Is This the Way It Ends Now?

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Summary

(Not your average characters watch their series fic)

L dangled the note in front of him. It claimed the disk would help with the investigation. Was this a trick? Was this another evolution of Kira's power? Was it a different supernatural force trying to help them against Kira?

He didn't know, but the only way to find out was to view its contents.

Link to Chinese Translation
Link to Spanish Translation

Notes

To avoid the copyright infringement stories like these commonly encounter, there will be as little transcription of the show itself as possible. I hope it makes sense from the character's analyses of events where they are in certain episodes. Enjoy!
The Game Begins

Chapter Notes

Fair warning, this fic is actually longer but because I'm lazy and didn't put spaces between quotation marks and words it lowered the official word count to 135,000 and I'm definitely too lazy to go and change that.

Edit 8/16/2020: Due to boredom during this pandemic, I am no longer too lazy to correct this. Will be going back through this putting the spaces and getting rid of unnecessary thats and hads.

Edit: 8/20/2020: Holy shit. Word count is plummeting as I get rid of excess words and correct run-on sentences. For those of you now reading this, it's a lot better!

The Shinigami king saw the path Ryuk’s foolish human was walking down. He knew how the story would end. The white-haired child would be victorious over the self-proclaimed god of a world yet to be created. He also saw in the young Yagami a contender for his position when the mortal passed into their realm. While there was nothing he could do for the human’s soul, he could put off his entrance to his world by a few decades.

Perhaps, with time, surrounded by the right influences, his ambition would die out and he wouldn’t have to worry over his throne.

Wouldn’t that be nice?

He also didn’t want to deal with the human Rem was being set up to die for. She already had her life extended when Gelus had killed for her. Halving it twice had brought it closer to a normal human’s, but with the addition of another death god’s lifespan…there was a high likelihood of her killing herself when Kira ultimately failed, but if she didn’t he’d have to go kill her himself.

That felt like an insult to Gelus and Rem’s memory.

Speaking of memories, he quickly collected the relevant ones to burn on one of the mortal’s compact disks. He hated to take away the best entertainment his substituents had in years, so he made it into a television show. Not much different from how they watched the human world from their realm.

They’d get to see how it ended, and the humans could change the course of their future.

So long as Kira didn’t come into his realm, