandered but I couldn’t really pin down what I was thinking about and before long, light was filtering into the room. I could feel the heavy bags weighing down my face even as I stayed in the fetal position on the hard, cold floor. I hugged my stomach protectively, trying to keep up my resolve.

What felt like another hour passed before the door opened and I barely had the energy to even look over to see Kuroro walking in with a blank face.

“Get up,” he ordered me, I immediately tried to stand but my body wouldn’t allow it. I stumbled
and my knees gave out a few times, looking up to Kuroro when he started towards me with something in his eyes I didn’t recognize he reached for me. Instinct was a funny thing, I could tell he was reaching to help me up but my natural react took over and I stumbled back, hitting my head on the wall as I did. Something indescribable flashed in his eyes and if I tried to decipher it, it came close to hurt. I wanted to scream at him that he had no right to look that way after this long.

I used the wall to get up to my feet as I glared at him. He stared back with that blank look of his.

“Get dressed,” he simply said to me but when I didn’t move he realized his mistake, I was still chained to the wall. He sighed in frustration and unlocked my binds and dragged me into the queen’s chambers. He basically threw me at the wardrobe and left me to change. My eyes drifted to the hidden door and just as I expected it had been nailed shut. How like Kuroro to quickly find the means of my escape and steal it from me.

I picked out a random dress and slipped it on, the rough material of the inside almost making me cry out. I tried to move my body back to the King’s chamber but every movement was riddled with needle like pains and I could feel blood dripping down from my ankles.

Yet still I managed to return. Kuroro was setting up a table on the balcony, two silver domes covering what must be breakfast. When he noticed my presence he turned and he seemed a lot calmer now, he was even smiling.

“Sweetling, let’s pretend one last time,” a shiver ran down my spine, was he going to kill me tonight. I almost lost feeling in my knees and collapsed right then and there.

I have to tell him, I determined as I rubbed a hand over my belly.

Quickly I took the seat Kuroro pulled out for me and gulped as I sat down. If I remained silent I could die before Shalnark would even have a chance but again that wasn’t fair to my child and then if I didn’t say a thing after Kuroro hunted something like that and Shalnark told him before I died. . . I can’t even imagine the punishment I’d get.

“Um. . . Kuroro I actually need to-“

“Don’t speak, let’s just enjoy ourselves this last time.” I gulped again but felt my confidence grow, he can’t cut me off forever.
He seemed content as we ate and I tried a total of two more times before I finally just blurted it out.

“Kuroro! I’m pregnant!”

Everything seemed to stop for a moment, even the wind was shocked by my outburst and then the world moved much too fast. Kuroros face darkened and I swear I could see thunder rumbling above his head.

“Kurapika, I am not inclined to indulge your crazy fantasies at the moment.” His voice left no room for argument as he stood and began leave me. I felt the metaphorical axe coming down, he didn’t believe me but I’ll have to make him. I jumped up, ignoring the pain of fabric digging and ripping into my skin. I ignored the shackles slashing into my Achilles heels and ran after him.

I caught him in the King's chamber, grabbing onto his arm. “Please believe me, I can explai- Ah!” Kuroro shook me off and continued forward even as I fell to the ground but I was on a mission. I jumped right up, blood spattered from the movement of my foot onto the wall behind me as I pushed forward and this time I caught him by the door.

“Kuroro! I’m carrying our chi-” the slap to the face knocked me to my knees, the workers must be out of the castle if Kuroro is willing to slap me away halfway into the hallway.

“Just shut up! I don’t want to hear it!” Kuroro kicked the door closed and I stumbled to my feet to run after him. When I got up he was already halfway down the hall, moving towards the stairs. Now that I had chosen a path the determination spurred me on, I took off running, almost slipping a few times on my bloody feet.

I slid to a stop in front of Kuroro, panting from the effort. Kuroro glared at me and I almost wanted to back down but I couldn’t, I was holding my babies life in my hands.

“Kuroro, just let me explain!” I screamed at him, my fists clenched and my eyes squeezed shut as I pores every ounce of determination and desperation into my voice. He needed to understand, he had to. This was our child I was talking about.

Kuroro growled deep in his throat and yelled back.

“You little brat! Just how far are you willing to go for this ridiculous delusion of yours!” He
snapped at me, his own voice raising as he yelled back at me. His hand hit my shoulder and I stumbled back a step. I opened my mouth to answer but he cut me off. “Just shut up and die!” His hand hit my chest again.

It wasn’t a particularly powerful shove but with my weak body and lightweight I stumbled back two steps, my bloodied feet finding an edge and slipping out from under me. I wasn’t aware of where I was until I was falling backward. I was standing at the top of the steep grand staircase and now I was plummeting down them.

My eyes opened and for a moment the world filtered into black and whites, I looked to Kuroro my eyes begging the ultimate question that my mind couldn’t wrap my head around.

Everything had been for nothing, not even Kuroro wanted this. I could see it in his eyes, the instant panic and regret. He reached out for me and I reached back but our hands slipped past each other without touching. It’s over.

My head hit the marble and the world flashed blood red. In the end I couldn’t save anything, I lived a short and meaningless life. My only existence ended up being that of a pawn in a game of risk and then I died.

This is the end, as least I can be a little happy now that I have no choice in it.

Everything went black.

Chapter End Notes

Hey everyone! I hope you liked the chapter and I’m so excited for what’s in store!! Just so everyone knows I’m starting up a patreon to help start up my dream of writing and creating web-comics and books, my fan-work will always be free but I’ll post pictures and add-on’s to my stories on there!

https://www.patreon.com/boozombie
Chapter 23

I paced the library as I mentally prepared what I’d say to Kuroro. I’d have to perfectly pretend that I had only just found out, then this whole mess won’t be my fault and once the little brat gives birth he can get his punishment for lying to us.

Everything will be fine, first thing in the morning I’d let Kuroro know and this would all be alright!

“Hey Shal.” Nobunaga slumped into the library, looking positively gloomy. He sat heavily in one of the chairs, obviously upset.

“Hey, what’s with the long face? Did someone die?”

“You haven’t heard?” Nobunaga shot up to look at me with disbelief. “The Captain is having Feitan kill the queen, that’s why all the maids and servants have been sent away on ‘holiday vacation,’” he air quoted. I felt my eyes widen and the blood drained from my face. Oh god no.

“When?!”

“Wow, I didn’t think you cared Shal,” Nobunaga sighed but continued when he saw the serious look on his face. “Kuroro said he didn’t want to know when, but Feitan told me he’d be doing it tonig- okay bye then?” I raced from the room, panic swelling up inside me.

I waited too long!

The marble felt like it was working against me as I slipped against the tiles in my desperate dash to the stairs.

“Feitan you can’t!” I screamed as I made the final push towards the stairs.

“Just shut up and die!” I stopped in my tracks as the stairs came into view and the worst outcome had already come true. Kurapika was tumbling down the stairs like a rag doll, I even yelled in horror when his head hit the marble stairs with wet smack.
He’s dead, and he’s taking Kuroro’s baby with him!

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The world was unstable, drained of every color but the dark red of blood leaking around Kurapika’s form. I could hear my breath, I could almost see it but I couldn’t move. I was stuck staring at his broken body.

He’s dead, he can’t be dead! I don’t want this, how could I ever have wanted this?!

My eyes connected to Shalnark’s and I was suddenly moving, racing down the stairs to the puddle of blood that surrounded my wife.

“MACHI!” I screamed as I hastily pulled the boy’s broken body into my lap and tried to find where the blood was coming from. His head wasn’t in as bad of shape as he would have assumed given all the blood. Most of it actually seemed to be coming from somewhere under his waist. Where was everybody?!

“MACHI! SOMEONE GET MACHI!” I screamed again when I turned to see Shalnark still standing there with a pale face. “SHALNARK! Stop standing there and HELP ME!”

“Oh god, right!” Shalnark ran off screaming for Machi and others to help.

“Kurapika?” I whispered down at the unconscious boy, desperately listening for his breath. Please still be alive. I could almost cry in relief when I felt a faint heartbeat and I could see his chest rise slightly. “Okay, it’s gonna be okay. We will patch you up again, it will be fine.” Kuroro felt like that was a lie, there was so much blood. Where the hell was everybody?!

“Kuroro!” Finally Machi came storming up the stairs. She froze when she saw the dead looking boy in my lap. “…Wh-What did you do?!” I turned to her with dark fearful eyes.

“I made a mistake, Machi help me!” I tightened my grip on the small bloodied boy, feeling helpless.

Machi looked at me with horror and disgust in her eyes. “Let’s get him to the room, quickly!” Machi raced up the stairs, presumably to get her medical kit. The rest of the crew was running into
the grand entrance way to see me struggling to lift the boy from the pool of blood.

Uvogin gasped, jumping a banister to get to the boy. “Oh little spitfire!” He cried out like the sight physically hurt him. Before I could even ask him to help me lift the boy, he was already swooping in to grab the bloodied blonde from my grip and hold him gently against his chest. His eyes snapped to me accusingly, he looked like he wanted to say something but instead walked as quickly as he dared. “MACHI! Where do you want him!?” He yelled for the woman as I sat in a daze, unsure of the realizations I had experienced in such a short time.

The image of Kurapika reaching out for me and our hands slipping past each other replayed in my head. I was so close to catching him, I pushed him! It’s not like I wanted him to fall from the stairs!

After a moment of silence I picked myself up and chased after the hulking man carrying my broken wife up the stairs and into the King’s chamber. They moved to head for Kurapika’s room but I immediately sped up to stop them. They didn’t need to be distracted right now!

“Wait my room is bigger, lay him on my bed!” Uvogin shot me a glare but did indeed turn and lay the fragile boy on my bed. Machi came around the side of the bed with her medical kit. Being powerless in this situation, all I could do was fidget at the end of the bed.

Machi examined Kurapika’s head with her lip held between her teeth, you could see a small amount of relief fill her as she prodded at the boy’s skull.

“There is a cut, looks like the edge of stair nicked him good. He’ll definitely have a goose egg on his head but nothing seems to be broken.” She quickly grabbed some kind of cream from her bag and bandages. No one spoke as she first stitched up the cut, then smeared the cream over the wound, and lastly wrapped his head in white cloth. “Okay,” she breathed as she turned her attention to Kurapika’s bloodied clothes. “We have to stop whatever is bleeding, help me take off his clothes.”

I had to bite the inside of my cheek as shame boiled up inside me. They wouldn’t like what they’d find under his clothes.

Uvogin helped to lift the edges of the fabric while Machi cut through it, her eyes immediately held questions when it was thicker than she remembered making it.

A collective gasp stalled the room completely the moment Kurapika’s body was uncovered. His
skin was blistered and raw, more red than not. He was so skinny you could count each of his ribs above his hips that threatened to cut right through his thin skin. The worst were his ankles that looked like the scarred skin had recently been ripped off. I heard someone gagging behind me but I was pinned in place by the blazing hatred fueled glare Uvogin was giving me.

“His clothes... Who added this cloth to his clothes?” Machi asked in a horrified whisper. She slowly picked up the pink tinted fabric like it would bite her, then her eyes turned to me and the betrayal in them almost had me begging for forgiveness. “Why? Why!”

I honestly couldn’t remember why I did that anymore. Was it jealousy? Or did I have a legitimate reason for it? I couldn’t answer her, even as the five or so crew members in the room turned to me with horrified questions. Luckily I ended up not having to as Pakunoda crashed through the door. Unfortunately Pakunoda was probably the most outraged for the boy.

She stopped dead when she saw him and some kind of pained whine/scream escaped her lips. She turned to me with fire rampaging in her eyes and screamed at me as she trampled forward, her fist raised. Phinks stepped forward to catch her hand when I didn’t, even if the disgust in his eyes spoke volumes about the depths of how much he didn’t want to stop her. I’m still their captain, their king.

“YOU BASTARD!” She sobbed as she began to fall limp in Phinks’s arms, only being held up by her armpits. “You’ve killed him! You bastard, you’ve killed him!”

“He isn’t dead,” Machi called the attention of the room, her eyes locked on the odd gore on his dress. It looked like he had purged his small intestine, blood covered gummy chunks of flesh stuck to his thighs and the cut fabric under him. “I’m not a real doctor, I have no idea what to make of this!” Her voice dripped with emotion, overwhelmed by the feeling of uselessness and desperation.

Uvogin’s fists clenched and a mixture of guilt and rage filled his expression. He looked to me with accusation.

“How long?” he demanded as he slammed a fist onto the wall. “How long have you been starving him?! We all knew you withheld a meal here and there but this,” he pointed a large finger at Kurapika’s withered form. “This isn’t just a few meals, this has been going on for longer than I knew!”

“Uvo, it’s not like you could have done anything,” Pakunoda cut in as she finally pulled herself together enough to walk to Uvogin, her eyes still glaring at me.
“No, you don’t understand! He begged me for something to eat just a week ago!” Uvogin’s face twisted into a aghast look of grief only to get worse when he looked down to see the boy again. “And I didn’t give him anything!”

“A week ago? I thought he had stolen your lunch?” At least that’s what Shalnark had told me, I believe I had slapped him twice for that.

“Kurapika! Steal anything? Do you even know who you’re married to!?” Pakunoda yelled at me, taking Uvogin’s arm to comfort him as he broke down.

“Why did you tell me he stole his lunch?” I turned to Shalnark, my eyebrows scrunching up since it wasn’t like him to exaggerate. “What about when you heard him insulting Machi?”

“What?” Machi gasped, turning to Shalnark as well.

“Well I suppose I may have misunderstood the situation?” He said almost like a question.

“And assaulting the maids?”

“He might have just bumped into them. . .” Shalnark looked at me fearfully, and I felt anger that he had used me to hurt Kurapika even more than normal.

“The stealing from the kitchens!!”

“He did actually do that!” Shalnark jumped forward, seizing anything to take some of the blame off himself.

“Does it matter!?” Pakunoda spoke up, sparing a withering look at Shalnark before turning her angry eyes back to me. “Anything he’s done wouldn’t have mattered if you showed the sweet boy any care at all!” She growled, tears building up in her eyes. “Of course he hates you, you treat him like a misbehaving dog! No, you treat animals better than you did him!”
“I . . . I-GOD DAMNIT! It’s not like I wanted this!”

“THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANTED!” She screamed back at me.

“This is getting us nowhere!” I silenced the room. “We will have a meeting, no one bother Machi.” Chancing another look at the angel I had destroyed before turning away. “Do anything to save him Machi,” I finished before leading everyone out, leaving Machi alone with the boy.

“I heard the queen was struck by an illness.”

“He looked sick for months,” one maid laughed but then felt bad about it when her eyes caught on the small child hanging around the stairs by the queen’s room.

“It’s too bad for Prince Soran,” I listened to the fringes of conversation from the dark corners of the castle as my eyes also caught on the small boy. “And he was almost adopted too!”

“The poor child, he looks broken up about it.” Kuroro would have to adopt the boy fast, and we’d have to hope that old fool Netero didn’t have some secret plan in the works.

I pushed off the wall and moved towards the king’s chambers.

“It’s Gyro!” One of the maids whispered as I passed. No one bothered me as I walked, the darkness rolling off me from my anger scaring everyone I passed.

“He must have heard about the queen,” another spoke and I had heard about it all alright. Kuroro the damn child!

I stomped my way to the king’s chamber and threw open the door so hard it smacked the wall. Kuroro, Machi, Uvogin and Phinks turned to me with wide eyes. They looked as if they had been sitting in uncomfortable silence, everyone looking at THEIR CAPTAIN with hateful eyes. Well, looks like it’s up to me to slap some sense into everyone.
“Gather your pitiful crew and get your asses into the office!” I yelled at them and stormed away towards Kuroro’s office, shoving past Feitan as I went. This shit stops now.

First I hear a week late from the crew that the queen is at death’s door and then I find out that Kuroro had been beating him senseless with the goal to eventually kill him! That idiot!

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Time to face the music, I sighed to myself as I got up. Phinks, Machi, and Uvogin shoved past me, a number of my crew hadn’t spoken to me in a few days. Kurapika has developed a fever and still hasn’t awoken, he looked to be in terrible pain.

Feitan walked in as I moved to get up and he looked at me with emotionless eyes.

“Captain,” he called, a tinge of sadness when he looked at the sick boy laying in my bed. “He’s going to die, isn’t he?”

“Without a real doctor most definitely, but even then his chances are slim,” I told him, running a hand through Kurapika’s sweat drenched hair.

“And he’s in a lot of pain huh?”

“Yes,” I growled, sick to death of the world constantly reminding me of what I had done.

“I think I should kill him,” he stated solemnly. My eyes widened and my fists clenched in time with my heart.

“Excuse me?” I snapped at him. I didn’t like the idea of a world without Kurapika in it.

“Listen, he’s in pain and he’s going to die,” Feitan explained as he put up his hands to show he had no ill will. “This will be a mercy.”
I gulped looking at Kurapika yet again. I didn’t want a world without him but Feitan was right, he was probably better off dead at this point.

“Alright, but we have been called in by Gyro so it will have to wait.” I let my shoulders slump as I moved to the door. “Come on.”

“Then I will kill him after, I’ll make sure it’s quick.“

“What? You’re going to kill him?!”

Feitan and I turned to see Shalnark standing at the open door, his eyes wide and his face pale. His eyes shifted between us, a bone deep fear in his eyes.

“Do you have a problem with that?” I sighed, it looks like everyone is questioning my decisions now. Shalnark fidgeted, his hands fiddling with his shirt.

“You can’t kill him!” He breathed, his expression turning into one of panicked desperation.

“And why is that? He’s going to die anyway!” I argued. Exasperation fueling me since the flame of anger had long gone out. Now I just wanted this all to be over.

Shalnark looked ashamed for a moment before he stepped forward and shut the door.

“The prenup wasn’t talking about adoption, it actually wanted you and Kurapika to have children!” Shalnark blurted out. I Immediately felt a disturbed laugh build up. Seriously, was everyone going crazy this week?!

“Shalnark, men can’t have children,” I chastised as I moved to step around him but he moved into my path with determination.

“No I’m serious here! I uncovered records about the queen’s crown, it has some kind of ancient magic that allows men to have children!” Shalnark explained. “He can get pregnant and if he dies before having a baby, Netero will attack us!”
I looked over to Feitan and back to Shalnark, waiting for the joke but this was apparently serious.

“Kuroro I’m pregnant!”

Was it a lie? Did he only say that in a moment of desperation to end his own pain or was he actually pregnant?

“How long have you known?” I growled feeling my anger rise from its cold death. Shalnark’s guilt ridden eyes told me everything I needed to know. I ground my teeth and shoved past him. “We are late, and prepare yourself Shalnark. This betrayal will not go unpunished!”
Chapter 24

I angrily stomped to MY office, Shalnark and Feitan following behind with drawn expressions. I stepped into the office filled with the rest of MY crew, all of them looking fierce and upset with me.

Gyro was sitting in MY chair, his arms crossed and his glare directed wholly on me.

“Shut the door,” he told me darkly.

Trying not to blow up over Gyro for something so small, not when I felt like murdering Shalnark for not telling me something so incredibly important!

The door closed with a reverberating bang, everyone in the room quiet as Gyro just stared at me with fury and disgust.

“Well,” he breathed, his voice a deep gravel. “We can't turn back time,” he stood slowly. I moved to speak, announce the disturbing news that they would probably have to leave the island if Kurapika dies.

“No, just no!” Gyro glared at me. “Do not speak! I will be doing the talking today Kuroro because frankly, I’m trying to figure out why I ever thought you’d be right to be the one to step up as our king!” Gyro slammed his hand down in the desk, his words making me flinch and back down a bit.

“How COULD YOU BE SO STUPID?!” He shouted at me suddenly, slamming his hand down again. He went on without taking a breath. “If I had known you’d do this, I would have married the boy myself!”

“Gyro-“

“What did I say?! Keep your mouth shut!” He cut me off with a swipe of his hand. “You are a great disappointment right now! No matter what the prenup said, you should have expected to have had to keep Kurapika! Not just until an adoption! FOREVER!” The man was breathing fire before he dropped down to sit again.
No one spoke but a few of the crew did look a little smug that he was being dressed down.

“If I had known you were treating him like this I would have taken him to live with me months ago!” He looked around at the crew and his eyes narrowed. “And all of you are no better! You all say you didn’t know the full extent of the abuse, but there should have been none! Kurapika is your queen, not a punching bag and may I remind all of you the only reason we can live on this beautiful island is THAT BOY!”

“Gyro the prenuptia-“

“I AM AWARE!” Gyro shouted again and pitched the bridge of his nose with another angry sigh. “You have created an absolute mess but luckily Kurapika isn’t dead yet, so we have time to salvage this situation,” he bit out.

“Oh! You will listen to me now. We will rush the adoption, make Soran legally your son and do everything possible to keep this island.”

“Gyro! Adoption will not help us!” I yelled at him.

“Kurapika isn’t dead yet! We can stil-“

“THE CROWN! Gyro, the goddamn crown! We can’t adopt,” I interrupted desperately.

The room was awkwardly silent as Gyro looked ready to just decapitate everyone in the room.

“What the hell are you talking about?” He finally growled. I felt at a loss of how to exactly explain what I had just learned, so I fumbled through it.

“The crown is magic, I guess, and Netero knew that!” I looked around to see everyone was still confused, looking at me like I was crazy. “Shalnark found out that the crown can let men have children!” I managed to finally say.
“Are you telling me that Kurapika, a man, is supposed to be able to have children?” Gyro’s glare got harsher before switching to Shalnark, his eyes like shards of ice. Shalnark froze before speaking with a start.

“I-it’s true, the crown has the ability to let a man bare a child.” Shalnark’s voice was soft and shaking, he knew where the conversation would go.

A few of the troupe members gasped, namely Machi, whose eyes had gone wide as she stared at Shalnark in horror.

“You pushed Kuroro to treat him worse and you knew this?!” She whispered, accusation in every muscle of her body tightly wound body. Everyone began to yell over each other, throwing insults and screaming at either Shalnark or me.

Everyone jumped when Gyro sudden picked up MY chair and just threw it against the wall.

“EVERYONE SHUT UP!” He raised his voice before turning back to Shalnark and I, the concern in his eyes betrayed his anger. “Is this true?”

Shalnark seemed to shrink into the floor. “Yes, it’s true.” Everyone started to talk over each other yet again but Gyro held up a hand. We all knew to shut up when he wanted to speak but Shalnark did add in one last comment. “Kurapika confirmed it himself. . . . A month ago.”

“A month ago?!” Pakunoda shouted, everyone turned to her as she stomped past Uvogin. She was on a warpath as she raised a hand and slapped Shalnark across the face so hard her nails broke his skin. “How dare you!” She hissed at him. Shalnark took the slap silently, he didn’t even move.

“Pakunoda,” Gyro called to gain the woman’s attention. “Now isn’t the time, we must figure out what we’re going to do.” Pakunoda grunted and stomped her foot before moving back to stand by Uvogin, narrowed eyes still staring at Shalnark and me.

Gyro sighed angrily, picking up the chair and setting it up to sit down once again. He let his face drop into his hands. We all waited anxiously as he breathed deeply, his fists clenched against his forehead.
“This is what we’re going to do,” Gyro placed his hands on MY desk, his eyes dark as he looked over us. “We’re going to find a doctor, a real doctor who can easily be made to disappear and we will get Kurapika back on his feet.” He looked to Feitan. “Feitan, I want you to head this. Choose anyone you want to join you, just get it done.” His eyes snapped back to me harshly. “And if he does recover Kuroro, if I ever hear that you so much as slap him, I’ll take him away! He’ll live with me on the far side of the island and I will raise your child. Let’s hope it turns out better than you.” He stood and walked out of the room. “Get to work everyone!” He shouted over his shoulder.

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I used a small bowl to slowly drip broth into Kurapika’s mouth, just the way Machi had early. She had stepped away for a moment and I felt the need to care for the boy I had long tried to push away my feelings for.

His skin was pale and his long beautiful eyelashes fluttered a bit but he didn’t wake. I rubbed a hand over his throat, making sure he didn’t start to choke.

“You’ll be fine, you are just going to be fine,” I whispered, keeping a steady pace with the broth. He needed to keep his strength up, so he needed his nutrients.

“You know,” Gyro’s voice called from the door. I placed the small bowl of broth to the side and turned to the man with a sigh. I understand that I fucked up, but I’m not excited for Gyro to continue to beat that fact into me over and over again. “This is the first time I’ve seen him since the wedding. He was so full of spite and fire, a strong and feisty boy. He was beautiful and I always thought of you as a man that appreciates beautiful things, not destroys them.” Gyro’s voice was a hard edge but I could feel that he had calmed down enough to let me talk now.

“It was because he was so beautiful that I felt I had to destroy him,” I spoke softly, taking a seat to watch Kurapika. I hoped that he’d wake up every time his body so much as twitched.

“Why?” Gyro asked taking a seat on the other side of the bed. “Why Kuroro? He was everything you ever wanted for a Queen, a partner and now we find out he can have children. Why? He was everything.”

I let my head fall into my hands with a self disgusted sigh. “I don’t know. . . It all seemed so clear in the beginning.” I tried to explain myself but I quickly realized there was no explanation. “I was afraid, I knew he was perfect and I was afraid I’d let him control me if I didn’t destroy him.
And so you thought you’d kill him? Kuroro you should have known that this was a forever type deal!” He argued but kept his voice down for Kurapika’s sake.

“I did know that! But I thought that I could handle it, I thought I could work around losing him. I didn’t want to fall in love with him.”

“And are you?”

“No, I don’t think I am.” I sat up a bit. “I am not a total idiot, love is not wanting to hold someone down until they cannot struggle against you anymore. It is not wanting to control every thought in their head so they can only want you. I do not love him, I want to possess him.” I explained, reaching deep into the darkest corners of my mind as I focused intently on the half dead blonde in my bed. I want his mind and his body. I want his heart as well! I want everything.

“Well that’s just unsettling.”

“Yes, I understand that although I don’t know if I’m capable of love anyway.” I waved off Gyro like I didn’t just admit I was broken somewhere fundamentally.

“I honestly don’t care if you can love or not, just fix your temper and get your priorities straight!”

“Then I need a favor,” I gulped down a lump in my throat, hating that this would give everyone more reason to hate me.

“Yes?

“I need help cleaning out the queens chambers. . . It may or may not be a mentally exhausting torture chamber.” I sunk into myself a bit, unwilling to admit that he did feel a little guilty.

“Dear god boy!”
My temper was going haywire and I feared that if I spend another moment by my captain’s side I’d end up punching someone for what has become of my little spitfire. If I had known . . . No that wasn’t fair to say, I did know. Some part of me definitely knew how bad everything was getting for poor Kurapika, and yet I did nothing.

I hadn’t fought when Kuroro had banned our trips around the island. I had let it go when he brushed off my concerns for the boy’s health, I had done nothing.

I made my way toward the stables. With Kurapika still unresponsive his poor horse must be starving for attention, and maybe feeding the innocent creature will calm me.

My fury at Shalnark could almost surpass my anger towards Kuroro; how could they hate the sweet boy so much that they’d beat him until he was near death?

I understood why Shalnark would distrust the boy, but he wasn’t the woman that did those things to him all those years ago so why did he need to be so cruel?

I burst into the stables irritability, startling the poor stable master as he was brushing down the horses.

“Oh, Uvogin sir! How can I help you?”

“I was just coming down to feed the queen's horse,” I told the man as I searched for the steed.

“The queen’s horse? He hasn’t had a horse for more than a month sir.”
I froze looking to the man with confusion. I gave that horse to Kurapika, where had it gone!?

“Excuse me?”

The crew had glared at me all through the chore of replacing the tar strained mattress with a fresh one, and now as Kortopi and Phinks collected the broken artifacts, I had never before felt so disgusting.

The room had been a horrible mess when they’d opened the doors, aghast and upset cries had followed soon.

“You made him live like this?!” Pakunoda looked close to tearing my head off in that moment and Uvogin had just walked out, fury in his eyes and his face set in stone.

That had been over an hour ago. Now as dust motes danced in the open air from the curtains that Machi had recently thrust open, everyone simmered.

Everyone seemed to be on a tipping point, calm enough to not yell at me anymore but still ready to attack me should they find another reason to do so. And of course it would be Uvogin’s return that gave them that reason.

Uvogin walked into the room with the might and vengeful nature of a thunderstorm, his eyes lingered on me for a moment. If looks could kill, well I’d probably have died yesterday. He turned to Gyro, who had been leading my mutinous crew since he came, and cleared his throat to gain his attention.

“Yes Uvogin?” Gyro looked up from the piece of broken jewelry he was inspecting with a sad frown, his eyebrow raised in question.

“Why do you have Kurapika’s horse?” Those gruff words made me freeze, horror consuming me since I had completely forgotten about yet another atrocity I had committed.
Gyro looked surprised before he turned to me with a suspicious look.

“Kurapika’s horse? That steed was a gift from Kuroro . . . What the hell did you do?!?” He snapped at me.

All eyes turned to me, Pakunoda and Machi with renewed fury in their eyes. Koltopi, Phinks, and Nobunaga just looked at me like they didn’t even know me anymore.


“I may have tricked Kurapika into thinking I served him the beast,” the room gasped, Phinks making a noise like he might vomit. “On his birthday.” They gasped again, probably inhaling dust motes while they did.

“What the hell Kuroro!”

“You crazy bastard!” Machi and Uvogin yelled at the same time, I winced. Yeah I had this one coming; even I could admit that one was a little twisted.

“So you sent the steed to me so he wouldn’t be the wiser? Kuroro, you give pirates a bad name.” Gyro shook his head and looked around at my crew solemnly. “It’s clear now this won’t work with only me making the conditions.” He sighed and stood, looking around to the crew members like he had a private chat with them before, now only stating an already determined decision. “The crew will each give you a condition, and you will adhere to it or else I will be taking the boy!”

I growled in my throat but it didn’t seem like I had a choice by the looks of determination on everyone’s faces. “Fine then, get it over with.” Surprisingly it was the least upset of my crew that went first: Feitan. 

“I’d like to make the first condition,” Feitan stepped forward, grabbing the attention of the crew minus Shalnark, Shizuku, and Franklin. “I told you before that I could help you induce prisoners sickness and you refused, this time you will have to. I don’t care how you do it, but I want Kurapika to think he’s here by choice.” Feitan looked at the door to the other room with a sad look. “He’s been tormented enough.”

Pakunoda nodded, her eyes narrowed and angry. “And you’ll fix his reputation!” She shouted at
me. “He can barely walk down the hall without whispers hatefully chasing him and that needs to stop!” There was a grumble of agreement around the room and I’d give her that one. I could admit that Kurapika’s reputation had grown to a concerning level of hatred, but I really didn’t know how to go about fixing something so broken. I could just tell the staff that Kurapika was an angel but that wouldn’t fix anything, they would have to somehow come to the conclusion themselves for anything to really change.

“I will do what I can,” I finally said when I realized she was waiting for an answer.

“Not good enough! You need to promise that Kurapika’s quality of living in this castle will go up!” She poked a polished fingernail into my chest. I smacked her hand away lightly.

“I promise!” I growled at her. No one got this upset when Franklin, Phinks, and Feitan had a ship eaten alive by rats. I glared back at my crew and held up my arms as if to say ‘what else have you got?!’ “And the rest of you?”

No one spoke, obviously the most pressing of their concerns had now been taken care of.

“When they think of their conditions I’m sure they will alert you, for now Feitan gather your men to search for a doctor. Uvogin, watch the boy while Kuroro and I discuss how to best deal with Kurapika’s reputation.” Gyro stood, handing off the piece of jewelry to Koltopi and motioned for me to follow him.

“The rest of you do with the room as you wish, just make it livable.” He offhandedly ordered as we left.

“This is getting us nowhere!” I yelled as I exited the office. We had been talking for hours and yet we had nothing short of just hoping Kurapika woke up with no memory of his entire life. And Kurapika’s reputation was an entirely different matter, the best idea so far was to somehow make up a story explaining Kurapika’s behavior in a better light then talk about it where the maids would overhear.

But even that came with its own problems, the evidence of what we had done would cause Kurapika to only agitate them again. It was simply impossible to fix Kurapika’s reputation without his input and I don’t believe I’ll be getting that at this point.
I sighed as I made my way towards the dining room, intent to get myself something to drink, it’s been a long day of being yelled at. Koltopi and Phinks were fiddling with something on the table and I knew Uvogin was watching Kurapika, so that meant Feitan had taken the others out to search for a doctor.

I craned my neck to see what they were doing only to do a double take when I noticed the vase on the end of the table. Wasn’t that . . . ?

“Hey, is that the vase you broke some months ago?” I asked Phinks as I walked forward to investigate the beauty.

“Yeah, looks pretty good right? I tried to do it myself at first but it only fell apart again. Koltopi is much better at this than me,” he explained with a solemn expression, fiddling away to fix a silver piece of jewelry I now recognized as Kurapika's earring.

“He thought Kurapika might be happy to see his relics fixed if he wakes up,” Koltopi added in. “I thought it was a good idea.”

“Yes it is,” I murmured, my mind wandering as an idea suddenly struck me while staring at the reformed relic. It was amazing, you could barely tell it had ever been broken at all! It was like they had erased history, or rewrote it . . .

It’s brilliant yet so simple, how had Gyro and I not thought of this!

I backed tracked out of the room quickly but not before grabbing the vase. Phinks cried out in protest but let it go fast enough. I raced up the stairs, ignoring the slight stain of blood and headed straight for the office in hopes that Gyro would still be there. He was.

I burst through the door and closed them behind me. Gyro looked up room his cup of whiskey irritably.

“What now?”

“Do you recognize this?!” I asked with a rush to my voice.
Gyro raised and eyebrow before placing down his glass with a click. “No?”

“You should, you saw it up in Kurapika’s room when it was still broken!” I placed the vase on the desk in triumph.

“What? That’s that pile of broken glass?!” Gyro stood to look it over before nodding in approval. “Who did this?” He asked with awe.

“Phinks and Koltopi, well probably mostly Koltopi. That’s not the point, it gave me an idea on how to fix this!” I pulled up my chair I had been using earlier and sat down.

“Yes?” He asked me eagerly.

“We change history!” Gyro looked at me skeptically but I continued anyway. “Kurapika will be in a vulnerable place when he wakes up. If we put everything back to rights, we could really pull this off.” I grinned, nothing makes a man feel better than a plan forming in his head!

“Go on, I’m listening.” Gyro leaned forward as I began to explain the details, including how we’d fix Kurapika’s reputation.

I slowly became aware of the world around me, the sound of fire snapping in the corner, the light in and out of someone breathing slowly, and the light scraping of wood being carved. All these things dancing around my ears.

I became aware of all these things in darkness and it took me longer than I care to admit to realize my eyes were simply closed. My eyelids felt like dead weight, no matter how I commanded my body to lift them they declined. I tried to shake my head to get my body to move but stopped the attempt immediately when pain roared like a demon inside me with such an intensity that I lost my breath for a moment.

My fingers began to shake and twitch and my head started pounding, each thump of my heart making my skull feel full and ready to explode, but the most agonizing of the pain came from my
abdomen. It felt like something had been ripped out of me and my hips were re-aligning themselves completely. Every bone quivered and screamed a sour symphony at me.

A harsh anguished whimper was forced out of the deepest reaches of me when it all came together in my mind: I wasn’t dead but my baby was.

“Little spitfire?” The call was accompanied by the clatter of a chair falling over in someone’s rush to get to my bedside. I recognized the hefty sound and affectionate nickname from Uvo and that only made the growing sorrow worse. I was happy for a moment to hear those words, the thought tasted bitter with betrayal to the life that no longer existed.

A sob escaped my lips, making my stomach heave, sending waves of pain that only made me cry out more.

My baby is dead.

My baby is dead!

My baby is dead!

My stomach spasmed suddenly and my shoulders lurched up as I gave another sob that ended in the instinctual jerking to the side to vomit. How there was anything in me to vomit I do not know.

I flinched when a large hand touched my back and my harsh movement made the man move a fraction away before apparently stealing his nerves and laying his hand on my back firmly and rubbing gently with soft whispers.

“It’s okay, you’re gonna be okay little spitfire, just get it all out.” I spilled rancid thick yellow bile onto what I hoped was the floor, the pain rolling up and down my body continually.

“Uvo,” I gasped when the bile stopped spilling out of me.

“Yes spitfire, I’m here.” He answered me immediately. My eyes finally fluttered open to see the darkness of the room, fire light flickering on the walls and across a tiny half carved wooden dragon
haphazardly thrown on the desk. Snow was quietly falling outside the windows and it sent a jab of homesickness to my gut. Funny how I could lay in my parent’s bedroom and feel homesick. It’s been so long since I’ve seen the snow, I missed it, or more accurately I miss the days with my family playing out in the snow.

“Uvo,” I rasped with a bare pause in my breath, I was going to die soon. I knew that but I couldn’t die yet, not when my death meant families like mine would lose their home. “I need you to do something.”
“Okay, I’m ready Kurapika.” Uvogin called out the moment he returned to the room after I told him where to get my seal. He’d have to stamp my wax seal onto the letter if I wanted Netero to take it seriously.

“Write it down word for word,” I whispered and hissed in pain when I tried to sit up.

“Fine I will, just lay still alright?” Uvogin looked like he was holding himself back from tying me down to the bed.

“Okay.” I wet my lips and reviewed my letter in my mind before I began. “Write: Dearest Father, I write to you on my sick bed. My body is weak and I fear I may be gone soon.”

Uvogin choked, the feather he wrote with stopping as he looked up at me.

“Don’t say that,” he whispered, pain in his voice. “You’re going to be fine!”

“No I’m not, lets not pretend that I do not have mortal wounds Uvo.” I tried to keep my voice light but firm. “Now write it down.”

“Fine, but we’re coming back to the dying thing.” Uvogin grumbled and finished the sentence on the paper. After a moment I continued with my letter. “I have suffered great evils at the hands of the Phantom pirates but I have found solace in the fact that the people of Ryuusaigai are not evil. In fact it is the only thing left for me to cling to, they seem to be good and I would be remiss if my death continued the cycle of war and tragedy.” Uvogin seemed to smile a bit, like he was glad that in the middle of all of this I was able to see how good the people were.

“I have lost much in my short life and so I ask you, my loving adoptive father, for only one favor. Do not punish these good people for the travesties committed against me.” I licked my lips again and took a deep breath. “I, Queen Kurapika Lucifer, officially claim and consider the orphaned child Soran as my son. I beg of your mercy and know that you will move forward with this information in the best way possible.” I finished and looked over to the giant. He had a saddened expression on his face and his brows furrowed. “Okay, seal it and make sure it gets to Netero.”
There was silence, the sizzle and pop of the fire was the only sound.

“Uvogin, seal it.” I snapped at him. His shoulders stiffened and suddenly he slammed down the feather.

“No.”

“Excuse me?” I tried again to sit up but fell back from the blistering pain in my stomach.

“I said no, because you are not going to die and if you do this you are giving up the fight and I won’t let you!” Uvogin moved to the edge of the bed and took my hand softly in his. “I am not letting you give up on life!”

“Well why the hell not? I don’t like my life, if I die then it would just be one more unhappy life wiped from this world! Just let me go!” What more did he have to do to prove to these people that he was ready for this all just to end!

“I can’t just let you go!” He squeezed my hand tighter.

“Why?! because I’m your people’s salvation? I just gave you an out!” Kurapika cried out, begging for death at this point.

“No! No. . . I can’t let you go Kurapika because you didn’t deserve all of this! You are my deepest regret,” Uvogin brought his forehead down to touch his fingers. “If you die now I’ll never be able to do something to apologize for the life I helped ruin.”

The sincerity in his voice shook Kurapika to the core, Uvogin was truly apologizing for being part of his people’s death and his own torment.

“Then. . . There is something you could do for me.” Kurapika whispered, a ghost of a smile on his face as a tear traces down his temple.
“What can I do?” He asked with a desperation unlike him.

“I haven’t felt the snow on my face since I was a child. Would you take me out there? I want to remember my home how it used to be.”

“Okay spitfire, okay.”

__________________________________________________________________________

Gyro and I had just finished up coordinating our plan on the off chance that Kurapika actually lives through his injuries. We’d also come up with our plan should he die, which was becoming a more pressing issue every hour Uvogin didn’t declare the boy was awake.

It was as we were adjourning for dinner that Feitan came barreling through the front doors with his eyes full of panic.

“What’s going on?” I called when the man completely missed me and started towards my office. His eyes snapped to me and he seemed to breathe a sigh of relief. “Did you find the doctor?”

“Forget the doctor!” He yelled and stopped in front of me, frantic and fidgeting. “King Netero docked on the island!”

Gyro stepped forward, his expression dark. “Why were we not informed when his ships were spotted?!” He demanded. They had guard stations and patrols, no ship should be able to come within sight of the island without the king knowing about it!

“The snow hid their approach,” Feitan panted like he had raced to beat the army that was probably marching to the castle right now.

“Did they say why they’re here?” I asked. There was no way Netero already knew, Kurapika has only been abed for three days. It was impossible that he had figured it out and then set sail here in less than three days! The journey to the Hunter Kingdom took a week at least!
“It was some bullshit about having come for the holiday. He heard about Kurapika’s injuries and says he rushed the rest of the way here!” Feitan explained. The situation was bad but Kurapika wasn’t dead, I was still legally within my right to be on the island. If he tried to force us off he’d be in violation to the world’s national treaties. But this could be a good thing, if Netero has brought a doctor with him then we wouldn’t have to kill any of our own doctors.

“When he reaches the castle bring him and a doctor only up to see Kurapika, Gyro, let’s go.” I turned quickly after getting Feitan’s nod of understanding. I had to get to Kurapika quickly and make sure he hadn’t died but Uvogin would have told us, right?

We moved up the stairs quickly, taking two at a time. Maids paused and stared at us as we rushed past, a few going moon-eyed as they thought I was in a rush to see my sick wife because of actual dedication and love.

I slowed down when we got to my room, rapping lightly on the door as to not scare anyone awake in the room. No answer came and anxiety began to crawl in my stomach. I opened the door slowly.

“Uvogin? Netero has arrived we need to-“ the room was empty. Kurapika was missing from the bed and Uvogin was gone, even the fire had been put out.

“Oh God’s teeth! are you serious right now?” Gyro snapped as he looked around me to see the empty room.

“Find him,” I mumbled, my mind going haywire in befuddlement. “We have to find them. Quickly!”

Gyro turned and called the guards, organizing a search party faster than anyone else could. We have to find him before Netero got here!

Uvogin, what have you done?

Uvogin had me bundled up in his arms, he had wrapped two blankets and a fur over the two of us. He had even gotten me some warm pajamas and fluffy socks to keep me warm, even so I could feel the wind blow through me like I was nothing more than paper.
“Are you happy little spitfire?” Uvogin whispered as we sat under the last tree left in my mother’s garden. Kuroro had ripped up the entire thing after I had gone missing, under the excuse that it was so I’d stop getting lost in it. He had ripped out my birth lavender my mother had planted and every single plant. All but this tree.

“Yes, the snow feels nice.” I cuddled deeper into Uvogin’s chest, trying to soak in his warmth but it was useless, I could feel myself slipping away. It was moments like this the nostalgia swept me away. “Did you know my grandfather use to call me Spitfire too?”

“The king?” Uvogin whispered, before he chuckled a bit. As light as the laugh was, I still found myself bouncing on his chest slightly. “I’m sorry for being so uncreative I guess.”

“No I like it,” I mused allowed. “It was like I had a piece of home whenever you called me by that name, like I wasn’t completely broken.”

“You aren’t broken, you’re too strong to break.” He tightened his grip on me, his chin placed on the top of my head.

“I’d like to believe that.”

“You are though Kura, no one else could go through what you have and still care about a people that is not his own.” The rumble of his voice against my back was comforting. If I’m going to die I’d like to die like this.

“I’ve only ever wanted to be a good leader, I couldn’t be that while alive but maybe I can in death.” The words were honest but I held back one detail. Carrying a child changed me, even with the short time I actually had the pregnancy I found I couldn’t not think of the women on this island holding a baby, or the innocent children that deserved a home no matter the crimes their leader committed to get it. They were children just like I was, if I can’t have a childhood than maybe I can just secure one for the innocents of Ryuusaigai.

“You’re a good person, Kura.” Uvogin muttered with a sad tone to his voice. “I’m sorry Kurapika, I really am.”

“I know.” It could never be okay.
We sat for a long time, enjoying the fall of the snow. As my vision began to fade, I swear I could hear the sounds of my childhood, screaming and giggling rang in my ears from memories I thought I had forgotten. What did their faces look like? It had been so long since I had seen my family, I found it hard to remember what any of them looked like.

“Kurapika. . .” Uvogin called as my eyes began to close slowly. “Kurapika? Kurapika!” Uvogin began to shake me but I wasn’t coming back, I was falling. Cascading into the cold and lonely grip of death. In a moment I would be gone. Finally gone.

“KURAPIKA!” Somehow the sound of Kuroro’s voice pulled me back. The man had such a grip on my life that my eyes flew open and I could see the man run into my field of vision.

“Uvogin! Why is he out here?!!”

“He wanted to see the snow,” was the man’s only argument.

“He’s sick and injured and you brought him out to see the snow?!” Gyro shouted at the giant as he motioned for the man to bring me back to bed. “Never mind! Get him back into bed and warm quickly!”

“No!” I screamed out, trying to struggle but it was weak and barely caused anyone some concern. “No please just let me die!” I begged as I turned my head to Kuroro. “You have what you want please, just let me die now.”

Kuroro stared at me like I was a ghost that haunted his nightmares. In truth he was my demon, not the other way around.

“You aren’t going to die Kurapika,” he promised as my struggles caused my vision to swim and my head to spin. Before I could even begin to cry and beg to just let me put be out of my misery I lost my grip on consciousness and fell into the black abyss.
We’re getting into my end game guys.
Chapter 27

I carried Kurapika limply back to my quarters. His face as he once again begged me to die wouldn’t leave my mind. I knew that I had gone too far, everyone had made sure I knew that I had, but this was the final nail in the coffin for me. I had really messed up.

His skin was cold and his lips beginning to turn blue so I shouted for someone to run ahead and start a fire in my room. He’d need blankets and fur too, his body wasn’t retaining any heat!

Pakunoda and Gyro ran ahead to start the task as I marched the ice cold boy back into the castle, dodging the group of Hunter soldiers beginning to fill the entrance hall to race the boy back into bed before King Netero could see.

Gyro was adding wood to an already raging fire when I entered and if I wasn’t so worried about starting a war I could not win, I would have been worried about setting the castle ablaze.

“Get him in bed, and get those clothes off!” Gyro commanded when he noticed me. I looked down to finally notice that the boy’s nightdress was soaked from the snow. Quickly stripping the young blonde forced me to take in every bruise and scar that littered his body, I did this. I couldn’t even remember why I did half of it!

Gyro took the boy the moment I was done and I held myself back from possessively yanking him back into my arms. “Go greet the King, I’ll warm him up.” I had been excused. I didn’t like it, I should be warming him up!

“Allright.” I barely restrained the snark on my lips. At the very least the boy had awoken, that was good, right?

Nodding, I turned quickly and moved at a rapid pace down the hall to the stairs. I could tell by the way the soldiers held themselves that Netero had let himself into the court hall, the bastard.

I moved with a purpose in my step, appearing undaunted by the obvious reason the man’s troupes were here. The soldiers watched me with barely restrained animosity as I passed, making my way to meet the older King.

Netero was standing at my throne, his eyes locked on the unused queen’s throne. I had noticed the
collection of dust on the chair, the maids had been silently refusing to touch it. The hardened look in his eyes said it all: he was putting together at least one piece of what life for Kurapika was like here.

“You turned his childhood home into a torture chamber, I see you allowed even your staff to unknowingly join in on the torment.” Netero didn’t even look at me. “Did you know he had always dreamed of holding a court of his own? And you refused to even give him that.”

I didn’t say anything, I didn’t need this man lecturing me.

“I shouldn’t be surprised, I knew who I was leaving him too,” Netero finally turned to look at me, his eyes were furious but he spoke calmly. “What lies in our power to do, lies in our power to not do. Do you know who said that?”

“Aristotle.” I leaned against the wall, making sure that any emotion I may be feeling wouldn’t show on my face. Sighing heavily I moved towards the man as imposingly as possible to ask, “What are you doing here Netero?” My voice was cold.

“Can’t an old man come and see his son? I have a gift for him; let’s call it a birthday/winter festival gift.” He slowly took out a small pouch with a bright red bow and my eyes narrowed because I recognized that pouch. Cinnamon thorn tea. That bastard had really known all along.

“A king cannot bring an army to see another king’s wife.” I stated as I side eyed the men peeking into the room suspiciously. “Most would call that a declaration of war.” I paused before continuing. “Besides he’s sick, no one will be seeing him until he’s back on his feet.”

“I’ve brought a doctor, common place whenever the king boards a ship.” He gestured to a willowed old woman standing by for his order.

“Yes I’m sure.” I lifted a brow, like hell he brought a doctor just because.

“Kuroro, you can not keep me from my son.”

“Well he is my wife so I’m pretty sure I can do whatever I please.” I snapped back at the man and every soldier stiffened in hatred for me.
Netero’s mouth twisted a bit in frustration before he took three large steps towards me, determination in his eyes. “You are no longer a pirate!” He snapped at me furiously. “You obey the laws the United Kingdom’s dictate! And that means that Queen Kurapika is allowed to see his family!”

Our eyes held each other in a silent battle and I refused to speak because technically he was correct, Netero had a right to see Kurapika as his adoptive father. But it still made me angry that I had to bend to this man.

“What’s the matter Kuroro?” He leaned in to whisper close so no one else could hear. “Do you want to hit me too? Force me to comply with what you say? Like a big man beating smaller boys into submission?!” My shoulders hunched and my breathing hitched. How dare he?!

“Shalnark!” I snapped knowing the man had been sticking close to me considering we were in the same boat. “Please show King Netero’s doctor to Kurapika!” I yelled out and Netero seemed to breathe a sigh of relief as he tried to move past me to go to the dying boy upstairs but I stepped into his path to block him as Shalnark led the doctor up the stairs.

“I need to see him!” Netero snapped at me as he tried to step around me but again I blocked his path.

“Not now.”

“Why? Have you killed him already?!” He yelled at me, his eyes just the slightest bit afraid. “You know what will happen if you ha-“

“You think I would have sent your doctor up there to check on a dead body?!” I snarled in his face.

“Then let me see my bo-“

“LINENS! GET ME HOT WATER AND LINENS!” A shout from the upper floors interrupted the man for the second time. The voice was obviously the elderly doctor’s, both of us were immediately running because of the sheer panic in the woman’s voice.
Our run turned into a full on sprint when the sounds of weakened screaming could suddenly be heard.

We were in front of the King's chamber door in seconds but I finally grounded myself and tried to stop the older man from entering. He shook me off with a hard glare and unfortunately I didn’t have a good hold on the man to stop him. Old bastard is strong.

“I’m seeing my son!” He barked as he slipped into the room, Machi was down the hall directing maids to do the doctor’s bidding. She gave me a wide eyed look of fear as I followed the older man into my room.

Netero was standing wide eyed over the bed, taking in every inch of the boy’s bruised and scarred skin. The doctor had propped up the blonde’s legs and seemed to be working intensely in the apex of his bloody thighs. Had he been bleeding like that when I undressed him earlier? I didn’t believe so.

“What the hell have you done to him?” Was the whispered question that next assaulted me accompanied by desperate screams.

“I thought you said you knew who you left him with?” I shot back simply to hurt him. I was a monster, that was perfectly clear, he shouldn’t be surprised by what I did when left alone.

Netero’s head swung towards me, a look of anger and horror on his face. His mouth worked and I could see he was killing me a thousand different ways inside his head. Finally he spoke over the sounds of pain in the room.

“I’m annulling this marriage.” My eyes widened for a brief moment and everyone froze but Kurapika and the doctor. Uvogin had a look of fear on his face, he had been fidgeting in the corner, looking as though every scream from the boy hurt him physically. Machi had just been coming in with the things the doctor had asked for and was now looking close to tears and Shalnark just looked blank, like he couldn’t believe this was actually happening.

Gyro’s eyes has only hardened, he knew as much as I did that Kurapika was a legal adult. This man can’t do anything to take Kurapika from me.

“With what power?” I took a threatening step towards the man.
I am his legal guardian! With this evidence of his abuse, I can take him back!” I almost wanted to laugh, Kurapika wasn’t a child. He needs to stop thinking about him that way.

“But he isn’t a minor now is he?” Netero’s eyes widened like he remembered that the boy did in fact turn 18 just a few months ago and there wasn’t a thing he could do about it. The desperation that filled his face was almost pleasurable to me, I enjoyed watching him grasp for any kind of option.

“Please, you want the stupid island? Have it! Just let Kurapika go, let him have some semblance of happiness! Let him come home.” The room was still quiet, everyone waiting for my decision. I weighed the options, but there really was only one. If Kurapika went with Netero there would be nothing stopping the man from attacking us. It could happen in a week or even in ten years but he would attack eventually without that boy acting as a legal shield.

“This is his home.” I turned away from Netero, ignoring the devastation on his face. He didn’t have a right, I remember being shocked by how easily he just let me have the boy but that made sense when you remembered that the man only adopted Kurapika to one day get his hands on the incredibly wealthy lands of the Kuruta. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief that I hadn’t let go of the boy.

“What are you doing?” I turned my attention to the doctor. Kurapika had fallen unconscious again but still he let out weak sounds of pain. The doctor glared up at me from her spot between the boy’s legs. What was she doing down there?

“I have to get it out before the rot poisons his blood.” She said as a way to wave me away, her eyes sliding to Netero who had taken a step back in loss. She was worried for him.

“Get what out?” Gyro stepped up to speak for the first time in a while.

The doctor looked at him with a hateful fire in her eyes before speaking. “The fetus of course.” Once again the room froze, horror shooting through everyone. Mine and Netero's eyes flew open.

_Kuroro I’m pregnant!

I killed my baby.
Netero began to laugh, a hollow sound bordering on sobbing. “So should I come back the next time you impregnate him? If this is what I have to expect I think I should if I don’t want to bury my son!”

I couldn’t retort because my breathing was becoming panicked. I had a child, my wife had been pregnant and he had tried to tell me. I did this, my baby is dead because of me.

“Shalnark . . . Did . . . Did you know?!” Machi’s horrified voice broke through my panic and I looked up at the blonde. Who was that man? It was one thing to fixate his animosity on Kurapika but completely different to allow my child to suffer for some misplaced revenge scheme!

The violent energy in the room began to boil, all of it directed at Shalnark. It was only broken by the sound of Gyro suddenly shouting.

“SHALNARK! Go to my ship! You will be leaving on a sea mapping trip immediately!” Shalnark jumped and after a brief moment of hesitation he ran out the door before anyone regained themselves to attack him. I understood the order, we couldn’t show Netero that we were weak by turning on ourselves but I was still panicking.

I couldn’t breath, a child’s laughter assaulted my ears and fantasies roared up. Thoughts I hadn’t dared think of for years now, so long ago when this plan had first started and we didn’t know the heir to the island was a boy. I had dreamed of the family we would create after the child we took became compliant. Now the truth was that that dream didn’t die with the reveal of Kurapika’s gender and I had killed my baby!

“Kuroro!” Someone called in fright but the blood rushing in my head made it impossible to focus. Soon I found myself stumbling out of the room and into the hall. The maids that were trying to find out what was happening down the hall tried to approach me.

“What’s wrong? Is it the queen?”

“The entire castle can hear the screaming, is he going to die?”

I waved them off but the thought of Kurapika dying now made me so incredibly angry. We haven’t
had a chance to fix this yet.

Our baby is dead, he can’t die before we have another chance.

*Kuroro I’m pregnant! . . . Pregnant!* His voice was attacking me, the memory of him falling replaying over and over.

I screamed, it was what I needed in that moment but it wasn’t enough, my rage whipped out along with my hand and I punched the wall. The maids screamed out for me when my knuckles split but I punched the wall again, I deserved this pain.

*Kuroro I’m pregnant!*

I killed my baby.
Gyro waved off Netero, who stayed for four days until Kurapika’s fever broke, so he’d wake up any day now. I was now preparing to share the plan with the rest of the crew, some of them may not like it but it was the best we had.

Everyone would soon be here, excluding Shalnark who had been sent to Gyro’s ship and Shizuku who would be the key factor in this plan so she needed to have no knowledge of what was happening.

“Thank you for coming,” I called when my crew began to fill my office. Feitan gave me a nod along with Phinks but everyone else kept silent and avoided looking at me.

“Let’s get started.” I sighed as I began to lay down instructions and plans I had drawn up for each of them in the last few days only for Uvogin to interrupt by slamming a hand down on my desk.

“Hey! Before you start I have my demand!” Uvogin glared hotly at me and I nodded. I agreed to give them each one condition I had to hold up if I was to keep Kurapika. And I would be keeping him, he’s mine.

“Go on then.”

“I want you to give him back his freedoms. His speech, his horse, his time with me and the others, he deserves that much at least!” Uvogin slammed his hand down on the table a few more times for enforcement.

I couldn’t exactly say “no”, but before I could say anything Phinks was speaking up.

“I’d like his garden replanted.” Everyone turned to look at him, it was an unusual request coming from him. “What? He liked that garden and I heard from Shalnark that his mom planted it to celebrate his birth. By ripping it up you’ve basically told him you’d like him to not have existed!” Phinks crossed his arms as everyone gave him a disbelieving look but a few were actually impressed. Damn I was impressed, I guess at some point I did want him to have never existed, I didn’t like the power he somehow had over me.

“Okay, I agree to both. Kurapika will be allowed his freedoms again, and if everything goes
accordingly he won’t even remember that they were ever taken in the first place.” I smiled as everyone around the room looked confused, they couldn’t understand how something so traumatic could be forgotten so easily. Well maybe except for Feitan.

No one spoke as I handed them each their assignments. “Uvogin, Nobunaga, and Feitan, I need you to repeat this story to Shizuku until she remembers it as fact. Koltopi and Phinks, I need you two to focus on forging certain items and keep repairing anything broken but I need a few of them changed when you fix them, I’ve written down the specifics.” I explained as they quickly read over my instructions. Machi’s brow twisted as she read through hers.

“You want more dresses?” She growled lowly as she crumpled up the piece of paper in her fist.

“Yes, as many as you can,” I added wondering what was wrong with her.

“And what do you propose I tell my assistants about the torture fabric they saw on Kurapika’s old clothes huh? They’ve already seen it, I managed to play it off that I didn’t know and told them I’d ask about it but they are going to figure it out!” She yelled at me with a growing fury, seeming to be coming to her own decisions in her mind.

“I already have a plan for that if you’d read it over-“

“I’m not making him more dresses! He hates them!” She cried out throwing my plan in the trash bin. “I’m making him clothes he’d like and that is my demand!”

I clenched my teeth but again I couldn’t say no so I breathed out a sigh and nodded. “Fine, I’ll revise your part in the plan to include why Kurapika’s wardrobe will so dramatically change.”

“This is good.” We turned to see Gyro had joined us at some point. “But let me reiterate once again; if you ever hurt that boy again I will take him to my cottage and you’ll only see him when I determine it’s time to give your throne an heir and then never again!”

I gave him a dark expression, I was getting tired of having no say but nodded angrily. It was time to put my plan into motion.
This time the world came back to me quickly, my eyes snapped open and the pain crashed over me. My head pounding and my limbs weak. I wasn’t dead and that hurt worse than any physical pain.

Why couldn’t they just let me be with my baby? I wanted to be dead with my baby, I already relinquished the island to them, or did Uvogin really not give them the letter?

“Oh my, Sweetling you’re up!” Suddenly arms enveloped me and the confusion at the voice and such a gentle touch didn’t feel right. That voice didn’t go with hugs, more like beatings and rape.

“Get off me!” I screeched and tried to pull my weak body away from Kuroro.

“My darling what’s wrong?” He looked at me with an innocence he shouldn’t be able to possess, and a worry he had never shown me before.

“What’s wrong! You!” I hit his shoulder as hard as I could trying to push him away but he only held me tighter but amazingly it didn’t hurt, he wasn’t hurting me! What’s happening?! I didn’t plan it, and I couldn’t stop it but I started to breathe faster and my mind began to spin as panic and confusion consumed me. Against my own will, my body curled into Kuroro as I needed comfort and human touch, my finger threaded into his coat as great heaving sobs rattled my chest. “You killed my baby! You raped me, you did horrible things to me!”

“My love, Where is this coming from? Did you have a nightmare while you were sick?” His voice was calm with a hint of disturbed confusion and concern.

“What?” My breathing got louder and I curled into him further out of pure human instinct for touch in a moment of weakness. Kuroro began to card his fingers softly through my tangled and sweaty hair.

“I realize the loss of our baby had to be traumatic for you, I didn’t even know and I fell apart, but please let’s not fall back into those lies Netero fed you okay?” He cooed softly and the confusion dropped suddenly as I finally realized what this was.

He was trying to brainwash me. The scariest thing about the situation was that even though I could clearly see what he was doing, my body wouldn’t move away from him and some part of my mind was relieved. If he wanted to make me think we loved each other then he’d have to stop hurting me right? Or maybe the last rape where he stuffed strange things inside me and the loss of my baby
finally just broke me in two.

“I’m going to get you something to eat, alright?” He gave me a loving smile as he kissed my forehead and laid me back down as he stood and headed for the door with a satisfied look on his face.

I was in a very dangerous situation.

I felt almost giddy as I left for the kitchens, the maids following as closely as they dared. They wanted something to gossip about and the news that the queen had taken a tumble down the stairs and been struck with fever was getting old. We hadn’t allowed them anymore information than that and now they were desperate, perfect.

Kurapika had acted exactly how I wanted him to. Confused and distressed, he had clung to the only human contact in the room. I’d become the only thing he could lean on and the fantasy world I will construct will become his only truth. Eventually he will learn to accept it all.

Now I needed the chattest of the maids to take her role and unknowingly help me and to spread my lie, build the fantasy until Kurapika was seen in a completely different light. Time to start my act.

Gyro was waiting in the dining room, like we had planned, a slew of whispering maids hiding, thinking they were being sneaky. They were waiting for gossip, and they were going to get more than they expected.

“What’s the matter my friend? Shouldn’t you be happy, your love has awoken hasn’t he?” He asked, perfectly playing the part we had decided on.

“He has, I have no doubt he’ll get strong again soon but I’m worried for him.” I sighed, playing my part as well as I could hear the maids lean in closer from all sides.

“Why the worry? You two have loved each other since you were children, it will all work out won’t it?” He laid down the first layer of the lie that would become Kurapika’s world.
"You weren’t there when I found him again, that bastard Netero has been after this island for so long and when he heard about the deal you brokered with his grandfather, he put his plan into place as you know. Kurapika had been made to believe that we did it!” I forced my voice to fill with sorrow. “He thought we had killed his people Gyro! And because of this our people have thought so badly of him and he just receded inside himself more. By the time I convinced him of the truth, the assassination attempts started!” I put my face in my hands to hide my grin. From the gasps and whispers I could tell the maids were eating up my story. Soon they’d run to the women that controlled them with this information and Shizuku would tell them exactly what she believed to be truth, confirming this story into fact.

“Oh god, is that why he stopped speaking? Was he afraid of us?” Gyro asked also covering his face. To anyone watching, we looked to be in the middle of grief and guilt but I knew he was also hiding a smile.

“At first yes, but I found out from that doctor that he has been sick for ages now! He stopped speaking because somewhere in his mind he knew he loved me and our people and didn’t want to spread the disease.” The maids gasped behind me and an anxious chatter started up before they were shushed so they didn’t get caught eavesdropping.

“If he was sick why didn’t he tell you about the babe?” The chatted started up again, they were confused of course and I couldn’t believe my own people could be this bad at sneaking around. It was almost funny.

“I didn’t even know that crown would give him the power to have a child!” I cried out as a way of explaining it to them. “I thought the prenuptial meant adoption like everyone else, I don’t know why he hid it but after my mistake with Hail I don’t blame him. I still can’t believe I could listen to those traitors over my own love!”

“How were you to know that sweet girl had been set up? Hail was an unfortunate mistake Kuroro, we can’t blame ourselves for what happened. All we can do is be happy we finally caught them.” He tied the story together beautifully. Sadly for my old crew they knew too much, they had to be my patsy for Kurapika’s ‘abduction’ but at least they’d die for something. They’d be the final deaths in this lie and Hail could now be a hero, the woman that tried to save the Queen. It was good considering not many people had believed the woman had been apart of a plan to kill anyone, an oversight on my part. The other maid that day had been a new resident, so no one could argue that but the last maid on the morning of our wedding was known like Hail, but my next step will remove any doubt that she was not among the traitors.

“I know but Kurapika had begged for that girl’s life, I know he hates death so I thought he was just being merciful even if they tried to kill him.” I sighed and raised my head once I had my grin under control. “And he was afraid for the babe because I didn’t believe him, he kept it a secret and tried to have the baby in secret so our people would never lose their home again! I feel horrible, I’ve
been so focused on trying to build everyone a home that I didn’t see how badly our people treated poor Kurapika.”

“Can’t we just tell them the truth?” Gyro suggested, a sparkle of amusement in his eyes. “Certainly if you tell them that he was brainwashed by Netero into thinking we hurt his people and he only acted that way because of that they will believe it? Plus he was slowly coming back to the man he once was, he was even willing to suffer in silence for them all!”

“But if you hadn’t known that the two of us had fallen in love years ago when we were children, would you believe it? Based off his behavior?” I asked with a raised eyebrow and Gyro deflated a bit according to our script.

“I suppose you’re right.” He mumbled sadly as he pretended to think on what we should do. “Now that his illness is cured and those traitors will be dead soon, you should think about assigning a maid to him again, let the people get to know him. Maybe that will help finally break him from the damage Netero caused?”

“It’s a good plan Gyro, please excuse me I promise Kurapika I’d be back with something to eat.” I stood and the maids scattered. They moved with our story on their lips, they didn’t know it but they were now part a vital part of my plan.

As I made my way into the kitchens I found the woman who would be the linchpin in this all. May, she was well known to our people. Easily the chattest of the maids and the center of all gossip in the castle, if she is on Kurapika’s side then they all will be. She was humming suspiciously, trying to pretend she hadn’t been eavesdropping.

“May?” I called, keeping up the act that I had just had a very hard conversation.

“Oh! Um. . . Yes your highness?” She smiled a bit shakily, thinking herself in trouble.

“I know you probably have your concerns and I have no right to ask this of you but. . .” Her eyes widened a bit, she could sense something good about to happen and she hung on my every word. “You are one of the best I employ here and I need a new handmaid for Kurapika-“

“Oh my god YES!” She shouted before slapping a hand over her mouth. “I mean I’d be honored to be the Queen’s personal handmaiden.” She have a small bow and I knew exactly why she was
changing her tune so quickly. She wanted to confirm my stories, she wanted to know Kurapika in order to spread more gossip. If she was by his sides she’d be the center for all information concerning him and she loves being the center of attention.

“I’m glad,” I breathed a fake sigh of relief, acting like I didn’t understand why she was suddenly so happy to be put in this position. “Thank you. You’ll start in a few days after he is rested a bit more, I’d like to take care of him a few more days.” I faked a blush, like it was embarrassing that I wanted to be at my wife’s side.

“No, thank you, your highness.” She giggled and ran off, probably to find Shizuku in order to confirm my story.

it was all going according to plan.
Kuroro came back to the room and I glared weakly from the fluffy pillows he had sat me up against. If the man wanted to play a game, well then we’d play. He’d never convince me that I dreamed every horrible thing he had done to me.

“Oh good, you’re up still. I’ve brought you some soup.” Kuroro smiled charmingly and I only continued to glare at him.

“You don’t seriously think this will work do you?” I finally asked as he settled himself the side of the bed.

“What will work? I’m just bringing you soup. You’ve been asleep for a number of days and I had to hand drip broth down your throat,” he scooped up some of the thin broth and help it up to me. “You must be starving, I wasn’t able to feed you much.”

“Kuroro I am not letting you feed me!” I growled and weakly tried to smack the spoon away from me but he pulled it back to keep it from spilling.

“Kurapika, it’s okay, I know you’re still confused but don’t worry. I’m going to take care for you.” He smiled bigger and I almost wanted to smash my head into the wall since I really thought he’d lose his cool and lose the game.

“I just want to die,” I finally snapped at him. “You have what you want, just let me die.”

Kuroro’s eyes widened with fake surprise. “Kurapika, how could you say such a thing? After how long it took us to find each other? Please don’t leave me darling, I’d die inside without you.”

“What are you talking about? You hunted me down, kidnapped, and raped me! Forced me to marry you and the abuse continued!” I will not allow him to do this, he can’t just deny the past and expect me to fall for his schemes!

“I know your mind is a hard place to be right now my darling, but we really must sort through what is fact or fiction in that brain of yours.” He smiled like I had just told a hilarious joke.
“I know what is fact and fiction! You can’t make me believe we love each other!” I yelled at him and finally managed to smack the spoon he was trying to feed me with. The silver spoon clattered on the floor and I waited for the anger to fill his eyes, for him to hit me, yell, something.

But he only turned back to me and smiled softly. My breath froze in my chest when he reached forward and took my hand in his. I instantly jerked away, I didn’t want him touching me! Surprisingly he let me, normally he’d just force my hand back.

“Do you remember when we were kids-“

“We did not grow up together!”

“-and we snuck down into the kitchens in the dead of night cause Gally wouldn’t let us have any of those puff pastries she made? You were so afraid your grandfather would punish you if he found out!” He chuckled a bit as my jaw dropped. That was Pairo, this was an event with his childhood best friend, not this sleazy pirate! How does he know this?! “I just laugh whenever I think about how you dropped that sack of flour and you looked like a red eyed ghost as you cried, shouting ‘Grandpa isn’t gonna let me be a prince anymore!’ You were so cute as a child.” He snickered, ignoring my dumbfounded look of disbelief. This was a trick, it had to be. . . But how did he know this?!

“That- you weren’t-!” I sputtered but he stopped me with a finger to my lips. I was too confused to do anything about that.

“I can see the fever has you still a tad confused on what’s real or not. I’m going to go grab another spoon and then we can talk more, alright?” He stood and gave me a charming look before leaving the room swiftly.

What the hell was that?!

I almost cackled when the door to my room closed, it was all too easy. Kurapika obviously thought his mother’s journal had been destroyed, but she had managed to hide it in the catacombs and Shalnark had found it on his first trip down.
The journal was filled with little tidbits of Kurapika’s childhood with his dead fiancée, and I planned to use that information to its fullest. Soon Kurapika would have no choice but to believe the world I crafted around him.

Workers side eyed me, their curiosity palpable. So I gave a heavy, heartbroken sigh and looked down at the spoon with a look like the world was breaking around me. And then the crowning jewel of my act: I turned to the door with a wistful, lost look and placed a hand on the carved wood of the door before leaning in and kissing the wood. I pressed my forehead against the wood, every muscle in my body schooled to silent speak of hardship and longing.

I pulled away from the door, pretending I didn’t notice the girls giving me sappy looks. Already the tide was changing and the story around the castle painted Kurapika in a less offensive light. My disheartened and sorrow filled love-lost looks only helped to make us the royal sweethearts we should have been from the very beginning.

It wasn’t like me to have let myself become so out of control, somehow I had let anger fuel me and drive my every action. Now I finally understand why I was so angry, it was all because I wanted something that I couldn’t have. I tried to force him to pretend, I tried beating him until his mind broke and eventually had to depend on me but now that I had calmed down I could finally see the path to getting exactly what I want.

The next two days left Kurapika confused and ultimately distraught. Kuroro refused to allow him to get up so he was stuck in bed at the mercy of the pirate. It not like he had the strength to stand anyway but everytime he came to feed and ‘care’ for me he told me things he shouldn’t know.

He talked of my mother’s birthday where Pairo had shoved my whole head in the cake, except he had been there in place of Pairo. The day that rogue dog almost attacked me, and Kuroro stole Pairo’s heroic moment where he swooped in and tossed us both in the river to escape the animal. I shook my head to clear out the confusion. It didn’t matter that he knew intimate private moments from my childhood, I know what the truth is!

The room was dark, the snow outside making the night seem less dark than it was and the roaring fire Kuroro had kept up made the room stifling.

The darkness and alone time ate away at me, having time to let my mind run wasn’t good for me. All I could think about was how much I didn’t want every second the world gave me. My life felt pointless, everything had just been a build up to my imprisonment and death of my child. Every
escape had backfired, taking more and more from me until here I was; nothing but a shell of myself.

I turned over in the bed and curled into the softness of the pillows, enjoying the comfort since eventually Kuroro will go back to his true personality and take everything of comfort away again. I pulled the furs over my body and wrapped my arms over my midsection.

_Would the baby have had black hair or blonde?_

It was the wrong thought to pop into my head, tears pricked in my eyes as I squeezed my stomach. Thoughts and visions of the person that would never be filled my mind. What their laugh would be like, the color of their eyes. I envisioned it all as the tears came faster and my chest tightened until I couldn’t even breath.

My ribs shook as I gasped deep desperate breaths, I curled even further into myself. Burying my wet face into the pillow I bit at my lip until it bled, the pain honestly helped.

I jumped when a hand laid over my back and I quickly snapped around to find Kuroro had snuck in while I had been crying. My lips wobbled as I whimpered in my throat. Kuroro stared at me with a soft, sad look.

“Are you alright sweetling?” He whispered in a hushed tone like he was afraid to break me.

I wheezed in a deep shuddering breath as I gave him a wet eyed stare. We didn’t move for a charged moment before I began to break down again, my breath racked my body. Without any real thought behind it, I instinctively reached for the only human contact I had. My hand curled around Kuroro’s.

Kuroro squeezed my hand back and before I knew it, I was pulling him towards me and curling my fingers into his shirt to sob into his chest.

His fingers brushed through my hair as he whispered sweet nothings into the air around us.

“It’s okay, just let it out. That’s right, I’ll protect you my love.” His voice was like a vice in my mind. I knew it was wrong to seek comfort from the man that had delivered me to this despair but finding someone to hold me was the only thing I could fully grasp.
His arms wrapped around me made me feel as if he could hold me together even though he was the one to break me apart in the first place.

“I miss my baby, I feel so empty.” I managed to stutter out as I rubbed my cheeks into his shirt, drenching it but he didn’t seem to care.

“I know,” he cooed sadly, holding me tighter. “Our baby is gone, I’m sorry that happened but I’m so glad you’re alive. I wouldn’t trade anything for your health.” The words sounded so genuine and I knew it was a lie but . . . I’m so tired. I’m so sick of fighting and suffering, can’t I just stay like this for a little while?

The metaphorical iron cage would slam shut again soon, so I might as well enjoy my time out of it.

____________________________________________________

The moment Kurapika reached for me and pulled me to him made my heart skip a beat. This is what I’d always wanted, the feeling of him curling into me was almost euphoric.

As he cried, holding onto me with desperate abandon I felt my resolve to make Kurapika mine, body and soul, hardening. I want everything, I want him to only ever look at me. I wanted him and I to always be like this.

It was this moment that the rewards of my plan became oh so clear. If I do this right Kurapika will be mine. All mine, I won’t have to threaten or beat him into submission anymore. He’ll just want to be loved by me. Already the confusion was eating away at him, soon the forged evidence will build up against him and he won’t be able to believe his own mind. Only me.

“It’s okay, cry all you want.” I whispered into his ear, pulling him comfortably into my lap. “I won’t leave you.” I smiled, I love the feel of him in my arms.
Chapter 30

Every day spent in what should have been my deathbed felt longer and longer each minute. Kuroro wouldn’t leave me alone, everyday it was ‘let’s play chess,’ or ‘let’s talk about our childhood together.’ He still refused to break from the act.

Kuroro hadn’t shown up yet, most mornings he would wake me up with breakfast, going on about how much weight I had lost. Like that wasn’t his fault! I battled with the idea of trying to stand and maybe just throw myself off the balcony while he wasn’t around. In the end I decided it wasn’t even worth it to try.

Every other attempt to die or escape didn’t turn out well, so why even try? I was Kuroro’s little doll, that’s all I’d ever be so why fight it?

I sighed as I pulled myself up so I was sitting against the headboard and just waited for Kuroro to come. Maybe he has finally gotten bored with me? That would be a blessing if everyone just forgot I existed. I could just live out my days quietly in the library, pretending I didn’t want to die.

The door opened and I turned slowly to keep Kuroro in my line of sight but anxiety spiked immediately when it wasn’t Kuroro that walked in but a girl. One of the maids by the look of it, panic was pumping through my veins. The last two maids to walk into Kuroro’s room had been killed by his hand!

She smiled brightly at me when she walked in, very different from Hail and the other girl. She didn’t seem to hate me like everyone else. When Kuroro walked in behind her I was fit to cry, I didn’t want to watch another person die, especially someone that seemed so sweet and kind.

“Good morning your majesty!” The girl spoke so excitedly that I just knew she had no idea of the danger she was in!

Kuroro smiled pleasantly as he came forward to stand by me, I just looked between the two of them afraid and anxious for what was about to happen. The air grew awkward and heavy as both waited for me to respond and eventually Kuroro sighed and I stiffened. Here it comes.

Instead of Kuroro whipping out his ceremonial sword strapped to his hip and attacking the girl, he bent down so we were at level and took my hand.
“Sweetling, I realize you’ve had a hard couple of months but the doctor gave you a clean bill of health, you may talk to your maid.” His deep voice rolled over me and the only thing I could grasp was that he was assigning me another maid and telling me I CAN talk to her.

“I can speak to her. . . ?” I questioned so softly Kuroro had to lean in closer to hear me. The bit of hope I felt at the thought that I might be able to actually talk to someone else was amazing but I needed to keep myself in check. I can’t show Kuroro that I care about anything, he’ll just use it to hurt me the moment I make him angry again. Look what happened with my horse Freebird! Although I try not to think of that since it makes me queasy.

“Yes, please. This silence has made people make wrong assumptions about you. But I know once they get to know you they will love you.” He whispered back but it was almost purposeful the way his voice carried over to the maid who was giving us a sappy smile. He had done something, some kind of lie. I don’t know why but apparently he wants the staff to like me now.

I wanted to glare at him because it was his fault that the people hated me but instead I turned to the girl and fidgeted under her lovely smile. The two waited patiently for me to find the courage to speak. Speaking should be easy, it’s natural, but after months of extreme punishment anytime I tried to make a connection with anyone it was very difficult. I worked my mouth a bit and flicked my eyes up to her again.

“Ga-good morning. . . ?” My voice shook a bit and Kuroro gave me a proud squeeze to my shoulder, I almost flinched but I knew how to put up an act now.

The girl gave an odd little squeal and looked up to Kuroro before practically skipping forward to the end of the bed. “You are so cute! I can’t believe I never saw it before! Oh, I’m May by the way and from today onward I’ll be your personal handmaid!” She gasped out in one breath as she clapped her hands together.

“I’ll leave you two to become acquainted, I have some difficult business to deal with but I’ll be back later to sit with you.” Kuroro kissed my forehead and I really did flinch this time but May seemed to think it was me being shy or something so she just smiled and awed at us. “Ask May for anything you need my dear,” he assured me with a soft smile that made me sick and left after giving May some kind of whispered instruction. She nodded and turned back to me as his suffocating presence finally felt.

“So your majesty, what would you like to do today?” The girl smiled as she came to stand by my bedside.
“K-kurapika...” I whispered softly, she gave me a confused tilt to her head so I spoke a little louder. “Please just call me Kurapika.”

“Oh my! You are seriously so sweet! Okay then Kurapika what would you like to do with your day? Cecil is bringing your breakfast up soon so would you like to get dressed? Or I could help you with a bath!” Her mouth ran faster than I could really keep up with. My mind kept circling back to the fact that none of my maids ever lasted more than maybe a week, the second one didn’t last more than five minutes. There had to be a plan here, right? Kuroro was going to show me my place again, I just didn’t know when it was going to happen. I had to warn her!

“May!” I interrupted her monologue and grabbed her hand. She looked down at me curiously as I stared at her with all the determination and desperation I felt. “You have to run! Get off this island before they kill you too!” I whispered in case Kuroro and Shalnark were listening and the test was whether or not I’d warn her.

She blinked at me, confusion on her face before a soft smile broke out over her face and she bent down, taking my hands in her own. She wasn’t reacting the way I thought she would.

“Hey it’s okay,” She whispered, matching my tone. I ripped my hands away and shot up to grab my blanket and throw it off me. The blue nightgown Kuroro had dressed me in was thick and matched with a pair of fluffy socks to keep me warm and hid the scars and bruises from view. I pulled up the nightgown to show them off and grabbed the socks to show the worst of them all: the very permanent rough upraised red skin on my ankles.

“They have done horrible things to me! They can harm you too! They will kill you, please you have to get off this island!” She gasped at the state of my body and I felt so relieved that it was all I really had to do to convince people Kuroro was evil.

“Those awful people,” she mumbled and took up my hands again with a sad shake of her head.

“Yes! . . . Why are you not freaking out?!” My voice raised when she acted like this was all knowledge she already knew. Seeing my scars is always sure to be shocking so I expected something after her initial gasp.

She gave me a little tsk that silently tried to say she was here for me and patted my hands. “Oh Kurapika...” She looked around for a moment so check if anyone was listening and I leaned forward. I don’t know what I was hoping for, maybe that she was some kind of spy and she already knew all of this? Hopefully to be followed by the reveal that the plan for Kuroro’s overthrowing was already in the works. What I got instead was far more shocking.
“I promised I wouldn’t say anything but it seemed to me you won’t be able to breathe easily if you
don’t know,” she started. “Those people can’t hurt you anymore! His majesty, Kuroro and the
High crew hunted them all out of the shadows. They’re all in the dungeon!” She spoke cheerfully
as my jaw dropped as I tried to figure out what the hell was going on.

“What?” I asked my voice high in the panic running through my head, Why was she not getting
this?! And what does she mean that the people that hurt me are in the dungeon?

For a moment I worried Kuroro had turned on the high crew but she had mentioned them so that
didn’t happen. This could only mean he’d found another scapegoat to blame everything on, just like
Hail.

“The group that kidnapped and tried to assassinate you, and framed Hail. They have all been
captured!” She nodded her head encouragingly, obviously my shock and confusion was coming off
more as tentative happiness.

We sat in silence for awhile as she let me come to terms with what she thought should be a
celebratory moment for him. A knock at the door signifying his breakfast had arrived ended any
real chance he had to get answers.

The girl that brought his breakfast was also bright and cheery, smiling at him and offering good
mornings but she had a touch of hesitancy in her voice like she wasn’t sure about him yet.

“So Kurapika how about you eat at the table today? I know Kuroro doesn’t think you’re strong
enough to walk yet, but I think between the two of us we can get you to the table! And you’ll feel
better when you’re out of bed!” She grinned and I actually agreed. I liked the idea of getting the
hell out of this bed. Kuroro has been adamant that I wasn’t strong to leave the bed yet. He didn’t
even let me get up to bath myself, he’d carried me to the copper tub and I had been on the verge of
screaming the entire time.

How warm the water was had shocked me, the memories of ice cold baths too fresh in my mind. I
was not looking forward to the next bath I would have to take, it was embarrassing and terrifying to
have your tormentor be the only thing keeping you from drowning. Worse yet to have him washing
me, refusing to let me lift a finger. I felt like a child.

“Okay.” I nodded, straightening my clothes as she folded over the covers so it was easier for me to
weakly climb out of the bed with her help. I took her hand and she held the elbow of my other arm,
keeping me steady. My knees wobbled under my own weight, how was I so heavy? I was skin and bone!

My legs felt like twigs and I was afraid they would snap! Honestly I’m surprised they didn’t when I fell from the stairs!

“You are doing great! Okay, let’s take a step, don’t be afraid because I’ve got you.” I would have smiled at her if I wasn’t so focused on not falling.

The first step was difficult and I found I couldn’t pick my foot up much but I did it. May kept giving me warm compliments all the way until I was more than halfway to the small table my breakfast had been set on.

“Wow, amazing Kurapika! Just think; once you can walk by yourself again, I can take you down to the stables!” I almost stopped, why does she think I’d like that? The only reason for me to go down there is dead and gone. Her eyes suddenly lit up and she gasped. “Oh my! You don’t know do you?!”

“Know what?” I panted, more focused on not letting my knees buckle.

“Now that the assassin situation is cleared up and you are healthy, Lord Gyro brought your horse back!” This time I actually froze, my legs shook and my head snapped up to look at her. My feet began to slip and she started to panic, trying to keep me from falling. Eventually my feet slid apart and slowly I fell to my knees, taking May with me.

Staring at her I finally managed to ask the question blaring in my mind. “Excuse me?!”

May was probably doing exactly what I told her not to do which was tell Kurapika about the capture of his ‘kidnappers,’ which of course I expected. If I was the only one tell him his memories were wrong, or even me and the high crew, he wouldn’t ever believe it.

I chuckled a bit, happy with how Kurapika had been behaving these last few days. He was weak enough that he couldn’t try to fight me if he wanted to. He was just confused enough to stay quiet and compliant. I could tell he knew what I was doing but he’d just lost a baby and almost died, he
was much more malleable than he wanted to believe.

Every step towards my office darkened my mood. I had done wrong yes but Shalnark wasn’t the king and he needed to be punished for using me to watch Kurapika suffer more. Today he’d be back before leaving on a very long trip to map the seas around Kurata and before he left we needed to have a talk.

After that I’d need to make sure their went any doubts that my old crew was the culprits behind everything. Luckily they were all already chained up in the dungeons and I knew exactly what to say to forever brand them to the title of traders.

This could actually be a pretty fun day if I played my cards right.
Chapter 31

My crew gathered solemnly, everyone was still in a bad mood but it got a little easier to breathe now that Kurapika was going to live. He had been on death's door for so long that small factions within the high crew had sprung up. But now they needed to be one again, well all except Shizuku who couldn’t remember anything long enough to be upset at anyone. She wouldn’t be in this meeting because she needed to continue thinking that Kurapika and I were childhood sweethearts. It took everything we had just to keep her from forgetting.

The room wasn’t exactly quiet, Machi spoke quietly with Paku and Uvogin and the rest formed small groups here and there but everything froze when Shalnark walked in with Gyro by his side.

Shalnark had a nervous smile gracing his face as he walked in, he knew he was on thin ice with everyone.

“Thank you all for coming.” I started the meeting promptly once everyone was gathered. I needed every condition before I could move forward with Kurapika and a few haven’t been given yet. I also needed to make sure everyone knew Shalnark’s punishment would be fair and on MY order so no one can protest.

“Why are we here Captain? And why is HE here?” Uvogin growled glaring daggers at Shalnark, who gulped and fidgeted.

“He’s here as part of the crew, I wanted to make his punishment known to all of you and get the rest of your conditions for Kurapika’s imprisonment.” I looked to everyone, making sure my words were being taken as law by everyone.

“But HE ALMOST DESTROYED US!” Uvogin yelled as he pounded on the table. “He-“

“UVOGIN!” I yelled to shut him up, I was over the insurrection and the rebellion against me. Today we were going to be one crew again, no more fighting! I took a breath calming myself while Uvogin seemed to seath in fury. “Alright come now, conditions! Nobunaga, Bonolenov, Franklin, Koltopi, Pakunoda give me your best shots!”

“What about Shizuku?”
“She has asked for the maids to like him among a few other things, she keeps forgetting she’s given her demand. She doesn’t even remember why she’s giving them.” I sighed, it was starting to actually become annoying.

Bonolenov was the first to step up and clear his throat. “I’ve thought about this a lot, but he and I are both the last our nations, and I want everything that is Kuruta protected.” Bonolenov spoke solemnly and I raised a brow. It seems yet another of my crew had become sympathetic to my young Queen. “His culture and relics never to be forgotten or broken again.” I nodded, it wasn’t a bad idea actually. It even worked into my plan, if Kurapika saw us respecting his culture it would lend more weight to my world of lies around him.

“Done.” I answered as I formulated how I’d go about doing as he asked. The west wing was never used, I could convert it into a museum of sorts.

Pakunoda stepped forward next. “Kurapika has to be involved in matters of state,” she spoke with a sadness in her eyes, obviously thinking of the moment he had begun to cry silently over breakfast. I had been very happy that morning, I had thought it the turning point for Kurapika and I and then he’d started to cry. “It was the only thing he really wanted.”

“Done, I was going to do that anyway.” I waved her away before turning my attention to the last three of my important crew members.

“I don’t want Kurapika locked away in any rooms or anything anymore, this is his castle as well he should be able to go wherever he wants!” Franklin demanded with a slight tremor in his shoulders. I should have guessed that Kurapika’s restrainment would be the thing he took offense with, he was rescued from a slave ship as a child.

“Alright.” I nodded. I could work with that, it’s not like he could escape the island once he was loved by all anyway. He wouldn’t be able to move a step out of bounds without fawning citizens following his every moment. Kurapika would always be my prisoner but I won’t have to lock him up anymore because my plan was already working.

I turned to Koltopi who was stepping forward next. “I don’t like that you told us that he was getting enough to eat captain, I can’t trust you concerning him and he’s keeping us safe. From now on I want him to be in attendance to every meal, I want to watch him eat.” It stung a bit that I had lost the faith of some of my crew but I had made a mistake and I had to deal with that.

“That’s fine, I agree.”
Finally I was down to one but Nobunaga looked frustrated and a bit upset.

“What’s wrong Nobunaga?” Gyro asked as the man started to mumble to himself.

“Damnit!” Nobunaga cried out. “You guys took all the good ones! That’s pretty much everything!”
I raised a brow at the man because it seemed he was having fun ordering me around and was now upset that he hadn’t thought of an order yet.

Nobunaga suddenly snapped his fingers and brightened up. “I know! Holidays!”

“Holidays?” I asked, almost bemused.

“Yes! Holidays, you have to make some holidays celebrating the Kuruta and Kurapika, and you must pull out all the stops!” Nobunaga grinned. “Festivals and banquets and invited guests! . . . Like his family.” Nobunaga finished uncertainly, like he had thought of it as he spoke. It was the only request that stopped me short. I couldn’t allow the royal family of the Whale Islands on this land! They’d ruin everything! Unravel all my plans with their pure unfiltered love and care for Kurapika.

“I can’t do that!” I gasped, Queen Mito and her little nephew were the greatest threat to me and my hard work! Everyone knows if you want to keep control of someone, you have to keep them separate from those that care about them!

“Well you’ll have to because this is my demand!” Nobunaga yelled back. “I saw how he was with them at the wedding, I’m sure if it’s you, you’ll be able to find a way to let him see his family and keep him under control.”

“But-“

“Kuroro, you can’t say no to these. They are demands I have authorized.”

“But we can’t let him see his family! They could snap him back into flight mode! They would help him escape Gyro, we can’t allow it!” I argued, it was just ridiculous a request of me! Do any of them realize how much work it would take to bring his family in here and then keep up my act?!
“You’ll have to make it work, you better start thinking of some national holidays.”

I growled in my throat and clenched my fists but finally an idea struck me, so I nodded in agreement. “I’ll give some thought to holidays I can enact.” I spoke softly before sweeping my hair back and switching gears and looking to Shalnark to begin speaking of his punishment but he stopped me.

“Don’t I get a demand?” He asked and everyone's shoulders stiffened but mine and Gyro’s. It was obvious that he’d feel the need to ask considering everyone else got the chance to order me to do something, but the thing that put everyone on edge was the fact that it could only be something to do with Kurapika. Shalnark had proven as much as I that Kurapika and him are not a good mix.

I looked to Gyro and he nodded so I waved for Shalnark to go ahead.

“So everything can get back to normal as fast as possible, I’d like you to impregnate him again as soon as you can.”

“What, so you can kill another baby?!” Uvogin yelled at him standing up once again.

“Hey! I wasn’t the one that pushed him down the stairs!” He yelled back and I glared, I was trying to forget about that.

“But you could have stopped it!” Machi was yelling now too.

“That’s doesn’t change my demand! I just want life to go back to normal! Us taking down the stupid royal snobs!” Shalnark was panting and furious.

“Shalnark!” I snapped and made sure that everyone in the room remembered I was the one in charge. “I understand you hate them so much, you hate them because of what that countess did to you when you were young but do not take that out on Kurapika!”

“Exactly,” Gyro stepped in. “Kurapika isn’t her, that woman was worse than Kuroro but at least she let you go.”
“She threw me away! The moment I outgrew her preference she literally threw me from the ship!” He teared up a bit and his voice croaked. “She laughed while doing it, like I was nothing to her.”

“And do you realize you put Kurapika through the same hell you went through?” Shalnark’s face blanked and then darkened.

“I-I . . .” He stuttered on before deciding on the worst possible answer. “He deserves it,” he sneered.

I sighed and bowed my head, disappointed he couldn’t see past his hatred, I did in the end. “Shalnark, pack your bags. Gyro is leaving on a sea charting mission tomorrow and you’ll be going with him, that is your punishment. You’ll live on the seas like you almost sentenced our people to.”

“THAT’S IT?!” Uvogin shouted at me. “He almost brings us to ruin! And he just has to go on a sea trip?!”

“Yes! This is my will and my will is law, I AM THE KING!” The room chilled and everyone froze with their furious expressions.

“Is that all, my king?” Pakunoda hissed out at me. I nodded and the crew all got up, leaving without a word to me. It was okay, it would all work out. We had taken the first step to coming back together as a crew, and this time Kurapika would be apart of that, albeit unknowingly.

“I’ll be back soon! Then we can get you into the bath.” I chirped happily to the cutie that was my Queen. He was just amazing! He was soft spoken, shy, a little harsh with his words but that was just because of the way he grew up! He was adorable and caring but a little misunderstood.

Now that I knew what I knew from listening in on the King I wouldn’t allow anyone to be cruel to the poor boy! He had been through enough already. So as I moved from the room, taking plates to the kitchen, I stopped for everyone and anyone that called to tell them of my first day with the Queen and why we had all just misunderstood him.
Gyro and Shalnark of the high crew passed by me in a such a rush that I didn’t even have time to bow my head. I shook off the feeling that they were running from something and the urge to find out every juicy detail only to almost be knocked over by Uvogin as he ran to catch up with the other two.

He shouted something and a grin stretched across me lips, who was I kidding? I never could resist a good story.

I plopped my tray into Marybeth’s hands as she passed, she wasn’t one to go chasing down gossip so she wouldn’t care to finish up my chore.

“May don’t get yourself in trouble, you’re already the maid to the Brat.” She giggled and as fast as lightning, I grabbed her arm and pulled her to face me.

“Don’t you ever call him that again, he saved everyone even though we treated him like nothing. Remember this: he is better than us.” I hissed at her before pushing away to follow after Uvogin, Shalnark, and Gyro.

She scoffed at me but I was satisfied with the downturn in her eyes.

I pushed my way to the grand entrance where Gyro was trying to get Shalnark out quickly but Uvogin was catching up. It happened so fast, one moment Uvogin was yelling out for them to wait and the next a punch was being thrown and Shalnark was on the ground.

“I DON’T CARE!” Uvogin screamed at the downed man. Shalnark looked up at him with wide scared eyes, glancing around at the growing crowd. “I don’t care that she raped you, or that she beat you! Just because you’ve been hurt doesn’t mean you get you hurt Kurapika!” I gasped as did many others that were watching as Gyro being to try and stop the fight but Uvogin would not be denied. And neither would Shalnark.

“What do you know?! No one had ever tied you up and forced you to feel things you didn’t want too! I hate him! I hate his breed, nobles and royals think they can do anything! Like the world belongs to them well it doesn’t!” Shalnark yelled at Uvogin as the startling realization came to everyone watching that Shalnark had been abusing the Queen! No wonder he had withdrew so fast, no wonder everything the King tried had failed because someone he trusted was hurting the one he loved! And yet the Queen has still saved us. . . He had remained kind. My chest tightened as I felt my new found devotion for Kurapika strengthen. “I DESERVED JUSTICE!”
“YOU TOOK HIS BABY!” Uvogin screamed at him and the room went so quiet you could hear a pin drop. It wasn’t news to any of us anymore that the Queen could have children but to now know the reason the babe had died was fury inducing. “Is that your justice?!” A door slammed from down the hall and I recognized it as the King’s door. . . Kurapikas door, he had heard all of it.

Others came soon, Phinks and Nobunaga held Uvogin back and Gyro dragged Shalnark from the castle with panic in his eyes and everyone else just stood there; unable to move.

Someone asked the staff to continue on with their chores and the world started turning again at a slow rate. Eventually I made it back to the King’s chamber to find the fragile mass of the Queen huddled under the blanket, weeping silently. He looked like he couldn’t breath.

He just kept repeating the same two words. “They know.” Over and over like it was the worst possible thing for the staff to know of his abuse and loss. I tucked his head in my lap and held him as my heart broke for him.

“Yes we know, and we are all here for you.” I whispered. “We won’t ever let him hurt you again.” Somehow he just cried harder.
I moved towards the dungeons with a skip in my step, everything was really starting to come together. My only real problem at the moment was somehow coming up with an idea to adhere to Shalnark’s request without getting Kurapika taken away by Gyro.

But that was a thought process for later, now I just needed to accomplish what I was coming down here to do. I needed my old crew, the only people outside of my inner circle alive, that knew Kurapika wasn’t here by choice to unknowingly convince the rest of the castle that Kurapika had been victimized by them.

Considering I’d already killed the younger sister of the man who was unmistakably the pseudo-leader of his crew when I or any of the high crew wasn’t around. I hadn’t done that on purpose but it worked out in the end. All I’d need to do is actually tell the truth.

Cracking a smile at the irony that actually speaking the truth would be the solution to this little problem. I moved into the dungeon and shut the door with a bang, I almost laughed when I heard a few bodies jump and flinch. The sounds of sobbing and pain invigorated me as I headed to the cell of young Genthru, who was hanging from his iron shackles against the wall. His eyes were down cast, wide set, and confused.

“Hello there, are you comfortable?” He had heard me use this tone a number of times, most recently when I’d tied Kurapika to the mast of the ship. It was the tone I used when I wanted someone to know I was mocking them.

He looked up at me with wide golden eyes, his bony face sunken in from the days I had left them down here. “Why?” He demanded desperately.

“I’m sorry, you’ve all been very loyal but you have served your purpose and you all know too much.” I explained with cold eyes, low enough that the guards outside the door couldn’t hear but the men inside would understand why they all had to die.

It was all rather simple really.

“We know too much?!” The man yelled out, but luckily after starving down here for so long the words didn’t seem to carry all the way to the door.
“That’s right, you’ll follow the same path as your sister,” I stated so plainly it was almost like I was speaking of the weather.

His eyes narrowed, unsurprised that this had been the real reason for the death of his younger sibling. “What the hell did you do to her?!” His voice had gotten stronger as the urge to avenge his sister rose.

“It’s simple, I ordered my wife to never speak to anyone besides myself and the high crew, the punishment for disobeying this would be having to watch the one he spoke to die.” You could see he had figured out the end of this story but I continued on. “She died because Kurapika decided to speak.”

Darkness eclipsed his eyes as he glared, his face hardened and the full spectrum of hatred could be observed, I’ll admit I loved observing that spectrum.

“You killed her because your whore spoke to her?!” He spoke in a breathy growl, gearing up to his true state of rage.

“Yes, as with the other of course and now sadly you all as well.” I was candid with my speech, almost casual in my stance. It was hilarious to see the absolute rage that graced him at how I stood before him like this was nothing to me.

“I wish I really had tried to kill him, and you too! You’re a monster! Killing innocent girls and showing this false version of yourself!” His voice grew as he spoke and I did find it interesting that he didn’t care about the abuse he knew Kurapika was going through but most of my pirates didn’t really care about any humans they weren’t personally attached too. “HE SHOULD HAVE KEPT HIS MOUTH SHUT! KEPT HIS MOUTH SHUT AND DIED!” Genthru screamed, finally loud enough that the guards could hear. The other prisoners chimed in, having heard every word of my speech, they screamed along with Genthru slurs against Kurapika.

I left the dungeon with a smirk and a choir of screams at my back that degraded my wife. I quickly schooled my face into one of anger. I noticed a few maids down the corridor sweeping, biting their lips while the guards stationed outside the door seemed to be clenching their fists. Everything was going perfectly. I moved down the hall, giving a small comment that they weren’t worth it. They would all be gone soon and they could never hurt Kurapika again.

My timing was perfect as usual for the rumor of what had been said in the dungeons spread faster than I could even walk. The kitchen was bustling with angry whispers and I caught sight of Kurapika’s new maid setting down a tray that held the scrapes of his breakfast much too hard. She
was obviously upset by what she had heard from the other maids. Good.

I gave a heavy sigh, placing my hand on the table and put my head down like I was filled with regret and major upset. May looked to me with large almost tearful eyes, god this is just so easy. My people were so easily manipulated.

“May, I think there is some boiled custard somewhere, it’s Kurapika’s favorite. Would you be so kind to take some up to him?” I let my voice crack a bit and sighed again. “I still have a few meetings to take care of but I think he could really use the pick-me-up.”

May smiled and a few girls sighed a bit dreamily. “Yes of course! I will remember that he likes it from now on as well.”

“Thank you, do you think you could come talk to me in my office once you deliver the dessert? I have some important information to disclose to you about Kurapika.”

“Of course your majesty.”

_________________________________________________________________

I tried not to stomp my way back to the Queen’s side, the tray of boiled custard in my clenched fingers. I couldn’t believe anyone would want to harm that sweet creature laying borderline crippled in the royal chambers!

Kurapika had been nothing but kind, sweet, shy, and full of innocence! The Ryuuseigai people were a bit dark, that was a well known fact that we were all a bit cynical and warped as people. It was understandable considering since for a few generations we had accepted that we were going to drown, but Queen Kurapika had saved us and he was a pure shining light! Sadly we had all been blind to that at first so now it was up to us to help Kurapika through this terrible time.

I slipped into the royal Chamber and gasped at the sight of Kurapika crawling on the ground looking to be in pain. He looked up, shocked for a moment but his expression immediately flooded with relief.

“May! You have to help me!” He begged, his voice more confident then I had heard before.
I quickly moved to set down the tray and help Kurapika up and back into bed. What he was trying to accomplish out of bed I don’t know, probably trying to break that leg that he already somehow miraculously didn’t break in his tumble down the stairs.

“Here let’s get you back to bed, you’re still too weak to be up!” I had Kurapika half way standing but he suddenly pushed my hands away and fell over again immediately.

“No!” He shouted even as I rushed to catch him. I couldn’t understand what he was so upset about, why he was being so difficult about getting back in bed and resting. “No, I can’t go back to bed! Help me, I need to stop this execution!”

My eyes widen and my heart stuttered, I just wanted to cry. HOW COULD ANYONE HATE THIS BOY?! Here he was freshly back from being kidnapped and grieving his child and he was forcing himself from his sick bed to help the people who caused all his pain!

“Kurapika they did awful things to you,” I tried to reason with him. “Listen, they made their choices and they’ll have to face the consequences of it. I’m sorry but that’s just how it is.”

“No, no! They don’t deserve to die!” Kurapika cried out, his voice cracked and his arms fell limp for a solitary moment. It was clear to me that the stress and effort it took to get out of the bed and crawl around had already zapped his energy. He was basically falling asleep as he argued with me so in an effort to appease him, I smiled a bit and began to gently pull him back to the bed.

“Okay Kurapika, it’s okay. I’ll talk to the king and see what I can do. Just get yourself back to bed alright?”

“You won’t let him kill anyone?” He asked as I tucked him into the covers.

“I will certainly try.” I lied gently as he slipped into sleep. Giving a soft hum of happiness at his lovely almost childish face, I moved the tray with his little treat to the bedside table so it would be in easy reach when he woke before striding out with propose. I had a meeting with the King so I made sure to hurry.

I couldn’t help the small smile I felt building from my pride. I couldn’t believe that just ten years ago I was just a wide eyed girl volunteering to help clean up the King’s manor just to have something to do besides waiting to die and now I was head maid to the King’s castle and personal
handmaiden to the sweet Queen.

I knocked on the King’s office door and was let in immediately. King Kuroro looked up at me, his expression still angry from this morning. If he wasn’t careful he’d light his paperwork on fire with an expression like that.

“Your majesty,” I bowed as I entered, my new uniform, I loved that we had actual uniforms now, ruffled around my ankles.

“Oh May, I’m glad you were so prompt, how is Kurapika this morning?” He asked and my heart melted. The care and concern he showed towards Kurapika was beautiful.

“Well he seemed rather upset about the execution of his kidnappers and assassins, he is really much too innocent and sweet your majesty,” I relayed to the king.

“Yes, he has quite soft hearted. Try not to mention it and it should be fine, and I’ll talk with him tonight about it.” He sighed sadly and brush his hair back before looking but up at me. “Now for why I called you in here today,” he stated as he pushed his paperwork aside.

I straightened up and pulled my shoulders back, gulping a bit at his serious expression.

“Kurapika wants to try for another baby.” I gasped but didn’t interrupt. “He wants to make sure there is an heir and he’s afraid of more attempts on his life, so he’s trying to hurry it.” I nodded along, my attention completely captured.

“As you know, he is in no condition to carry a child but he is insistent on it so I’d like your help to get him health again, making sure he is eating his meals and taking walks to build his strength and such.”

“Oh my god! Of course, everyone is so excited for a little prince or princess to run around the castle. I will start up a plan with Kurapika to get him back in shape!” I squealed excitedly.

“No May,” he cut in quickly. “If Kurapika knows you know he’ll withdraw again, he is terribly shy. So if you could help without letting him know that would be the best possible plan,” King Kuroro explained to me and I nodded vigorously. It made sense, complete sense! Kurapika was an innocent creature, raised far away from the pain and hardships of Ryuusaigai so of course he’d
become shy at the idea of everyone knowing he was trying for a baby. Then there was of course the lingering fear of losing another baby, even if that wasn’t going to happen. That would make him want to be silent about it all.

“Okay, I won’t let him know that I know! Should he start wearing the crown now?”

“Oh yes, he’ll start wearing it tomorrow.” King Kuroro actually smiled something close to actual happiness and I felt a bit giddy. He was so happy with the idea of being a father, everyone knew that their fearless leader always wanted to be a father.

“Good, um one question,” I began my mind wandering to the small child that had been waiting to be adopted by the royal couple. Little Soran has to be very upset since it didn’t seem like the adoption was going to be completed. “What is going to happen with-“

“Young Soran? I decided when it didn’t seem like Kurapika was going to pull through that it wasn’t the right time to bring a child into the situation, but Lady Pakunoda seemed to really take to him. It isn’t public knowledge yet.” I brightened a bit, happy for both little Soran and Pakunoda. Pakunoda had been very upset when it was found out that she couldn’t have children and little Soran seemed so sad when Kurapika had been taken to his sick bed.

I grinned and turned away with a quick bow. As I left the office I almost bumped into Lord Feitan, a member of the high crew and the dungeon master as well as one of heads of the guard. I flashed him a smile and bowed to him as well just as he slipped into the office and shut the door.

Looks like he was talking to the king about something very important.

Now that the problem of making sure Kurapika was ready to bare a child was taken care of and out of my hands, I could focus on the problem of getting that crown back on his head without breaking my act. It would definitely be a challenge and then there was getting him back in my arms of course.

Just as May stepped out, Feitan slipped in and marched up to my desk, placing a clear bottle of unknown liquid on my desk like it was the answer to all my problems.
“What’s this?” I asked quietly.

“This is how you sleep with your wife again.” He stated with a serious look.

I leaned forward on my elbows and a sly smile slid on my face. “Tell me more.”
Chapter 33

The feeling of uselessness was suffocating as I woke from my slumber, but it was the self disgust was paralyzing.

I could hear the crowd gathered around the castle and I knew immediately what had happened while I was asleep. How could anyone set up an execution so fast? The thought that I had become so compliant that I just went to sleep instead of helping those people crushed me.

I wanted to fight, to scream, and punch like I use to but . . . “Oh god, I really am broken, aren’t I?” I moaned in despair. I would crumble should I try to stand as strong as I use to.

The cheers from outside made me flinch and tear up just a little bit, no one had ever been executed on this island! Kuroro was even tainting my homeland now.

I pulled myself to the edge of the bed and set my feet on the marble flooring. I felt a bit stronger in body but my soul felt deflated, at least it was nice to feel like I could stand without fear of my legs snapping again.

I moved slowly, shakily to the balcony. As much as I didn’t want to see anyone die, I couldn’t just turn my eyes away from the horror around me. In some small way I caused it, just a bit.

The cold air assaulted me the moment I opened the door that led to the balcony, with bony and pale fingers I clutched the silk robe May had forced me into close to my chest. The sight that greeted me was off putting and almost out of another world. People crowded the streets, cheering for the deaths of close to twenty men, half of which were already piled on a cart. The corpses bled in a horrific twisting pile of limbs and disembodied heads, my street was red with scarlet blood.

Kuroro stood tall on the castle steps, his face turned away to watch the horror. People began to notice me and point me out to others, the people began to cheer all the louder even as my eyes flickered red while they widened. They weren’t cursing me. . . They’re cheering for me?

But the people hated me, they hated me because of Kuroro, so why were they cheering for me while Phinks and Uvo chopped heads off of men’s shoulders?

Kuroro turned like he could feel my eyes on him and for a moment, just one singular moment, I
saw it. That cold icy malice in his eyes chilled me down to my core before he blinked and he gave me a tight lipped smile that could almost look warm.

Immediately I sharply turned and moved quickly back inside, slamming the door so hard the glass rattled. I didn’t even understand why but I was gasping in panic as I leaned my body weight against the door like I was trying to keep out some kind of terrifying beast.

I felt like I was going crazy, crazy enough to just allow this all to happen so I could stop being hurt. I need something, anything, to ground me back into the reality that Kuroro wasn’t ever going to stop hurting me for as long as I lived and breathed. That was when I decided it was time to go back to my room.

The door almost seemed like it was oozing malice, it wasn’t too long ago that it was my torture chamber, my dungeon, my haunted graveyard for every good memory in my life. The last week or so, I couldn’t really keep track of the days, Kuroro had insisted I stay in the main royal chamber while I was ‘sick,’ like it wasn’t his damn fault!

With a heavy chest I moved towards it. I didn’t want to go near the door that held so many broken memories and pieces of my childhood, but I need to remember. I can’t allow myself to fall into this new trap of Kuroro’s. He wanted me to become complicit, to see a way to lay down and take this hell of a life he wanted me to accept but I know that sooner or later the beatings and rape will return. I refuse to let down my guard so he can humiliate or hurt me in some twisted matter that surprises even him!

Each step felt like picking at scabs. The door almost grew in size like a beast waiting to devour me, I need this though. I needed the rage and the spit and the fire looking at that room gave me.

The metal of the doorknob felt like it bit me and I flinched, almost losing all my strength to stand before finally I opened the door.

What greeted me was almost worse than what I had been expecting.

The look of horror that erupted on Kurapika’s face before he stumbled back into our room would have been concerning if May hadn’t already told everyone in the castle how he had begged for their lives, so now if anyone muttered about his behavior being brat-like, someone else would
reprimand them. Kurapika’s new reputation was already taking on a life of its own, I barely needed to micromanage it anymore.

The crowds of my people seemed to be enjoying the show but I was over it now, I was done with blood and death for the day. Now it was time to resume my little game with my little wife.

“Don’t forget that court will be tomorrow.” I murmured to Machi as I turned and headed back into the warmth of the castle and quickly up to my lovely Kuruta.

Everything felt a bit brighter, soon I’d have everything I wanted. The room was empty when I entered but the open door to the Queen’s chamber and the sounds of someone ransacking it calmed me. With quick footsteps I was at the door and watching a furious little blonde toss blankets and pillows around with desperate abandon. He seemed to be shaking and barely keeping himself up at this point, he was truly still weak and shouldn’t be up and walking by himself yet.

“It’s all gone.” He whimpered when he noticed me standing in the doorway and threw a pillow at the wall that had been washed up to its former glory.

“Whatever do you mean?” I asked him keeping my tone confused and concerned. “Everything in your room has never changed.”

Kurapika looked up at him with fire in his eyes and a snarl curling his lips. “Nothing has changed?!” He demanded as he ripped a framed jeweled piece of cloth from a shelf and hurled it at me weakly. “What the hell have you done?!”

I caught the frame hurriedly, acting like I was afraid that it had been broken. I had Koltopi and Phinks redo the ruined art into a rendered picture of Kurapika and I as children instead of him and his dead fiancé.

“Kurapika, you aren’t making sense. This is the picture your grandfather had commissioned for us.” I explained as I set it down back on its shelf.

“No it isn’t! It’s suppose to be the picture of Pairo and me!” He screamed at me and I just let my jaw drop like I was surprised.

“Kurapika... That boy died when you were three, you told me about him when we were kids. He
fell off the crumbling cliffs,” I explained the lie to him softly, using a soft comforting tone. Kurapika eyes widened and flashed red.

“No- no! That didn’t happen!” He yelled at me.

“Sweetling, you don’t remember? It’s why you are so afraid of the cliffs, and your grandfather wouldn’t have set us up-“

“He did not! We have never been engaged!”

“If your original fiancé hadn’t been gone.” I finished up, keeping up with my story that Gyro and his own Grandfather had arranged for us to marry as children. One day it would all just be history and he’d accept it, whether by deciding to just live with it or by going a little crazy and just believing it. I don’t mind a little crazy.

Kurapika flapped his mouth a few times like a gaping fish, he was about to say something before May came bustling in with an arm full of clothing.

“Machi and the girls finished up your new wardrobe Kurapika! Really, you should have just told them you aren’t a fan of dresses, they wouldn’t have been upset with you!” Her boundless energy translated into her steps, making her bounce with each step.

Kurapika snapped his mouth shut, unwilling the risk May’s life to win a fight. After a charged moment he finally turned his attention to May and gave her an incredibly cute confused look.

“What do you mean? New wardrobe?” He asked approaching her cautiously.

“Oh well King Kuroro-“ she paused and noticed me and bowed deeply, a bit flustered. “Oh your majesty! Good morning to you.”

“Good morning May, please continue.”

“Oh well, his majesty was kind enough to inform us that you don’t care for dresses after we realized all your dresses had been turned into torture devices and had to be remade. It is just so
“terrible that they would torment you like that!”

“What are you talking about?” Kurapika almost wheezed a bit pathetically.

“Well that awful rough fabric those awful people put in your clothes! Machi couldn’t salvage any of them.” The girl rambled off like a tidal wave so I decided to take my leave for now.

“May, we will be having court tomorrow so help Kurapika pick out a nice outfit for it.”

“What?!” “Of course your majesty!” Kurapika and May spoke at the same time and I only gave them a charming smile.

“Don’t worry Kurapika, once we’re done picking out your outfit if you still feel strong we can take a nice relaxing walk to the library!” She clapped excitedly before turning back to me. “If that’s alright of course?” She asked.

“Certainly, just make sure he’s bundled up and maybe you could bring him a nice boiled custard.” I gave them both a charming smile as Kurapika glared at me behind May’s shoulder.

“That’s a wonderful idea!” May grinned and turned to begin sorting through the pile of clothing and I slipped out before Kurapika had a chance to question me about court. I didn’t need him figuring out my plans before they were complete. He was mine, I won’t be letting him go anytime soon so I’d need to keep him docile. And very soon I’d have him back in my bed once again.
I had allowed May to pick my outfit for court, I didn’t care. We never made it to the library, in the end I still couldn’t walk all the way there. Nothing really mattered anymore, even the dessert that had been loosely promised didn’t seem to matter to me.

Sleeping in my own bed had been nice at least, Kuroro had tried to get me back into his bed but each day that I became stronger and less fragile the chances he’d try to crawl into the bed with me grew. Even the idea of him sleeping next to me made my skin crawl.

Today May had woken me up with bacon and eggs, talking energetically about my schedule for the day. After court it didn’t seem like I had much, just strength training and lunch with May. The last item on the agenda was terrifying: dinner with Kuroro.

Kuroro had been around more and more of late, it was sickening considering I remembered everything. I remembered the rape, the abuse, and that person was responsible for killing my baby and no matter how much he tried to brainwash me it was never going to work!

“-r husband should be here soon to help you to the grand hall,” I jerked my head up when I realized May had been rambling on while I sat withdrawn in my thoughts. “So it’s important we get you all dressed up, this is your first time addressing the people as Queen, right?”

“Yeah.” I answered noncommittally hoping she would stop trying to delve into anything further. I liked her, I didn’t want her to find out anything and be killed even if it would end the torturous peace Kuroro was forcing down my throat.

“Well, I picked out something blue for you.” I didn’t look up at her and she sighed worriedly. “It’s silk,” she added uncertainty, obviously unsure of how to cheer me up. It was no surprise though considering she didn’t know the entire situation.

“Sounds lovely,” I whispered, hating that I was incredibly happy I was to see pants for the first time in months. It was sickening that just having something comfortable made this awful situation feel a bit better.

“Alright, well um, are you feeling well enough to dress yourself? Or do you need some help?” May
asked softly. She knew something was wrong but she didn’t know what and so was being as supportive as she could.

I blushed at the thought of the girl dressing me yet again, it was better than Kuroro dressing me. Even though I have never been attracted to girls it was still embarrassing to have the girl dressing me like a child.

“I- I think I can manage by myself today.” I whispered with a soft blush, barely noticing how May fawned over me like a was some kind of adorable shy kitten.

“Okay, well I’ll just tidy up the closet for you then.” She grinned at me as she laid my clothing for the day on the bed next to me and walked off to my closet to start hanging some clothes that had been delivered earlier that day.

Heaving yet another sigh at the situation itself I slipped off my nightshirt with tired muscles and unfolded the light blue silk shirt. It was loose fitting and airy, like a pirate’s attire. Was Kuroro trying to make me fit in to this pirate community? It was such a stark change from dressing me in the best finery they could to single me out from everyone else. Still I couldn’t quite grasp his game, why was he no longer trying to torture me?

I slipped the shirt over my head, wincing when my arms protested against the movement. The shirt, like everything Machi made for me, showed off the tattoo on my back. I wasn’t sure what Kuroro told the maids but I over heard May gushing about how I asked for it to show my love and dedication to Kuroro and Ryuusaigai.

“Doing okay?” May asked when she noticed my pained expression.

“Yeah... Yeah,” I mumbled as the soft silk caressed my skin. I could purr at the sensation and that made my disgust in myself grow. I moved to stand on my own but all the exercise over the last two days had finally hit me and I found I couldn’t.

“I think I may need help actually,” I called over to May as I gave up on the idea of dressing myself.

“Oh, are your legs not feeling good today?” She asked as she dropped what she was doing and moved back to the bed. She was about to pick up the lovely white slacks when a solemn knock sounded at the door, it seems Kuroro was here to collect me.
“Oh that must be his majesty!” Before I could stop her she was already calling him in. “Come on in!” The door opened and Kuroro came in his full kingly attire, dressed elegantly for court.

“Good morning my sweetling!” Kuroro smiled happily, like he’s been walking on cloud nine for the last week and a half. “Still not dressed yet?” He asked when he noticed the soft sleepwear still covering my legs.

“Oh, the Queen wanted to get dressed by himself but his legs seem to be very weak today.” May explained my shame, again before I could tell her to keep her big mouth shut! I was starting to think Kuroro gave May this position just so I couldn’t keep anything secret anymore.

“Thank you May, I can help him from here.” An angry blush took over my face, looks like Kuroro will be dressing me today and there isn’t a damn thing I could do about it. “Why don’t you grab his accessories for the day?”

“Yes sir!” She grinned and raced from the room.

Well, at least this was familiar: Kuroro, weak legs, and the need to get dressed. Kuroro knelt to pull my pants from my hips and down my legs, I squirmed uncomfortably at the sensation of it and he smirked up at me.

“Come now, it’s not like I haven’t seen you naked before.” The words were such a mockery to our past. It was word for word of that day our interlude had begun. I scoffed as he shook out the white slacks and bent by me again. He slipped them over my legs as I glared at the wall over his shoulder.

“Arms here.” Kuroro tapped on his own shoulder, indicating I should brace on him to lift myself up. I glared at him suspiciously but in the end what was even the point of even fighting him on something so small? I took my quivering hands and gripped his shoulders.

He stood a bit, taking me by surprise and out of instinct I fully wrapped my hands around his neck. My body was pulled off the bed and he easily slipped the pants over my hips.

“There we are, nice and snug.” He smiled and I didn’t know whether he meant my pants or our bodies now pressed tightly together by simple gravity. I couldn’t even let go because then I would just crumble to the ground.
“Are you done?” I snapped with a deep red blush on my face.

Kuroro let a corner of his mouth perk up slightly as he set me back down with more gentleness than was strictly necessary. “No, you still need shoes and jewels dripping from your lovely visage.” Kuroro chuckled as he turned from me and bent to retrieve my dress shoes.

“Is now really the time to flirt?” I rolled my eyes at him, upset he’d speak so candidly with me after everything he’d done. Kuroro just chuckled at me and bent to my feet. I jumped when he grabbed my foot and he just laughed again.

“Why so jumpy?” He asked with a smirk.

“Don’t be so jumpy, it’s not like we haven’t done this before,”

What he said to me on our wedding night flashed through my head. It was like Kuroro was purposely repeating our past, but for what purpose? It was like he was trying to rewrite our history!

He continued despite that I didn’t answer him, just staring at him in fear of what he’d do to me all alone in this room if I fought against him. After everything that has happened, everything I’d lost and fought against, I was still terrified of him. I make myself sick.

He tied my first shoe and took my other foot and placed a chaste kiss to the top of it. “You have beautiful feet,” he mused. Yes, he was definitely repeating himself, this was an exact parallel to our wedding night when he’d removed my heels for me. I still couldn’t fathom why though.

I tried to suppress my fear, say something brave so he’d stop all of this but my throat wobbled and I simply couldn’t. The idea of ending this weird game was good and bad, as much as I didn’t want my iron cage to snap shut and to fall back into my world of pain, I also don’t want to play his game. I wanted nothing to do with him. I was shaking with indecision and terror.

“Are you alright? You’ve eaten, right?” He asked with fake concern, although I was only guessing since Kuroro was a surprisingly good actor. “You’re shaking my love.”

I gulped, trying to find the strong and brave boy I was a year ago. The boy that flipped a table, uncaring of the consequences when Kuroro spoke of planning our wedding, the boy that sailed away from a sinking island with nothing but nerves made of steel and the desire to escape, the one
that screamed into a storm as cannon balls hurled at him but he is lost. He was destroyed, bent and broken apart, forced to be someone I never wanted to become. So instead of screaming or snapping something sassy like the old me desperately shrieked for, I just whispered, “I’m fine.”

My worst fear has come true, he’d hollowed me out. I’m just a shell watching with empty eyes as he filled me as he pleased.

“You sure?” He asked and took my hand, I didn’t hold his hand back but I didn’t pull away either. The fear was still paralyzing and I hated myself for how weak I was.

*Just a sheep for his slaughter.*

*A broken toy.*

*The abandoned pawn.*

What was even the point anymore?

Kuroro finished tying my shoes just as May returned. My spiraling thoughts of giving up and just accepting whatever the hell Kuroro was planning for me suddenly froze and burst like a cone geyser when I spotted the horrific object she carried: the Queen’s crown.

No. No! He can’t force me, he can’t put that back on me!

But I knew he very well could.

“How we are! Can’t go to court without your crown!” May smiled large and happily and I knew I had already lost. This was why he had May grab it, this was why he didn’t bring it himself! He knew I couldn’t protest with her life on the line, if I said even a word against it he’d just take the ceremonial sword at his side and kill her. Tell everyone she tried to kill me and lie like he always does. I whimpered inaudibly in my throat as May grabbed a brush and moved towards me with the worst instrument of torture I had faced yet. I hate that crown.

I lowered my head so I didn’t have to look at Kuroro as May brushed my hair back, commenting on
how long it had gotten and then placed that awful thing on my head. Quickly I tried to factor in how long I had before it attaches to me. I was still horribly injured, and underweight so I could get away with wearing the thing for a whole two days maybe, depending on how much I had healed this last week. I know the crown will quicken my healing, but if it attaches before I have the chance to take it off . . . I don’t know what I’ll do.

I sucked in a breath that bordered on a gasp of panic when the cold metal was placed on my head and the chains draped over my exposed back.

“There now you’re perfect.” May smiled as she continued to fiddle with my hair. I felt like a doll, just sitting docily as they dressed me up and positioned me as they wanted. At the very least May didn’t have malicious intentions as she did it.

“He is perfection itself.” Kuroro smiled at me as May immediately blushed and fussed over us silently. Still he was repeating himself and our first night together.

I scoffed silently and waited for this to move along. The sooner we got this done, the faster I got this crown off me before it was too late.

I had carried Kurapika to the royal court, loving the hushed awe that overtook the large room. They simply ate up the ‘love’ story I had fed them about Kurapika and I.

I had fielded all the questions just yesterday day to make sure everything brought to him would coincide with the image I was crafting for Kurapika. I wanted my people to think of him as an angel, uncorrupted and innocent. So most questions and complaints or troubles he got were things like the orphanage needing more room.

Kurapika’s answer to that had been that the Kuruta had an old property owned by the royal family and the orphanage could have it considering we didn’t need two homes.

I was pleasantly surprised with his performance, I could tell he was struggling with accepting his new reality. He wanted to defy me, wanted to end this and die in the grip of depression and misery but he wouldn’t. That’s the problem with being a caring person, it makes you so easy to control.
He kept adjusting his crown, desperate for it not to fuse, it was hilarious to see him still fighting me. It made me happy that even while so broken and docile he had that spark I liked so much.

Although I didn’t like how far away from me he was, even the foot between us, including the armrests of our combined thrones, made my chest hurt. I want him near me, pressed against me always so I can be sure he can never escape my grasp.

The day wore on like that with Kurapika getting more and more comfortable as we discussed matters of state.

Some were confused by the many new laws that came with being an official nation, they were having a hard time starting up businesses.

Kurapika suggested a free class where he could teach the people the laws in a more in-depth way as he was accustomed to them. We spent twenty minutes discussing the idea, where and when we would hold it until it was decided he’d hold it in the castle a month from now.

New farmers brought the situation of land development to the table. Over the years the land had grown wild and was hard to tame. I wanted to install a penalty for anyone that couldn’t get their farms producing in time for the harvest since if they couldn’t we’d have to rely on other nations for food in the winter.

Kurapika fought me on the issue as I knew he would, calling for mercy as many of the men and women tending the land were unused to the work of owning a farm. He proposed starting an internship program with a period of higher pay to anyone willing to start working the land. That way the farms would get more help and it would promote more jobs and skills being forged.

This of course led into the issue of a school system which had been harder to organize than I had thought it would be. Ryuuseigai hadn’t had a school system before and most on the island were ignorant of many, many things. Not that my people were stupid, just uneducated. This was when Kurapika expanded on his plans of doing a class for the new law into a college for the adults on the island and opening the palace library to civilians until money could be raised to open a public library. They discussed for a large chuck of time about hiring teachers for a period of time from outside the island to train our own people who’d like to teach and so on.

All in all it was a good day and for a moment my dream of a docile, beautiful, and smart Queen was in reach yet again. It seemed the thing that finally broke him was the lose of our child, it was a terrible sacrifice but maybe one that is worth it. It’s not like we can’t make another.
I think I actually saw him smile once as he finally got a chance to run a country.

After court I could tell Kurapika wanted to escape me as soon as possible but I couldn’t let him go. If I did he’d take off the crown and then I wouldn’t have this chase for a few more months.

So instead of carrying him back to his room, I carried him toward the gardens.

“I know you had strength training with May today, but my day has been cancelled so how about we have a date today?” I grinned down at him, feeling him tense up.

Kurapika looked as if he wanted to fight me on it but the fear in his eyes kept him coiled up in the grasp of my control.

“I had May set us up a nice romantic picnic lunch in the new green house, it will be nice and warm.” I continued. Like normal my plan was perfect, it helped that Kurapika seemed to still be in an unbalanced state. He didn’t yet know how to react or even what I was doing so he was easy to mold and shape to my whims. He believes that he can stay sane and resist my brainwashing but what he doesn’t know is that he was playing right into my hands. Sooner or later he will stop fighting, it was human nature to choose the path with the least amount of pain. Especially when you know how much pain is included in that path. He’ll be mine very soon.

The day passed with me continuing to find excuses for Kurapika to keep the crown on. Mostly by alluding to the maids and servant I kept as close as possible. I couldn’t hurt any of them anymore but Kurapika didn’t know that and he had a very fortified belief that if he defied me that people around him would die.

Finally, after hours of our little ‘date’ from the picnic in the greenhouse to the library to the soldiers training room to help him get some strength back into those legs, it was time for dinner. I had Feitan slip a bit of his tonic into the dessert: boiled custard with caramel of course. I had offered it several times but he still hasn’t taken a bite.

Kurapika’s back and muscles were pulled taunt with stress and confusion as I continued to talk matters of state with him through dinner just to keep him distracted. Still he messed with the crown any chance he got, the relief on his face every time it wasn’t fused to him made me want to laugh. Then finally dessert was served and just two overly cautious bites into the sweet delight he began to wane and falter.
His eyes drooping and his muscles unwillingly relaxing until you could see the actual strain it took for him to stay awake. He looked so confused and distressed as he lost the ability to control his body.

“Oh sweetling, you’ve had an exhausting day,” I soothed over his confusion, leaving my seat to softly pull his slip of a body into my arms. “I’ll bring you to bed, you just rest your weary head.” I pet his hair as he looked close to panic, unable to keep himself awake. “Don’t worry, I’m just bringing you to your own bed to sleep,” I whispered, lulling him to sleep like some mythical creature trying to consume his soul.

Everyone moved out of my way as I carried his sleeping body to my room, maids cooed at him as we passed. Everyone making comments about how he looked like an angel sleeping like that and I had to agree.

Finally back in my room I laid him on my bed, where he belongs, and looked over him. A week of eating was already showing improvements on his body, he regained a few pounds and his cheeks were a bit rosy. He was still horribly underweight and sickly looking but that would improve with time, especially with that crown on his head moving it along much more quickly than normal.

With a gentle smile at my sleeping Queen, I slipped my hands under his shirt and lifted it off his dead weight of arms and body before moving to his pants. Seeing him like this, so quiet and still was everything I wanted. Hopefully someday he’ll be like this awake but for now drugging him should do the trick until he is re-educated.

Once I had him naked, his pale moonlit skin against my pitch black sheets, I placed gentle kisses down his chest. I smirked when he moaned in irritation at being moved around, he continued to grumble in his sleep as I moved down his once beautiful body. It would be beautiful again, I just had to be patient.

“You are so beautiful,” I whispered even if he couldn’t hear me, he was dead to the world and he probably wouldn’t even know come morning. Heaven knows his body is in so much pain already he won’t be able to tell the difference. “God, how I want you, I want all of you.” I moaned as my member began to respond from the pleasure I was about to delve into.

I audibly laughed when I noticed Kurapika’s cock was beginning to respond from the little attention I was giving him. To think he was a virgin when I took him, I really have trained his body so incredibly well.
Without wasting any time I took his member into my mouth, thoroughly enjoying the unconscious gasp he let out. I swirled my tongue around his flesh as his breathing picked up a bit. I reached around the bed, giving a kiss to the head of his dick and left it alone for a moment to unscrew the jar I had placed by the bed. I hadn’t used oil with Kurapika for quite awhile, but the objective of tonight wasn’t to hurt him.

I dipped my fingers into the oil before taking his member in my mouth again and moved my oiled fingers to his opening and slipped a finger inside. This time Kurapika’s back arched in his sleep, his eyelashes fluttered but the drug kept him from waking.

I waited for a moment, pumping my finger in rhythm with my mouth. He really had tightened up down here in the time I hadn’t been able to touch him.

After a few minutes of letting his body adjust I added another finger and began to scissor him open, making sure to massage the little bundle of nerves so he felt he no pain.

I continued to swirl my tongue, expertly bobbing my head and adding a third finger as I felt his body begin to tense and get ready to climax. Kurapika was releasing heavenly little whines and moans, his body squirming around on the bed completely free of his usual inhibitions.

He came softly, without his normal sobbing and horror that accompanied his orgasms, a soft gasp and a bit of drool dripping from his lips. I swallowed the salty cum that shot onto my tongue and slipped my fingers out of him before gathering some more oil onto my fingers and oiling my own member. I adjusted myself and the sleeping boy so he was basically in my lap and my hardness was ready to sink into him.

“Are you ready?” I asked despite knowing he wouldn’t answer.

Then I began to push.

Chapter End Notes

It’s been so long! I’m super sorry but honestly I went through a small bout of writers block that made me a little depressed but I woke up today ready to freaking write!!
Chapter 35

I woke up wearily, somehow feeling like my body had run a marathon while my mind actually felt well rested for once. I was in my own bed and dinner last night was a blur in my memory. Had being up and about been that tiring?

There was a building spark of happiness after being able to sit in court and experience being a ruler, helping his people with their problems.

The crown slid off my head with a dull thump, it would be concerning if I didn’t already know that the crown definitely didn’t have time to heal my body and make an artificial womb for me to carry a baby. I had won the battle of yesterday but Kuroro always had more and more surprising up his sleeves than me. It had taken a year but finally I truly understood I was out of my depth.

I huffed to myself and picked up the crown before throwing it across the room. My irritation and exhaustion was eating me alive, I don’t know how long I can keep myself from blowing up or crashing into a panic attack. This entire situation was draining me physically, emotionally, and spiritually. And that was impressive considering I already felt hollow and dead inside. The question was still very much: what is the fucking point anymore?

Kuroro has already won so why was he switching up his plan now? Why be nice when our relationship is already at such a point that we could never salvage anything at this point? I will admit at some point I thought it was possible to just live with this... this terrible, terrible thing that had happened because at the very least it was good for 5 million people but there was no going back at this point. Well unless he broke my brain entirely which is probably what he was doing.

May walked in as the crown clattered against the marble and I really didn’t feel like talking to her so I grunted and pulled the covers over my head as I turned away from the door.

“Oh. . . Um. . . Go-good morning Kurapika.” May seemed like she was hesitant to call this a good morning. I agreed if that’s how she felt. I peeked up over my shoulder at her and found she was looking at the crown with a determination that I didn’t know the meaning of. It’s not like she knew the importance of the crown.

“Morning.” I huffed with every bit of irritation I felt, it drove me crazy that everyone was suddenly treating me like a human just because of whatever the hell Kuroro did to make them like me. In the end, the only thing I accomplished was getting myself hurt in the pursuit of death. I wanted to die but I didn’t care for all the pain I had put myself through. I wish god or whatever would just smite me.
“So, get excited!” She suddenly squealed like she had just thought of an amazing idea.

“About what?” I grumbled, honestly unable to see anything to be excited for or about. I am a prisoner to a man that killed my baby and tortured me relentlessly to the point of suicide, what should I be excited about ever?

“Well, it’s been awhile since you’ve seen your horse or gone on a carriage ride with Lord Uvogin, so I think I’ll let him know to start tacking up Freebird!” She yelled out as she rudely pulled the blanket off my body like I was a tantruming teenager who didn’t want to go to their lessons instead of her freaking queen who just wanted to ignore the world that kept hurting me!

“May that sounds lovely, but can you just let me sleep today?” I moaned out like the child I shouldn’t be anymore after having every trace of innocence raped out of me.

“Oh come on,” she pressed. “You need some fresh air and some real sunshine on that porcelain skin of yours!” She pulled the curtains open making me groan and try to bury my face in my pillows. I ignored her as she moved to my wardrobe and began picking out my clothes for the day, I hate that she is just assuming I’ll go out and do as she says. I mean I could order her to leave me alone, can’t I?

That would be a bad idea because then Kuroro would come and ‘talk’ to me about how ‘crazy’ I’m acting and I’ll get another weird and upsetting talk about how Netero had somehow brainwashed me into hating him. It’s more like a lecture and if Kuroro didn’t show me everyday how much he loved to physically cause me pain, I’d think this was a new form of torture.

“May-“

“Ah no, no you are going outside today and that’s an order.” She pulled out several coats from my wardrobe that I didn’t know had been made for me which was becoming a pattern in my life.

“If I ordered you to leave would you?” I asked her even as I forced myself to sit up and grumpily rub the sleepiness from my face.

“Nope, my job is to look after your health and help you to open up a bit,” She hummed happily. “I’m also suppose to make sure your happy and protect you from people talking about things they have no idea about, so I wouldn’t leave even if your ordered me to.” Translation: she works for
Kuroro not me. She passed the crown on the floor and stooped to pick it up, placing it delicately on the dresser. “Now, I’m going to get your breakfast and in the meantime look over these outfits, I’ll be back in a moment.” She smiled as she laid all the clothes over my legs on the bed so they were in easy reach to me.

“Okay.” I sighed miserably as she left just as swiftly as she had come. I liked May, I really do but dear god do I hate her sometimes.

Just because I had nothing else to do I began to pick through my options.

“I hate my life.” I breathed up at the ceiling and then got to work.

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I noticed May bustle from the queen’s chambers, craning her neck around like she was looking for someone. I stood from my desk and moved to the open doorway of my office.

“May,” I called and she immediately moved to me. “What are you looking for?” I asked the moment I had her full attention.

“Oh just Lord Uvogin,” she muttered and looked down the hall again like just talking of him would bring him to her.

“Why?” I questioned, trying to figure out why she’d look for him after coming from my wife’s room. It’s not like I’m jealous that Kurapika liked Uvogin more than me, that would be idiotic considering it was obvious why he’d like Uvogin more.

“The crown didn’t take and Kurapika seemed pretty upset about it, so I thought a nice carriage ride through the city would be a great excuse to put the crown on again.” She smiled up at me and I just had to congratulate myself on placing May in this position, she was really doing a great job. Although, Kurapika is very weak and going out on a snowy winter day in an open carriage might not be the best idea.

“I can see what you’re thinking.” May suddenly smirked happily like she had just learned a juicy secret. “But you don’t have to worry, I’ll make sure he’s bundled up and has extra blankets! I’ll even have the kitchen make him some hot chocolate for the ride, okay?” She assured me.
“Well...” I thought about it but honestly I was afraid of Kurapika getting hurt and the whole thing made me nervous. He was fragile!

“You two are so cute! Don’t even worry, I will handle everything!” May squealed. “Oh!” She spotted Uvogin down the hall and like that she was gone.

I could hear her excitedly chattering to Uvogin and still I was worried, the memory of a shivering and dying Kurapika out in the snow haunted me. His begging to die was still fresh in my mind and I didn’t like the idea of Kurapika leaving the castle, but I did promise Uvogin I’d allow the carriage rides again so it’s not like I had a choice.

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“Now are you sure you don’t feel cold?” Kuroro fretted over me which was wrong on so many counts.

“Yes I’m fine!” I growled as Kuroro tried to wrap a forth blanket around me. He’d been so ‘concerned’ about me being out in the cold that he hadn’t even given me adequate time to be excited over seeing Freebird again and be with my now alive horse. The animal had been obviously overjoyed to see me and even now sitting in the carriage with a million blankets, Freebird kept flicking his head over to make sure I was still here.

Even though May had forced me to put the crown back on and it was freezing and Kuroro was being an extra pain in my rear, I was still pretty content. I got to be out and away from Kuroro, and I definitely think I can break Uvogin and get him to tell me what the hell is happening.

“But are you sure?” Kuroro tried to rub up and down my arms like he was trying to rub warmth back into me, warmth that hadn’t exactly left yet.

“Yes!” I snapped and pulled away from him roughly. A month ago the maids all would have bristled and whispered about my bad attitude but now the awed and giggled over my ‘shy’ nature. “I’m fine okay? I’m not cold and May gave me this.” I held up the container of hot chocolate, I don’t even know why I’m talking to him like a normal person because he’s a monster, but I couldn’t think about that right now. It was not healthy for my psyche.

“If he so much as shivers you bring him back, okay?” Kuroro commanded as Uvogin finished
tacking up the horses and hopped happily into the driver's seat.

“No worries, it will all be just good fun!” Uvogin grinned at me and I couldn’t help having a small smile, if for only this one thing, getting to go out with Uvogin again, this weird situation was good. But still I need it to stop, because I’d like to just be left alone at this point or die, whatever.

“Alright Kura, let's get this started!” Uvogin smacked the reins and the carriage jerked forward. Kuroro stumbled slightly as he had one foot on the carriage. He grunted in annoyance but seemed to calm down when I gave an almost silent squeal of joy.

A few minutes of silence passed while I fiddled with my crown trying to keep it from fusing to me and Uvogin whistling joyfully in the sunny winter day. We were headed into town this time, something we hadn’t ever done before. Before the people hated me so much that the idea of going through town and seeing all of my old stomping grounds was a lost cause. Another thing that was kinda okay about this weird situation. Still, I wanted it to end.

“Are you happy?” Uvogin looked back at me and asked with a sad tilt to his tone.

“Yes, this is nice.” I admitted and pulled the top layer of my blankets tighter around my shoulders. I knew I needed to get this conversation rolling but the feeling of fear was consuming. It’s hard to slam the bars of your own prison shut again. But at the same time the iron cage was predictable and easier to understand what to do. I have never been a wishy washy person and it was beginning to stress me out, not being able to make a choice was figuratively killing me.

“How’s strength training going?” Uvogin began the mindless small talk that we had thrown out in our relationship months ago, it seems we were back to awkward square one of our friendship. I answered with the same pleasantries, more than a little distracted with my internal struggle.

“How’s May doing as you-“

“Why are you playing along with this?” I finally gasped out, unable to keep fighting myself on how to do this.

Uvogin almost lost balance in his seat and his face blanked completely before he stretched a strained smile in his face.
He didn’t say anything for a long moment, the chilly air dropping a few degrees even as a crowd gathered around the streets to call out lovingly to me.

Shouts of ‘Get well soon!’ and ‘We’re so happy your alive!’ were lost to me as I just stared at Uvogin’s back, waiting for him to answer me.

“With what?” He finally tried to play it off.

“You know exactly what!” I growled lowly at him. “This scheme Kuroro’s trying to pass off as my life! All of this is wrong, now tell me why the hell you are playing along with this!” I whisper-yelled at him, my voice thankfully drowning in the sea of well wishers.

Uvogin gripped the reins tightly and seemed to be grinding his teeth by the low crunching voice that rumbled from him.

“Kurapika, it’s going to be okay!” Uvogin’s voice heavily laced with fake cheer and a dash of doubt and worry. “You’ll get your memories back eventually! But you really should just stop fighting this and accept it.” His voice was hushed at the end and I stiffened in horror. The sentence was too close to what Pakunoda had said to me back on Ryuusaigai. I know it shouldn’t have felt like a betrayal, but it did.

“I thought you were my friend.” I whispered as I turned to look over the snow covered buildings, people as far as the eye could see were cheering for me. I had never felt more alone.
Chapter 36

My life began to take a quick and drastic turn the moment I stopped actively fighting the lies Kuroro was trying to force down my throat. I moved through every day passively and downcast, almost unmoved by everything Kuroro threw at me.

I waited patiently for the day Kuroro would swing my cage door shut and laugh in my face just to strike the final nail in the coffin.

I barely blinked when he changed our thrones into an overly large one just so he could rub his dirty hands over my knee as we sat less than an inch apart. I was honestly surprised and questioning my own sanity when I spotted the vase Phinks broke months back in the ‘Hall Of Kuruta’ that Kuroro opened up in a memorial to my people. Everyone had looked at me like I was crazy when I began screaming that it had been broken.

I almost tore out my hair that day, everything was starting to tear at my soul. Between the conspicuously placed evidence trying to prove Kuroro’s lies, my desperation to try and keep all innocents out of the demon King’s path, everyone’s insistence that my own memory was faulty, and the worst of it all: explicit dreams I was having every night which for some reason featured Kuroro. As if my life and over all mind wasn’t twisted and beaten to hell enough!

Life settled into an odd serenity as a month passed in a strange game that I didn’t even want to play anymore. My only solace was that the crown had yet to attach itself to me. Then the day came that the images running through my head came to a climax of absolute horror.

It was breakfast with the entire crew, Kuroro sitting way too close to me while everyone chatted happily together, minus Shalnark of course who was off on a highly suspicious sea charting expedition.

Last night’s dream had included a rather gentle Kuroro, which was just wrong since he was never gentle, whispering crude things right into my ear that made me want to blush just thinking of them.

When breakfast had almost been over, my plate clean and my belly full once again, Kuroro had leaned over, getting way too close and whispered into my ear, “Let’s set out a little picnic today.”

His breath ghosted over my ear and a shiver raced down my back and then almost on instinct, I threw myself back, hitting my head on my chair and a bright red flush taking over my face.
Immediately I curled my head into my lap from the pain and May was rushing over to the table to fret about my ‘injury’.

“Oh Kurapika! Are you alright? Why would you suddenly bang your head like that?” She asked as she forced my hands away from my head so she could make sure I wasn’t bleeding or anything just as silly. It was just a bump! Plus she was now creating a scene.

Kuroro was staring at me with a flabbergasted look before it melted into something close to excited bliss. He shared a look with Feitan that I didn’t understand before May poked at a rather tender spot on my head and I had to look away to smack her hands away.

“May, I’m fine!” I snapped. This was yet another odd thing that had cropped up in the last month. Like right now if I so much as sneeze, trip over my still weak feet, or shiver I find myself surrounded by a gaggle of maids who would be wrapping me in blankets, rushing off to get me a cup of tea, or frantically looking me over for injuries. It was getting really annoying.

“Kurapika, are you sure you are alright?” Kuroro asked after May finally settled down. “It looked like a pretty painful bang to the head.”

“Yes! I’m fine! Will everyone just let it go?” I groaned. “I’m not a china doll, and I’ve handled worse.” I grumbled the last bit to myself since I knew if they heard they would all give me that look like I was the crazy one.

“If you’re sure, so picnic for lunch today?” He asked and I blushed again at the reminder of why I had bumped my head to begin with.

“Do I have a choice?” I mumbled low enough that only someone that was leaning too close to me could hear and of course that was Kuroro.

“Of course you do, we’ll have a little picnic out on the gazebo I had built.” He smiled charmingly and I huffed irritably.

“Whatever.”
After breakfast I made a choice to head down for the catacombs. I was losing my mind, I was losing! Everyday it became harder to remember my life as it had been, and deny the lie that Kuroro and the crew was shoving down my throat. I had been slowly withdrawing into myself.

I had stopped having tea with Machi, ended my walks on the beach with Pakunoda, refused carriage rides with Uvogin. The only thing I did do was go see Freebird. Having him back was like a miracle but sadly, if I even attempted to head outside I had to deal with a hoard of maids trying to get me to come back inside into the warmth. If I did ever get to the stables without being interrupted, the stable master would immediately run off to grab May to try and get me back inside, always assuring me that that stable master will see to Freebird.

It was all too much. I felt my brain rotting, so I had decided today I would go to the catacombs and find the proof that this was all a lie. There had to be something: the paperwork on my engagement to Pairo, the lack of any paperwork on any agreement between my grandfather and Gyro, something!

I just needed something to ground me, something to look at before I forgot that the cage door was closing and Kuroro would start abusing me again eventually.

I had to sneak through the castle to get to the library without the maid-hoard trying to smother me to death.

It was really annoying honestly.

The catacombs were only slightly dusty, but that was to be expected considering until last month Shalnark spent most of his free time down here. I took the half burnt candle in a holder near the door and lit it quickly before descending the rough stone stairs.

I immediately found myself in an underground library of sorts. I knew if I explored further I’d find a lost dungeon, some winding caves and even the royal burial chamber. My grandfather had brought me down here before when I became old enough to understand its importance.

I knew exactly where to look for what I needed. Shelves lined the stones walls, holding bound books of my people’s myths and legends, our written history and relics that can never be replaced. Most of it was gone now after Kuroro decided to move it all to his museum for my people. An
entire section of the castle was now dedicated to it!

I had looked through everything he’d moved up there and there was nothing about ‘our’ supposed engagement, so I felt good about this plan.

I searched every scrap of paper I could find, looking over paperwork detailing every decision ever made by a king of my country. Engagement papers should all be together so when I found one I knew I was on the right track.

I found my grandparents engagement papers first, a soft smile took over my face as I read over the agreement. They hadn’t been in love, I knew that from the many stories my grandfather would tell of her, but they had at least been friends. That was more than I could say for Kuroro and I.

I shuffled the papers around a bit before I finally found it. My engagement papers with Pairo, dated for when we were both two, just like I remember. I could almost cry in relief as I held the proof that I wasn’t crazy.

“I’m not crazy. . . I’m not crazy!” I giggled a bit crazed. I dropped the papers as I laughed, crying just a little bit as I did.

My laughter ended abruptly as something else slid into view when the papers hit the floor.

“What. . . ? No, NO!” I dropped to my knees, scuffing them slightly and gripped the paper so hard it tore a bit.

A death certificate. . . Pairo’s death certificate.

It was dated for four years old, but he had been 12 when he died! The day of the massacre! He died in the freaking massacre! He didn’t die on the crumbling cliffs when he was four like this document claimed!

“This can’t be!” I cried as I tugged at my hair, unable to deal with this. I could swear I was about ready to just go hide in the royal burial chambers until I die of starvation. Considering how long I lasted while Kuroro tried to starve me, I might never die and that was more horrifying than death at this point.
I crumpled up the paper, hating it just for existing and let myself just sit there on the dirty ground and cry for a little bit. I let myself sink into the deep depression I had been fighting since I woke up. I officially didn’t have anything left.

True to form for Kuroro’s horrible plots that somehow always out maneuvered me, when I shuffled the papers a bit more I did find a second engagement paper for Kuroro and I when I was five and a signed agreement to move the Ryuuseigai people to the island once we were married.

After an hour of just sitting there in my pity party I got up and left, my shoulders slumped and my head down. I shouldn’t have come down here, I should have known Kuroro would plan for this. Or maybe he didn’t. .. Maybe I really was crazy, was everything I remember just a horrible fever dream?

I passed the threshold of the previously secret passageway into the catacombs back into the library to find Kuroro leaning against a table waiting for me.

A moment passed where I saw it, the cruel edge of his eyes I had almost forgotten the look of, that conniving smirk on his lips he gets when he is in the middle of a evil plan that would ultimately harm me horribly. I saw it, it was there! Then his face morphed into the happy loving husband facade but I now had my proof. I would hold that look in my mind’s eye and try to maintain my sanity.

“Sweetling, you shouldn’t be wandering down there. You could have gotten hurt,” he spoke as he approached me and I forced myself to keep standing tall and strong.

“I know,” I whispered and finally I realized what the only thing I could do: play along. Play along until Kuroro unveils his plans to me and slams that cage door. So I lowered my head and continued. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t worry my love, I know you are just trying to get your bearings.” He wrapped an arm around my waist and I suppressed a shudder. “I hope you found what you were looking for.”

I narrowed my eyes as he looked away and watched him for micro-expressions that revealed the demon that he was but he didn’t slip up again. “I did.” I glared even harder at the side of his head.
I mostly stayed silent during meals these days, ate my food and kept to myself. Listening, hoping to hear their lies unravel but they were all terrific liars unfortunately, and they mostly stayed on whatever horrible script they were given.

The only weird thing was I kept feeling faint by the end of dinners most nights, I normally made it back to my room before passing out. Obviously I wasn’t fully recovered of course so it was to be expected.

Tonight was no different from any other night, I kept silent and readjusted my crown every few minutes in the hopes I’d get lucky once again.

“The halls are so creepy at night with no one in them,” Nobunaga’s voice was loud enough to warrant a brief look from me. “I swear I can hear a horse whinny in the middle of the night, it sounds like a horse is following me but it’s never there!” His voice took on a spooky quality like he was trying to tell a scary story.

“That’s ridiculous,” Machi snorted and looked to me like we could have some kind of close moment, laughing over how ridiculous Nobunaga was.

Honestly he was probably just hearing the echo from the stables and I didn’t feel like trying to be part of the group.

When I remained quiet Pakunoda coughed awkwardly but Kuroro just hummed happily and rubbed his dirty hand over my thigh making me flush at the reminder of the odd dreams I had been having.

“I’m done,” I whispered and moved to stand only to feel my head rush and I had to grab onto the table to keep from falling. Kuroro was instantly at my side, taking my arm. I lifted my other hand to my head and froze.

The crown... It was stuck. Oh god.

“Oh sweetling, are you feeling tired again? Here let me help you to your bed,” he crooned into my ear softly and I wanted to scream but my eyes were already sliding shut and I was losing feeling in my legs.
The panic sitting on the edge of my mind couldn’t take over as I fell into unwilling sleep.

Kuroro swooped me up into his arms like a bride and began to carry me away, whispering that everything would be fine and I needed to just go to sleep. I tried to fight it until I finally couldn’t anymore and the world blurred and faded away from my grasp.

This was it, finally the crown had attached itself to Kurapika, we could start our family. And with the revelation this morning that he somewhat remembered our nightly routine, I could move forward with him in a slightly more active role.

I asked Feitan if he could mix something up to make Kurapika just slightly lucid, and very suggestible, enough that he would actually remember it but at the same time out of his mind enough to not be able to tell if it was real or not.

Tonight I would have the wedding night I had always dreamed of.

I laid him in the bed and quickly striped him before he could wake and dressed him in the wedding dress he had looked so delectable in before stripping myself down to my pants and climbing over him.

He moaned weakly and opened his eyes lazily, pupils dilated and drugged.

“Wha. . ?” He asked sluggishly, unable to really speak in his drugged state.

“Shush” I whispered to him, kissing his beautiful skin just above his collar bone. “It’s our wedding night, and we love each other very much.”

“W—e. . . do?” He slurried, looking down to see his wedding dress on, his hand finding its way to my hair to gently tug. Oh god, that felt good.

“Yes, we love each other and you want to give yourself to me, this is a dream come true for us my sweetling.” I gentle bit at his ear and blew softly and he moaned.
His face scrunched up for a moment like he was trying to remember if that was right but he wouldn’t be able to right now. Tomorrow he’d have two memories of our wedding night and would wake up to a world where this was more possible than the first wedding night.

“Okay,” he finally mumbled almost drunkenly.

He tugged at my hair again like he was asking for a kiss and I happily obliged.

I win.
Hey hey hey! Guess what?! It’s the anniversary month of this story, it’s been a year! Whooowhoo!!

Kuroro looks so young.

Kuroro and I fell in love right here, this night.

I am eleven, so much younger than him but he never pressures me. He’s so sweet and kind to me.

The moon is so bright tonight, and he set up a picnic for us to watch the moonlight roses bloom.

“I’m so glad your grandfather agreed to this treaty Kurapika, I can’t imagine my life without you.” He took my small fingers and kissed my knuckles. He looked up at me through his dark bangs and I felt hypnotized by those deep dark pools of black. “My fiancé,” he smiled innocently at me, making my heart beat faster. “My Queen.”

But this is my land, wouldn’t I be king?

The eighteen year old held my gaze until I nodded in understanding. That’s right, I’d be Queen because he was older and wiser than me.

“I love you Kurapika,” he pulled me close to cuddle my head into his chest. It was innocent, we hadn’t even kissed yet since I was still so young. “You know I’d never do anything to hurt you, Yes?”

Blushing, even though something felt so wrong it all felt right. It felt like my thoughts weren’t my own but that can’t be.

“Yes Kuroro,” I whispered. “I love you too.”
I shot up in bed and gasped as I slammed my hand on my chest to clutch at my racing heart.

“What the hell?” I panted. “WHAT. THE. HELL?!” I shouted in rage and confusion.

That didn’t happen, did it? That couldn’t have happened. . . But it felt so real. It was like a memory more than a dream.

I curled into myself and felt panic biting at the edges of my sleep diluted mind. Why did that feel so real? It couldn’t be real.

The only thing that ended up calming me was the memory of that cruel glint that had been in his eyes in that library. Somehow Kuroro was planting these visions in my head, it has to be that because if it wasn’t, then that meant I now had two distinct memories of my wedding night. One a nightmare and the other far worse.

“We love each other .”

I shivered as Kuroro’s voice ghosted over me. What’s happening to me?

My day progressed exactly as it had the day before. Wake up, deal with May’s over exuberant personality, silently go about my strength training and eating with the pirates that may be the greatest friends I’ve ever made or the murders of my people and family. Nothing was clear anymore.

Kuroro found me in the library, I noticed the way his eyes immediately caught on the cup of tea I was keeping protectively close to me. I had been lucky, Netero must have slipped another packet of my cinnamon thorn tea in my drawers. I don’t want to lose another baby.

“Hello my love, how are you doing today?” I thought I had been fortunate in not seeing him all day long but of course he hunted me down eventually.

“Fine,” I told him, trying to pretend like I was still reading my book, but truthfully I couldn’t focus on anything when he was around.
“Anything fun happen today?” He asked like he was actually interested in what I had done today. I had tried to visit Freebird in the stables but the stable master had called my gaggle of maids to pester me back inside because apparently it was ‘too cold’ for me. It seems like everything now is too much for me to do.

Even getting May to leave me alone to sit in the library was hard to achieve, she argued that I could fall and not get up. So no, nothing in my life was too exciting right now.

“Not really,” I answered when I realized he was actually waiting for me to say something.

“Well, why don’t you put your book away and we will go do something fun.” He smiled pleasantly at me, he was really laying it on thick lately. But I didn’t really have an excuse to not listen to him so I stood and moved to return my book to the shelf.

I heard a faint clinking noise, like someone moving my tea cup but Kuroro was probably just throwing out my cinnamon thorn tea, that’s alright, it’s not my first cup today. Besides Kuroro hadn’t made any moves to reignite our ‘sex’ life, even though I had been having dreams about it. Very horrifying every time I woke up but at this point I was numb to it. I probably didn’t even need to be drinking the tea!

When I turned back I almost tripped over myself in surprise when I found Kuroro right behind me holding out my tea cup.

“You should finish your tea, we will be headed out to the city today.” He was smiling too charmingly for me to handle, and I felt like there was some plot happening. Why would he offer me the tea? He knows what it is and he also knows about the crown so why was he encouraging me to drink the tea?

With no ability to figure out his game, I silently took the cup and drank the rest of the lukewarm tea. It tasted slightly different for some reason, like something familiar. Everything lately had that odd taste to it.

Kuroro just continued to smile pleasantly at me so I let it go and asked. “Where are we going?”
“Where are we going?” Kurapika asked me, the drug I slipped into his tea down his throat and moments away from working its magic.

I had him off kilter enough that he still hadn’t noticed Machi had switched out his cinnamon thorn tea for regular old cinnamon tea. His brain seemed almost dulled from how much I had been drugging him, I felt confident enough to drug him every night now.

“Just into the city, there are a few sites I want to share with you,” I answered him as I took his arm. The drug was fast acting but he hadn’t eaten any food with it so it would probably hit him faster than normal. His body got a little heavy as we walked and before long we were at the carriage I had prepared for us today, May already waiting with a coat for my drugged darling.

“Is he alright?” May whispered to me when Kurapika tripped a bit getting into the carriage, of course I caught him.

“He’s fine, a little sick but the fresh air will do him good,” I waved her off as a different faceless worker took the reins of the carriage. Normally Uvogin drove but he had been feeling down because of Kurapika’s insistent rebuffings for friendship. I tried to assure him that soon the boy would accept him and they could continue their friendship but still he sulked.

“I feel faint,” Kurapika mumbled as the carriage jerked forward. I grinned as he slowly let his eyes close and he relaxed into sleep. In a few minutes he’d wake and be as malleable as warm clay in my hands.

“He alright?” The driver asked as we moved onto busier streets.

“He’s just tired, do not worry,” I told him as I pulled the unconscious boy more firmly against my chest. To keep him warm, and just for the feel of it, this would be the first time I’ve drugged him during the day. And the first time it didn’t end in sex, so of course I’ll take every chance to touch him as much as I want.

The carriage stopped at the fountain Kurapika had pointed out when we first arrived at the island. Time to change the memory of meeting his old fiancé.
Five years old, I remember this. The fountain looks exactly as it did then. I’m meeting my fiancé for the first time today, some day we will be married and we will rule together.

A faceless blur of a man I feel like I recognize leads a young black haired boy over to me and I step back nervously. They- my parents- brace a hand on my back to stop me from running back and I can’t help but look up to see my mother’s smile.

“Go on,” she encouraged with a breathtaking smile. My mom- I miss her so much. But why? I’m only five, I’ve never spent a day without her.

I looked back over to the boy, he seemed so much older than me. A teenager, almost ten years older. It seemed odd that my parents would agree to this, but somewhere in my mind that concern was thrown out.

“Hi, I’m Kuroro!” The boy stuck his hand out, equally as nervous as me.

“Well,” I squeaked in the smallest voice capable for a five year old, which was almost nonexistent with my tiny vocal cords. “I’m Kurapika.”

The black haired boy moved forward and took my tiny hand in his. “Kurapika, I promise I’ll be the best husband ever!” His smile was blinding.

I snapped awake, it was dark and I was in bed. The last thing I remembered was Kuroro helping me into the carriage and then . . . Nothing. I just woke up here, did Kuroro . . . ? No he loves me.

“Wait? What did I just think?” I’m going insane.

Life faded in and out, in and out, waxing and waning. Sometimes I remembered who I was, what had happened to me, who did those things to me. But other times I was someone else.
A person I don’t recognize, and obviously everyone else was surprised to see. The day I started talking to them again they all froze, looking at me with wide eyes and startled expressions. The day I laughed again I think Uvogin nearly fainted. But when I relapsed back into whatever hateful, angry person Netero had turned me into they all seemed so sad.

NO! No, Netero didn’t do this to me, it was Kuroro! I can’t even keep my waking thoughts straight anymore!

Every night more memories came back to me and little by little I was getting better. I slipped into anger less, I relapsed less. He was changing me, twisting around my life to suit him and I can’t stop it!

I try to remember that moment, that look on his face when I came up from the catacombs but the more these ‘memories’ came to me, the worse the change in personality became.

It felt like Kuroro was ripping me in half, crafting a new person from the gore left over. It was frightening that I kept forgetting who I was, what Netero had done to me. No, wait. . . . Yeah that’s right, Netero hurt me. He brainwashed me to hate my husband, my king.

“ARGH!” I gripped my hair. It happened again, the other personality that’s trying to take me over. I can’t control that person, it just slips in when I’m least expecting it and controls how I think.

This is what Kuroro wanted, this is what he was doing! Breaking my mind, controlling me, and making me happy!

I stood as fast as I could without knocking my weak body over and began to pace. How do I not lose myself? I don’t know how to cope with this.

I don’t know how not to lose myself. I don’t know how to deal with the cage just being gone.

______________________________________________________

I stood in the garden, numb, playing tug-a-war with another me inside my mind. Family picnic, that’s what Kuroro was calling it. The first warm day of spring and I was stuck between miserably angry and enthusiastically happy. It was like being stuck between a rock and a hard place covered in mind bending poison.
I guess this was more of a garden party in essence, Kuroro and the other and I guess me were replanting the garden. Kuroro has done the best he could with the green house, after he was forced to rip it all up in order to stop the spread of a plague that would kill all of the islands flora, but there is only so much that can be done in winter.

I was staring at the replanted lavender, the plant to celebrate my own birth. It wasn’t the same lavender but it was still nice to see the beautiful plant again.

I bent to pick some of the lavender to keep close and with a thump the crown dropped from my bent head and echoed around me despite dropping into the dirt. My heart beat stopped and the colors of the world around seemed to fade. Flashes of what I thought were dreams bulldozed through my mind, memories of gentle kisses and a body thrusting into mine. I realize now that while I waited for the cage door to be slapped shut in my face, it was being renovated around me.

The pirates noticed my frozen body and then the crown laying among the brush. I looked around at the happy faces of the pirates that knew what this meant, the swell of joy on Kuroro’s face as he reached to embrace me. Now I know, my cage is not gone. No it was simply been switched from iron to gold. And then I began to scream.

I held him close as my angel screamed and cried, but knew that my victory had been achieved. He knew what had happened, could finally see this new cage I had made for him, yet he still curled into my embrace. His fingers clutched at my chest as I stroked his hair.

"Shh," I soothed as his cries dissipated into hiccups as Pakunoda retrieved the Queen's crown from the ground where it had dropped. Kurapika needed to calm down now, he was fragile now after all. "This is a happy occasion," I promised as I pressed my hand to his flat belly, one that would soon swell as our child grew.

They would both be safe this time.
Citizens and castle workers sneered at me as I walked past, it seemed in the months I was away on that awful ship the Captain still hadn’t fixed up my reputation. I’m sure he’ll get to it soon, once he doesn’t have to deal with the royal brat any longer than it takes to get a baby out of him.

“Shalnark,” a maid greeted me with a barely restrained snark as soon as I entered the grand entrance of the castle. I gave a vague wave and moved towards the throne room. I could hear the majority of the crew speaking, probably a crew meeting judging by the time of the day.

Hopefully they’ve all come to their senses and realized how ridiculous is was to want to keep the stupid little royal brat.

“-a parade!” Someone called, sounding a lot like Phinks.

“We could have a banquet, it could be a great way to reward the profits our merchants are already bringing in for the country,” Pakunoda’s voice rang out.

It seemed they were planning something, I knew Kuroro had mentioned in the past wanting to establish national holidays but he hadn’t brought it up in so long. I could almost believe he’d forgotten about it.

“It will be the anniversary of th-the plague,” Nobunaga self corrected, obviously there was someone around that couldn’t know how they massacred the Kuruta, not some plague.

“Which is why a celebration of the fallen and the children of our future is perfect,” the captain’s voice rang confidently through the chamber. It’s great to be home. “Hopefully the babe comes on their due date, else we’ll be celebrating early.” Oh, so the brat was pregnant again. Good.

“You scheduled it a week after the due date, I think it will be fine,” the brat’s voice seemed. . . . Happy? The hell?! “Oh! Kuroro! Kuroro, I felt a kick!”

The room seemed to explode in excitement, several voices gasping and asking to feel. I finally
moved into the throne room only to be shocked still when I spotted my captain on his knees, hand on the brat’s bloated belly, kissing it tenderly. The brat sat comfortably on an overly large throne, while the King- the CAPTAIN was on his knees.

“What the hell is going on here?!”

I didn’t really understand why Uvo felt the need to step in front of the brat all protectively, how could he still be so enamoured? It was all a lie anyway, the entire reason he fell for the stupid blonde doll was all a lie as he tried to manipulate us!

“We’re planning a festival,” the brat spoke up suddenly when no one else seemed to speak. “We didn’t know you’d be coming back today, we would have waited for you.”

This is incredible, the little bitch was talking to me like we hadn’t done anything to him! Wow, Kuroro really works wonders. Kurapika seemed like he was back to the personality he slipped into when trying to trick us.

Kurapika moved to stand but Pakunoda and The Captain were immediately at his side, trying to keep him on the throne. That was horrifying to see honestly. The brat wasn’t even that pregnant, he could stand, it was probably close to four months along.

“Guys, Seriously! I’m fine,” the brat laughed. LAUGHED! The sound of joyful bells tumbled from his mouth and have I walked into an alternate dimension? Maybe a fantasy realm? “I’m fine, the baby is fine, and I can still walk without any issue.” The Captain seemed to want to argue as well as the rest of the crew. All of them stared at him like they would jump forward to catch him at the first sign of a slight wobble.

“You’re right, you are fine.” Kuroro took the brat’s arm and helped him stand. “But you do have an appointment with your physician, I’ll call May and catch Shalnark up with everything going on, okay?” Kuroro looked to Pakunoda. “Will you go with him as well?” She nodded.

“Okay, Kuroro.” Kuroro called for May and within moments a young maid was bustling in and fawning over the blonde nuisance as she pulled him away from the throne room. But not before the most sickening thing happened. “Love you!” the brat called.

“Love you,” Kuroro answered back without a moment of hesitation. No one seemed weirded out that the Captain and the brat were just casually trading ‘I love you’s’ like it was normal.
Kuroro smirked as the blonde left with Pakunoda and the maid and sat on the throne before his face returned to the collected normal.

“Gyro didn’t send word you’d be returning,” Kuroro finally spoke to me.

“You say that like you aren’t happy to see me.” I looked around, Uvogin still looked pissed but not enough to attack. No one else seemed too thrilled either. Yeesh! It’s not like I kicked a puppy, and the brat deserved it anyway. Plus they replaced the baby!

“Of course I’m happy to see you,” Kuroro’s face didn’t shift but his shoulders and posture still relaxed. “But I always appreciate forewarning, you know this.”

Silence conquered the throne room, the air stale and awkward. I shifted uncomfortably from foot to foot. My eyes batting around the cold looks I received before focusing again on the content face of my Captain.

“So you mentioned getting me all caught up?” I prompted, interested to know when he planned to axe the brat. Right after childbirth seemed like it would be the easiest to explain his death. Of course we’d have to hire a wet nurse or something.

“Ah yes,” Kuroro leaned back in his throne. “Over the last number of months I have groomed Kurapika, he is now completely under my control.” If I don’t know any better I’d say Kuroro actually seemed content, even happy with that statement.

“The garden has been replanted and we’ve opened the Hall of Kuruta-“

“-Hall of Kuruta?” I interrupted, why the hell would they open a hall to those weak, pretentious Kuruta?

“Yes, it helped to confuse Kurapika but it has been rather profitable in regards to inspiring the people to strive for more. They’ve been stuck in the mindset of our sinking little island for so long, looking up to the Kuruta for inviting us to this island has really helped them.”

Okay. I guess that made sense.
“The Hall of Kuruta opened to the public,” he continued where he left off. “And Kurapika is now working with some of the citizens to open a school. A few have decided that they’d like to teach so Kurapika decided to work with them first so they can focus on the children. Teaching them to read and so forth.” He seemed way too happy about that. And if Kurapika was helping with the education system on the island then when would they kill him?

“So he’ll teach them to teach and then you’ll get rid of him?” I nodded my head, it seemed about right, although that meant I would have to deal with him longer than I wished.

The room froze, cold creeping up the back of my neck as everyone began to glare.

“What?” I asked, we all knew Kuroro would eventually get rid of the brat! “It’s not like you can keep him alive forever, eventually he’ll find a way to ruin us.”

A few of my crew mates began to say something, but Kuroro cleared his throat. Silence ruled for a moment as Kuroro sat forward, his eyes roving over me.

“Shalnark, I thought it went without saying, but I’m keeping Kurapika.” My jaw dropped, what the hell? KEEPING HIM?! Why in the world would he want to keep that stupid little blonde? “As I said, Kurapika is completely under my control now. I’m keeping him.”

“Bu-but! Kurapika will betray us at some point! The safest path is to-“

“SHALNARK!” Kuroro stood abruptly. “There is nothing to discuss! Kurapika is my Queen and soon the bringer of my children. Live with it!”

My shoulders hunched and I looked around wildly. Everyone was nodding along to Kuroro like this was just normal!

“Kurapika’s a great Queen, he’s so smart and he understands how to run a country.”

I didn’t see who added that since I was caught in the void of Kuroro’s eyes. Everyone gave some kind of agreement and I knew exactly what I had to do. I have to save Kuroro from himself, break whatever spell the brat managed to cast on not only Kuroro but the rest of the crew. It’s up to me to
My heart beat fast to the tempo my feet set. I had to get away. I had to run, every second out in the open was another moment they might find me.

I could hear them catching up, my speed badly impaired by my swollen stomach but no one knew this castle better than me. I dove down a hall where a pillar had been slightly offset, creating a small alcove. I tucked my body behind it and waited.

I tried to breathe as quietly as possible, calm my heart before they heard and found me. They were like sharks, they could smell a drop of blood from miles away.

The pounding of feet reached my ears and I squished myself deeper in the pillar.

“Kurapika!” May’s voice echoed through the halls and I jumped in fright. God, her voice carries!

“Your highness!” Other maids yelled as well. “You shouldn’t be running around alone! Please come out.”

I needed some freaking alone time! The maids won’t leave me alone for even a second, it’s like they think I’ll break if the wind hits me too hard!

So I asked the maids to take me to the garden, walked as slowly as I could, and then when they were all ahead of me and distracted, bolted down the hall! It took them a minute to realize I was gone and even less time to form a search party.

They passed my hiding place and I counted to three before moving further down the hall towards the Hall of Kuruta. Shalnark was wandering the area and I gave him a short wave as I rushed past. I stopped short and turned to him.

“Don’t tell them I went this way.” I gave him a strained smile before continuing on my way.
All I wanted was just a few hours of reading without one of the maids breathing down my neck. Asking me if I wanted to put my feet up, take a rest, or how I was feeling.

I reached the library in the most roundabout way possible in order to avoid anyone that would tattle on me, taking three times as long for the same reason.

I breathed a small sigh of relief before looking around for a hiding place. My best bet was an abandoned addition to the library. About twenty years ago my grandfather had a reading nook built, well half built, the stairs to get to it had never been constructed. It was a glass alcove about ten feet up a far wall. Where the stairs were meant to be built now only housed an oak bookshelf.

I pushed up my sleeves and got to climbing.

“Kurapika is escaping,” Shalnark sang as he entered my office. I looked up from the mountain of paperwork required to run a country and cocked my head questioningly. What the hell was he on about? “I saw him sneaking towards the back garden, guess he isn’t so ‘under your control’ as you thought.”

I was already up and heading towards the gardens before he even finished. There’s no way he could have gotten his memories back, they are buried deeply and I destroyed everything that could possibly dig them up again!

Shalnark seemed to be following me and I felt slightly annoyed that he’d doubt that I could take care of this but I was focused on the possibility that somehow Kurapika had grown wise without the daily drugging.

Just as I was passing the library I heard a faint curse and stopped.

Taking two steps back I leaned into the library to see Kurapika tried his damnedest to climb a bookshelf. His belly was throwing off his center of gravity and he couldn’t really grip the edges right. His plain silk maternity robe also restricted his mobility.
“Honey?” I asked calmly since it did not look like he was running away. He dropped the few inches to the floor and turned to look at me quickly. His eyes widened and he looked around like someone might pop out of the woodwork and then shushed me. “What are you doing?” I lowered my voice, while shooing away Shalnark who was trying to peer over my shoulder.

“I’m trying to hide,” Kurapika whispered, still looking around cautiously. Then seemed to get frustrated. “Get in here before they find me! You’re like a homing beacon!”

He quickly walked up to me and took my hand to pull me into the room. I looked back to tell Shalnark that he could leave, preferably, but he was already gone.

“Why are you hiding?” I chuckled.

Kurapika went back to trying to climb the bookshelf as he explained. “The maids are driving me crazy! They won’t leave me alone.”

“Ah, that’s probably because they don’t trust Shalnark around you,” I mumbled as I positioned myself behind him in case he stumbled backwards. Even if his legs and weight were healed, I noticed that sometimes Kurapika’s knees got weak and he would fall on occasion.

“That’s ridiculous,” Kurapika grunted and smacked the wood when he failed to get a foot off the ground again. “The entire situation was a misunderstanding right? We should all just move on.”

I winced, this had all been necessary to take full control of Kurapika but I did feel a little bad that I had to downplay the death of our baby. It wouldn’t be good for my plans if Kurapika was full of rage. But it was really hard to keep the two separate when Kurapika didn’t understand that Shalnark didn’t do what he did because of anything but full unrestrained hatred.

“How about I get someone to build some stairs, and maybe clean up in the dust in that weird little alcove.” I took his shoulders to stop him from trying to climb the bookshelf again and pulled him into my chest. “And in the meantime we could have some quality time in my office, I have some work to do so you can relax and read a book or anything you’d like.”

Kurapika stopped struggling and tipped his head back to look up at me.

“That sounds nice,” he smiled.
“And the best part is that you won’t have to hide, since we are royalty and can just tell the maids to leave us alone.” I gave him a grin and pecked his lips.

The maids found us just a moment later and went all gooey eyed at our loving embrace. I shooed them away as I took Kurapika’s hand and led him back to my office.

Kurapika immediately gasped the second he saw the state my desk. Scrolls and papers hung off the edges, crumpled garbage papers littered the floor, I really had no time lately. With planning this festival and preparing the ceremony for the birth of our first child I didn’t have time to clean up.

“Your filing in a mess!” Kurapika gasped for a second time and started picking through all the papers.

“Don’t worry about it, just sit down and relax.”

“No way I could relax in this disaster zone!” Kurapika began to grab up papers and organize them. I rolled my eyes and moved to help. “Hey! No, I’m going to relax with some organization and you are going to finish working.”

“Well that doesn’t seem very relaxing, plus you’re pregnant Kurapika. I’ll call a maid to do some cleaning.”

“Nope, you said quality time! So I’m going to do some cleaning while you get work done and when we’re done we’re going to have lunch right here in a clean office.” Less than a year ago I would have punished Kurapika for daring to tell me what to do but now I’m a man in love, with everything I could ever want. Plus Kurapika looked really cute ordering me around.

“Alright my Sweetling.” I pulled him close for a kiss only for me to push him away.

“Work. Now, buster!”

I laughed and agreed.
The day was very enjoyable.

__________________________________________________________

Days passed in a strange calm before the storm like way. Kurapika slowly perfected the act of ditching his maids, fighting against the process of losing his mobility. Uvogin, Machi, and Pakunoda constantly found excuses to be around Kurapika. I didn’t mind, it made Kurapika happy.

Every morning I helped Kurapika to Machi’s studio to sit and have tea while she works. Pakunoda had found some midwives to help Kurapika with some breathing techniques and birthing classes. It’s very helpful considering nobody on this island ever thought that Kurapika, a man, would be having a baby. My baby.

Uvogin still took Kurapika out, although now his gaggle of personal maids came with them. It was good for Kurapika to get some fresh air.

The others also did small things here and there to make Kurapikas days as easy and carefree as possible. Phinks even rubbed his feet for two straight hours last week!

The outlier of all this was of course Shalnark. He had been home only three weeks and already he had come to me with thirty-two lies of misdeeds. At one point he told me he saw Kurapika try to shove one of the maids off a balcony!

When I talked to said maid she gushed for thirty minutes. It basically went like this : “Oh he was trying to pick up something I dropped and lost his balance! I’m just so glad he fell into me! Could you imagine if he had fallen? That sweet boy has been through enough, who told you he shoved me? Was it Shalnark? Oh that snake!”

As anyone would imagine, each lie pushed Shalnark further and further into a corner. The High crew has been growing steadily more furious with Shalnark. He just wouldn’t stop.

The maids were now basically guarding Kurapika at all times, May had even started documenting everything Kurapika did during the day.

It was getting rather annoying. Shalnark would barge in at odd times of the day to tattle on
Kurapika for imagined crimes that honestly weren’t that big of a deal. So what if he took an extra serving at breakfast? He’s pregnant!

“Kuroro! Quick, follow me! Kurapika is trying to get a boat to escape!” Shalnark suddenly ran in. I sighed, rolled my eyes but stood either way.

“Alright, let’s go see what he’s actually doing,” I mumbled to myself. Shalnark was really starting to lose it.

Shalnark tried to hustle me into Kurapika’s old room, which had been converted into a nursery a few weeks ago.

Kurapika was sitting with two of his main maids, May and Tessa plus Uvogin. All of them talking over some kind of blueprint of a small weird boat.

“Oh your Majesty!” May greeted, standing up to bow. “And Shalnark,” she sneered.

“Hello ladies, Uvogin, and my love.” The girls awed. “By chance is anyone escaping this lovely castle on a boat for some inexplicable reason?”

The girls looked at each other with raised brows and laughed. But Kurapika grunted unhappily.

“Who told you about the boat?!” he yelled. “That was supposed to be a surprise!”

“You have someone escaping as a surprise?” I teased although I am intrigued about what this surprise was.

“No! What would anyone even be escaping from?” He had a point, since taking control of his mind there was no reason for any escaping. “It’s a small sailboat, for our baby.”

“A sailboat?”

“Yes, I told you how the Kuruta were river sailors, didn’t I?” Aw, yes I do remember that from
when he escaped and I shot a cannonball and a harpoon gun at him. “Well this baby is going to be a great little sailor someday.”

“That they will be,” I smiled and kissed his forehead. “Shalnark and I will leave you all to your boat planning.”

I took Shalnark roughly by the arm and dragged him from the room.

“Kuroro I swear it seemed like he was really escaping this time-“

“SHALNARK!” I barked angrily. “You have to get over this, Kurapika isn’t against us anymore, so stop!” Shalnark reeled back and flinched.

“I-i’m just-” he stopped before ripping his arm away and stomped away. I have no idea what to do about him any more.

I hummed happily as I prepared Kurapika’s lunch. Things were going great considering Shalnark, that snake, was back.

“May! Tessa switched with me on queen watch, but he’s still with the king right now. So he’s safe.” I nodded. I’d slapped together a task force of maids and guards to always keep tabs on Kurapika, just to make sure Shalnark didn’t try anything.

But yes, things were great. The new prince or princess is due in just one weeks, the ceremony to welcome the beautiful little miracle to the kingdom was planned and prepared to start the day after the baby should arrive. Whenever that may be.

And the festival would commence in five weeks, cementing a national holiday celebrating the dead and the newly born.

At the moment the other castle workers and I have been planning to present an idea for another national holiday during the next court session. It would be a day for love, it would be on the
I put the finishing touches on the nice soup the cook made and added another bowl for Kuroro since the two were together today. Kuroro has been having Kurapika sit with him while he works lately. Tessa and some of the others think he’s getting anxious about Kurapika being so close to childbirth. I agree, and it’s adorable.

I knocked on the office doors and nodded to Tessa in thanks, I could take over watching Kurapika now.

I almost walked in when I hear the sound of yelling from down the hall. Lucky for me everyone knew my pension for drama so Tessa took the tray from me immediately.

“Go on, I’m sure the Queen will understand.”

“Thanks Tessa!” I turned on a dime and sprinted for the source of the shouting. I made it all the way to the throne room before I notice the yelling had quieted down and I skidded to a halt when the door was thrown open.

“GO TO HELL!” Lord Nobunaga stomped out of the room and I quickly jumped behind a pillar to watch whatever was going on.

“NOBU!” Shalnark came running after the long haired man. “He’s ruining Kuroro! Don’t you care?!”

“You leave Kurapika alone!” Nobunaga snapped back at him, turning sharply to take him by his shirt and shoved him away. “Kuroro’s happy, Kurapika’s happy, EVERYONE IS HAPPY! Just leave it alone!”

Everything in me wanted to follow Nobunaga, ask him what the hell that had all been about but I knew that would be incredibly inappropriate.

Shalnark stood, rubbed at his face and then screamed. “You’ll regret this!”
Shalnark was really losing it.

“The baby’s coming!” Everyone scrambled, Kurapika’s doctors that his majesty kept close went sprinting for the king’s chamber where the call had come from.

I dropped the tray carrying Kurapika’s lunch on the floor and jumped over the mess. I was the head attendant and personal maid to the Queen! How could I not be by his side when his baby is born?!

Every woman in the castle it seemed was pushing Kuroro from the room, uncaring that he was their king.

“But-! He needs me! I have to be with him through this!” The king argued as four girls physically shoved him from the room. Kurapika’s cries of pain seemed to make the king tense further and fight to get back into the room.

“I’m sorry your majesty, but you have to stay out here!” Tessa punctuated her sentence by shoving him into a wall and gesturing for me to get in the room before the king smashed his way through the mini blockade of castle maids and guards to make sure Kurapika got privacy during this incredible event.

“Keep him out here!” I ordered as I raced into the room and Tessa slammed the door closed.

Kurapika was crying, mumbling something about being in pain as his midwives tried to keep him calm and comfortable on the bed.

“MAY! I THINK THE BABY WANTS TO KILL ME!” Kurapika screamed out, as three girls talked over each other, telling him to breathe in a funny way.

“Oh, Kurapika it’s gonna be okay!” I pushed myself to his side and took his hand and let him squeeze my fingers as hard as he could. “Just breathe Kurapika,” I whispered.

“It’s time to push!” One of the midwives called. Kurapika squeezed my hand so hard I thought it
would break. Someone else I couldn’t be bothered to look at right now took his other hand.

“You can do this Kurapika.” Then he began to push, screaming the whole way.

I paced, every few seconds looking back to the door where my Kurapika’s screams kept coming from. May had somehow gotten three guards plus Uvogin, and Phinks to sign up to keep me out of the room. God damn traitors!

I had to get in there! My Kurapika was going through childbirth and I wasn’t there to support him, I need to get to him!

“Your majesty, the women have this handled,” one of the guards tried to assure me. I looked to him, more miserable and nervous than I’ve ever been, I recognize him as one of the men that volunteered to replace the men I had to execute.

“He’s right,” Uvogin placed a placating hand on my shoulder as we listened to someone call for more linens. “But think, any moment now you’ll be able to hold your first born child!”

I looked to Uvogin and smiled just a bit. The man seemed to have forgiven me and now the prospect at a little prince or princess was just too exciting. We no longer thought of the months Kurapika couldn’t remember, we tried to forget it too.

“Oh!” A gasp drew the attention of everyone waiting in the hall, which seemed like the entire staff at this point. Everyone held their breath and then... A cry. High pitched and strong, and just so perfect it made the world seem fuller. “It’s a boy!”

A boy.

A precious baby prince.

No one dared to try and stop me as I mindlessly walked to the door, opened it gently and walked in.
The women were tearing up, smiles so wide you’d think world peace had been established. And right there, in the center of the bed my tired queen sat up with a bundle in his arms.

That tiny smile on his face as maids fussed about the child, cleaning him up from the mess that came with childbirth.

I took a step towards my family then a large one to cover the rest of the distance. I needed to be near them already! Why was the world moving so slow?!

“Kuroro, meet your son,” Kurapika whispered hoarsely and held out the bundle to me.

He was perfect. Like most newborns he was red as a beet and his skin wrinkled up, he even still had goop in his pitch black hair but he was still perfect.

“I wonder if he will have you eyes, I hope he does.” The maids all awed as I managed to sit on the edge of the bed so Kurapika could scoot closer to gaze at the boy with me.

“He already looks like you, it’s like we’ve got a mini king,” Kurapika joked, smiling tiredly.

The room radiated with happiness and then Shalnark burst in. He was followed by a plump woman with a stern face I didn’t recognize.

“Oh what a happy occasion!” Shalnark smiled, large and fake like before everything that had happened. “Your majesties,” he bowed deeply and I raised a brow. What was he acting so weird for? He was up to something. “I couldn’t help but notice you hadn’t hired a wet nurse to raise the child, so I’ve brought you one.” The plump woman bowed.

“Hello, I am Rose.” And from the mean look on her face, she has plenty of thorns. Unconsciously Kurapika curled his body closer to me and the baby, his arm coming up to block the woman’s view of him.

May, Tessa, and all the rest bristled. It was natural for noble families to hire someone to raise their children for them but for some reason I didn’t care for the idea of it. Especially this woman, something just felt wrong about her.
“No,” Kurapika voice sounded so strong in the charged bedroom that Rose stepped back in surprise.

“Excuse me?” The tight bunned woman glared, edging on inappropriate.

“I said no!” Kurapika carefully took the babe from my arms and held him protectively to his chest. “I’ll be raising this child, I have no need of a wet nurse.”

“Oh Kurapika!” May gasped in delight. The women all beaming with pride. I’ll admit to feeling some pride myself.

“B-but my Queen,” Shalnark smiled brighter, irritation causing his fists to clench. “You can't rule a country and take care of a child.”

“Then I’ll rock him to sleep in court!” Kurapika argued. “I am not alone either. Kuroro, May, and Tessa are here to help.”

“Kuroro shouldn’t be changing diapers, he’s a king!”

“And a father!”

“Kurapika is correct,” I cut in before my little mama bear attacked Shalnark right after delivering a child. “We will be raising our child ourselves.”

“But!”

“No, you may leave Shalnark.”

Shalnark stomped a foot and quickly left with the woman he’d brought.

I hope this stunt was worth it to him, because his public image was ruined forever if I went by the looks the women were now giving him.
He needed to stop behaving like this because our world was now fundamentally different.

“Dang, for a man who just gave birth you look amazing!” May gushed over me. I only just gave birth a week ago but with help from the crown and my strength training routine, I had lost the baby weight faster than the snap of a finger. And I just had to look good and healthy today.

The day of our first national holiday, and the first time I will see my family since my wedding day. Unfortunately my wedding reception was a blur in my memory. I remember talking with Gon and meeting Prince Illumi and his fiancé and little brother but just barely.

But he remembered the night, it all made him blush even if it hadn’t been his first time. The first time had been when Kuroro first rescued me from that arranged marriage to Princess Neon. We’d just been so happy to find each other, we couldn’t wait.

“Your tattoo has been beautifully redone too!” She squealed, putting a little medical balm on the newly freshened tattoo.

*Hands grabbed my flailing limbs, holding me to the bed. I screamed and cried for them, him, not to defile my body. A forbidden tattoo, the pain of the needle was nothing compared to the blandishments of my culture the tattoo implied.*

I jumped, startled by the flash of imagery and feelings that went through my head at the touch to the tattoo. What the hell was that? It was like the pain had triggered something. Like a memory . . . I shook my head. It couldn’t be a memory. I love my tattoo, my grandfather agreed to it as a way of including Kuroro’s culture into ours.

It’s a shame none of my people could indulge in the newly legalized process.

“Are you okay Kurapika?”

“Yes May, I’m fine. Just some kind of vivid day-mare,” I joked.
I grinned as I basked in my total victory. Kurapika has just happily returned from putting down the baby and his visit from his family. After a little chat with Queen Mito, she came to understand that there would be no point in fighting me. It wouldn’t release Kurapika from my hold and it would only bring his suffering back.

Now we sat on our pedestal, hand in hand, as fireworks flashed before us and I finally had the world in my hands. If anyone knew this story and everything that had truly happened they would ask how I was able to be happy without tormenting Kurapika. Because I did derive much satisfaction from it, but I would say to those people: what better torture was it to know everything that had happened and still receive his love and affection?

It was twisted in a way, to know how deeply he hates me and take pleasure in the knowledge that I warped his mind into loving me. Forcing him to give me a child.

And that was what I think finally broke him: the baby, the first and the second. He struggled against my brainwashing for longer than I thought but the second he became pregnant again it was like survival instincts took over. Completely washing out the head strong boy of the past.


“It’s so beautiful!” Kurapika smiled innocently at me.

“It certainly is,” I gripped his hand tighter.

“Be safe Nobunaga!” A guard yelled as he saw me head out on patrol. The island was probably one of the safest places to be in the world, our people extremely kind to anyone they saw as one of our own. So it was more of a joke that they told me to be safe.

Something had been following me, it sounded crazy but something was definitely following him. Everywhere I went the clip clop of a phantom stalked me. My nerves were shot and everyone I
mentioned it to just laughed.

It had to be some kind of psychological torture, maybe universal karma stealing my sleep and peace of mind!

It had been happening for so long that I just expected it now, so the quiet was chilling.

It wasn’t worth thinking about anyway, it was all in my head most likely. But who wasn’t going just a bit crazy lately?

Hell, Shalnark has been going crazy for close to a year! Just two weeks ago he dared to approach me about Kuroro being ‘too’ close to the situation and Kurapika needed to go the moment the baby was born. He even brought in some strange woman to be little Aoi’s wet nurse! He had to know that wouldn’t be okay . . . Right?

He seemed to be the only one that couldn’t just move on!

I sighed as I neared the stables but immediately snapped to attention when the lights went out in the stable. There shouldn’t be any lights to begin with at this time of night!

“Hey!” I called out as I approached the stables. “No one is suppose to be here!” I added as I peeked into the building. It was dark and all the horses were calm. I wouldn’t be as suspicious if I hadn’t seen the stable master taking part in the festivities just an hour ago.

“Come out now!” He yelled again, getting angry. Then, in an empty stall something moved. The sound of crunchy, chewing started coming from the empty stall. “Seriously you have to go, the palace grounds are off limits.”

A scuffle came from the stall. It’s probably just some dumb kid but I had to be thorough.

“Look kid, come on out. You aren’t in trouble,” I sighed as I fully entered the stable, heading straight for the empty stall.

I place my hand on the latch and the noises stopped and something weird happened. Every latch on
every stall suddenly flipped up. I paused, looking back as a feeling of dread swelled in my stomach.

My hand was still on the empty stall door when it slammed open taking my hand with it!

I screamed half in fright and half in pain when my bones were slammed into the wooden wall. But I didn’t have time to get my wits about me because something came stomping out of the stall I thought empty. And it was big!

The clip clop that had been stalking me came back with a vengeance as it trampled over me. It stomped into my back but I didn’t see anything! There was nothing there!

I grunted in pain, blood dripping down my chin and I realized I’d bitten through my tongue. The horses were going crazy and with all the latches unlocked nothing could stop them from stampeding out of there stalls.

I barely managed to scream one strangled “Help!” Before Freebird’s hoove knocked me out.

Nobunaga’s funeral was a tragic affair. Pretty much the entire island showed up for the man, everyone is crying because of the death. It was too soon, Nubonaga still had so much life to give.

“Kurapika?” Kuroro held me tightly, his head on my shoulder as he shook. Drops of warm water fell on my shoulder, I held him tighter.

Him and the high crew had been together for a long time this had to be painful for him. Especially considering how slowly Nobunaga had died. He’d been trampled by the horses but he’d still been alive when the stable master had found him the next morning. It took two days for him to succumb to his injuries and go. It had been very traumatic.

Only two months passed from Nobunaga's funeral before we were burying Franklin and Bonolenov. Their horses also went crazy, Bonolenov had been thrown into a tree, splitting his head. Franklin had been able to stay on the beast but the horse seemed to be on a mission to get him off. It ran him through the dense forest and bucked him into four trees before he fell. In the beast’s panic it stomped his skull. Only he died quickly.
Kuroro fell into a depression. There seemed to be nothing I could do to pull him out of it after the deaths of three of his closest friends.

Luckily little Aoi was probably the cutest thing in the whole world. The small boy smiled for his father on a sad day and Kuroro seemed to get better.

“Let’s have another!” Kuroro said with a bright smile the moment the depression broke. I don’t think I could have ever denied that request, Kuroro had been having a hard time. If having another baby made the world brighter then another baby we’d have.

While pregnant with our second child I noticed the rumors for the first time. Everyone whispered that Shalnark was going insane, flinching at nothing, not sleeping, and screaming at the walls to leave him alone. Everyone believed that he had something to do with the deaths.

I was six months into my pregnancy when Kuroro and I decided to arrange Aoi’s marriage. It had been a long tradition in my family, and it had worked out wonderfully for me so we decided that Soran, Pakunoda’s adopted child, would be Aoi’s queen someday.

The six year old had been happy, kind of, to know we hadn’t forgotten about him. He looked at me funny, like he knew something I didn’t and was sad for me.

Seven months into the pregnancy Koltopi and I decided to begin a project to restore statues and temples from my people. I told him what they looked like and he handled the restoration. It was a lot of fun . . . Until Shalnark heard about it.

A fight broke out between the two, Shalnark fidgeting throughout the entirety of it. Koltopi argued that it was important to remember history and the Kuruta people. Shalnark just insulted me and my people, saying we were best forgotten.

May had balked at him and Koltopi had told him to take his craziness and leave. And that had been the end of it. Until a week later the little man was found in the courtyard with his chest caved in. Like something had kicked it in.

We found the culprit a month later, a wild horse had gotten spooked and kicked him but that didn’t stop anyone from believing it was Shalnark.
The funeral had been as depressing as the first three.

Kuroro became depressed again but not for long, our second child was soon born and it seemed to lift his spirits, holding his little girl. We name her Yachi.

But the birth of our baby girl wasn’t all happy. As the suspicion against Shalnark grew, discourse took over the remaining high crew. When Shalnark tried to visit the newly born princess Phinks punched him, telling him to never come near my children.

Two days later Phinks’ body was found in the garden, seemingly he had fallen from a balcony.

Three years passed in a shaky peace. Shalnark got worse and worse, dark bags developed under his eyes and a few maids said he slept with a knife under his pillow. He kept saying that something was stalking him. That something was killing off the crew and he was next.

Aoi had just turned four and Yachi was three, Kuroro decided we should have another child.

Machi and I had become great friends over the last three years and sitting with her as she made all the clothes for my growing children, so it had been crushing in more ways than one when she’d been found crushed under a sewing shelf, pins sticking into her body. She must have been in so much pain through the night, how did no one hear?

Her sewing room was a mess, like something had kicked around while enraged.

The crown fell from my head the day of her funeral but my heart hurt too much to feel any happiness. Slowly all my friends and loved ones were being picked off by time and odd accidents but this had been no accident!

I came to suspect Shalnark as well but there wasn’t any evidence, so I just kept myself and my children away from him.

Uvogin, Pakunoda, and I grew closer than we’d already been in the wake of Machi’s death. Pakunoda was normally very busy being a mother to Soran and babysitting my own kids, so she didn’t come with Uvogin and I when he took me on picnics and carriage rides. We talked about
Machi and the others, laughing at the good memories.

One day after Shalnark had a break down in the throne room, I decided to stay with Pakunoda and the children instead of going out with Uvogin. I didn’t know he’d go out without me.

His horse threw him while near the crumbling cliffs and the cliffs collapsed under him. It seemed like a cosmic joke that the horse survived and not Uvogin. His body had been recovered at the bottom of the cliffs, a sharp rock stabbed into his chest.

I sniffled my way through the funeral, now being Kuroro’s turn to hold me tightly. Kuroro and Uvogin hadn’t been on the best of terms for over four years but he knew how close we had been.

“I can’t believe he’s gone,” I sobbed into his chest, Aoi sadly hanging onto my leg. He was too young to have lost his favorite uncle.

“Are you going to be okay?” Kuroro asked me, tears in his eyes. I nodded as I broke the embrace to pick up Aoi and hand him to his father.

“Yes, I’m going to go clean out his belongings. It doesn’t seem right to leave this one to the maids.” I gave a watery smile and headed inside. May looked like she wanted to follow but they knew I needed a moment alone.

Uvogin’s room felt cold, the knowledge that he’d never again sleep here already sinking in. I didn’t waste anytime, Uvogin had been trying to prove the deaths all weren’t accidental, that Shalnark had done it all. If he had any evidence then I needed to find it before Shalnark had a chance to get it!

I took Uvogin’s truck and opened it and began to ransack it.

It was mostly clothes and mementos of our times together. I found a small portrait of one of our picnics, Freebird in the background grazing. I smiled sadly.

I continued digging until I spotted a sealed envelope. The paper had yellowed, it looked to be several years old, maybe four or five years old. My interest peaked when I saw the seal wasn’t only unbroken, but it was mine.
“What the...?”

“Write it down word for word,” I whispered and hissed in pain when I tried to sit up.

My head ached and spun as yet another memory welled up.

I didn’t waste another moment, I broke the seal and tore the letter out. Images started coming to the forefront of my mind. Things I hadn’t believed happened, things I had been convinced were a fever dream after losing my first pregnancy.

My hand smoothed over my still flat belly and I read the note aloud.

“Dearest Father, I write to you on my sick bed. My body is weak and I fear I may be gone soon.” But Netero had abused me, used me... Hadn’t he? Why would I write this? I continued. “I have suffered great evils at the hands of the Phantom pirates...”

No! Kuroro would never allow anyone to harm me, only Shalnark was able to get away with it for so long. No one else hurt me, but I wrote this... I said Phantom pirates, not Shalnark. “...but I have found solace in the fact that the people of Ryuusaigai are not evil. In fact it is the only thing left for me to cling to. They seem to be good and I would be remiss if my death continued the cycle of war and tragedy.”

The memory was taking shape. The fear, the pain, and with it came others.

Kuroro beating me into the bed, begging for him not to tattoo my back... Raping me.

The sounding incident... Everything.

My head hurt, my heart was racing and clenching at the same time and I found I was crying. My hands shook and my lower lip trembled. But I had to continue.

“I have lost much in my short life and so I ask you, my loving adoptive father, for only one favor.
My head fell, the letter was dropped and I sobbed. I cried harder as it all came back. Every abusive word, every night I begged for it to stop. The attempts at my own life, the death of my baby. The deaths of Hail and the others that Kuroro committed to keep me in line.

“How. . .?” I raised my head as all the anger finally broke free. “How could I have forgotten?”

“Mommy?” My head snapped up and I saw Aoi at the door. He looked just like Kuroro . . . But he had my mother's eyes, my eyes. “Are you okay?” He asked hesitantly.

I smiled for his benefit when I noticed how scared he was and opened my arms to him, secretly crumpling the letter up and hiding it in my shirt. Aoi ran unsteadily into my arms and I hugged him closely.

“I am now,” I petted his beautiful raven hair and picked him up. I couldn't let Kuroro know that I remembered. I was so afraid it would all start again. We had children now so nothing would stop him from killing me this time. But more than that. . . I love him. The other personality was pushing back, it wanted control. With every recovered memory the other personality brought up all the happy times with Kuroro.

Playing dress up with Yachi, tea parties with our children, loving touches during court. We had been happy. But it was all fake.

My life was fake.

For three weeks I struggled with the push and pull of the two personalities. One wanted revenge, wanted to see the look on Kuroro’s face when I reveal that I remembered, that he didn’t win. The other wanted to just pretend nothing was wrong, just go on and live my life happily the way things were.

Kuroro was excited about the new baby and Aoi kept asking me to make sure he got a baby brother, like I could control that. Everything was so happy, so I just let it all go. Let myself pretend like I never found that letter.

And then it happened, I found the vial of poison while cleaning out Feiten’s room. He had been
viciously stomped to death when a carriage caught fire and the horses panicked.

I didn’t even realize I had taken it until I got back to my room. I didn’t plan on using it because who would I even use it on? I love Kuroro, no matter our past.

Life went on for three more months until an odd day, Kuroro had gotten frustrated at Aoi. He was having a regular childhood tantrum and Kuroro had raised his hand like he would hit him. He hadn’t, no he doesn’t abuse when other people could see but it was enough.

While helping May prepare lunch for Kuroro I slipped it in. I poisoned my husband, I poisoned the king.

I offered to take the tray, May tried to fight it but I insisted and played my trump card. “We’ve been so busy with ruling and the kids we haven’t had any time alone. Do you think we’ll ever get time to ourselves again?” She blushed and waved me away.

I didn’t knock as I entered our chamber.

I remember everything that happened here, when he raped me on our wedding night, forcing me to comply with the threat of killing dozens of people if I didn’t. Beating me into the bed when I failed, killing that girl in front of me as punishment the next morning.

Chaining me to the wall and watching as I rotted. Shoving a spiked object inside me when I said my name wasn’t Lucifer. All of it.

Why do I still love him? But he threatened my child... No matter how I feel, I won’t let that happen.

“Ah, my sweetling,” Kuroro smiled when I entered and I smiled back. “You are a sight for sore eyes, these reports are driving me crazy.”

I could do those reports no problem.

“Well, why don’t you take a break and eat lunch with me?” I placed the tray in front of him and
quickly grabbed the unpoisoned bowl of soup for myself.

“That sounds wonderful,” he purred. We hadn’t had any time lately, so he was probably a little pent up. Good, he’s clumsy when he is overly lustful.

I made idle conversations as I watched him eat the soup, every bite took him closer to death and once he was done I didn’t fight when he pulled me to the bed.

“So, no kids around, no work to do,” you have work to do you bastard, even though I fluttered my eyes flirtatiously. “Let’s have some mommy and daddy time eh?”

“That sounds nice,” I whispered as he kissed at my neck. It continued for all of twenty seconds before he choked. His knees went weak and he fell onto the bed.

Regret hit me instantly as I watched my loving husband gasp for air.

“I’m sorry,” I began to chant as I followed him into the bed and held his head.

His eyes sharpened and he looked up at me in realization.

“Yo-you?” He coughed out and I nodded frantically, still whispering how sorry I was. His eyes softened and he raised a jerky hand up to wipe my tears away before burying his fingers at the root of my hair.

He pulled me close and for a moment my heart leaped. I thought he’d say he forgave me, or how sorry he was. Something that would finally prove to me that even if our relationship started with abuse we’d found real love in the end.

That didn’t happen. His fingers tightened painfully and I cried out as he yanked me close enough that he could put his lips against my ear.

“You wo-won’t ever esca-es-escape me,” he hissed with so much possessive anger I shivered. “I sti-still won.” And then his hand went limp and he was gone.
I screamed, crying out for help as I sobbed over his slowly cooling body.

I loved him and he was right. He did win.

Something odd happened in the panic, the vial of poison disappeared. I couldn’t find it.

The entire island grieved for weeks, nothing hurt me worse than when little Aoi, holding his little sister close, asked me when he would see his daddy again.

I slept in their room that night.

____________________________________________________________________________________

Everyone looked at me like I had killed them all. But I didn’t, I DIDN’T! I know it’s crazy, but I can see the shadows, it hides in the corners and it’s what’s killing everyone!

Maybe not Kuroro, poison was far and away from the way everyone else died, but I couldn’t tell anyone that I knew it was Kurapika. No one would even speak to me anymore. I was a pariah and I was the last one left besides Pakunoda.

I had to warn her.

I gripped the knife I kept with me to defend myself when the shadow finally came for me and prepared myself to talk to the woman. I needed to make her understand that we were in danger! That we were being hu- WHAT WAS THAT!?

I turned sharply to face the shadow that ran across my vision but nothing was there any more. My breathing escalated and I ran the rest of the way to the kitchens, the thing chasing me the entire way.

I had a theory on what it was but it was too crazy. Crazier than even me. But the crown was real . . . So why not the Ghost Horse?
Everyone died with a horse somehow involved so it made sense right? RIGHT?! Yeah, I’m right. I am.

Pakunoda tried to ignore me when I found her in the kitchen. I shoved a maid that tried to stop me from getting to Pakunoda. I turned away for a second to yell at her to stay out of my way and when I turned back there it was.

Pakunoda was gone and in her place a great black beast. Its red eyes froze me to my core and it just stared at me, taunting me.

I screamed angrily and pulled my knife from my pants as I ran at it. I jumped at its neck and stabbed at it. I kept stabbing again, and again, and again, and again!

People tried to pull me off it but I didn’t stop swinging until my arms were covered in red.

*I’ve done it! I’ve saved us!*

Pakunoda and I don’t have to worry because the Ghost Horse is dead!

“PAKUNODA!” I heard the brat scream and I snapped out of my thoughts to see I hadn’t killed the Ghost Horse. I’d killed Pakunoda.

“Throw him in the dungeon!” Kurapika ordered as I began to scream and flail about. I scratched at my own skin, panic overtaking me. I needed to get away.

*I’m next.*

I had to hold back my tears as I held an emergency court.
After Kuroro’s death I had been proclaimed as king and now I needed to deal with Shalnark. He had a complete mental break, screaming from his cell that the Ghost Horse was after him. That sent a shiver up my spine.

I’d always thought it was just a story, but it did explain a few things no matter how crazy that seemed.

Everyone had decided that Shalnark killed the rest of the High crew, including Kuroro. The general belief was the poison was meant for me but the bowls got switched. It didn’t help that my missing vial had been found in his room, I don’t know how it got there but it did.

I decided that there would be no execution, I wouldn’t have my land defiled anymore.

Everyone thought it was because of some kind of mercy, saying I was too kind.

I made a mental note to contact Netero and ask him to send teachers, my people needed to learn to think for themselves. Stop taking someone else’s words as law.

The next morning was a whirlwind of meetings and announcements because Shalnark was found with his head bashed in against the wall.

And that was the end of it. My last tormentor was gone and I was the king.

Ten years passed. I renamed the island Kuruta, it’s true name. After Pakunoda died all those years back I took in Soran. Recently he asked me about his suspicions about the real nature of my relationship with Kuroro. May his soul Rest In Peace.

Soran had become the only person I can talk to about the scars that were left and how much I loved him. He was only 20 but he was a smart boy. My own son Aoi is fourteen now, in four years him and Soran would be married. Aoi was the kindest soul to ever touch these lands and Soran was smart as a whip, they’d be excellent rulers someday.

They were good friends, not in love, but good friends. My third child, Kuroro the second, was a happy little ten year old and Yachi was off studying under king Gon’s and Queen Killua’s tutelage. She wanted to be an ambassador some day, the Kurutas first ever. All my children were happy and
Yet I missed Kuroro. I missed him everyday. I love him and I hate myself for it. The people think I never remarried or took a queen because I couldn’t bare to move on from the love of my life, and in a way they were right. Kuroro truly broke me. But it was so much more than that.

How could I show anyone this scarred body? Leorio was disappointed but in the end understood. I couldn’t be with anyone else,

In the end I didn’t win, but neither did Kuroro.

No one won. And that’s the end of it.

Chapter End Notes

Wow. Just wow. I wrote a year long torture porn with more than a hundred thousand words. I’m gonna be honest with all of you, I didn’t mean for it to be like this.

When I started this a year ago it was going to be a Three chapter long blip on the radar. You can all blame Serenechaos for this story. I was content to leave it at chapter two, then she emailed me asking question about where it was going and I got creative and the story grew.

So this isn’t my fault.

But seriously wow I can’t believe it’s over . . . I feel a little empty now lol.

I’m trying to write an original book now, chasing my dream of being a published author and all that. If you like the way I write and all that you could follow me on twitter where I recently started up my author platform. @thedandyzombie is my handle and don’t worry I’ll probably write more kurokura fan fictions. I’ve liked writing pirate Kuroro and I’ve got an idea for mermaid Kurapika, although it probably won’t be so . . . Dark.

Also p.s. I think it’s important for you all to know how close this had a very different ending. One perspective ending was Kurapika sitting dead eyes as he first two children played and Kuroro coming in and placing the crown on his head. Whispering “lets have another.” I different ending was going to be Kuroro at the festival reminiscing about how he won.

I came real close to just letting Kuroro win. So now I’m gonna go take a long bath and try and reassure myself I’m a good person.
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!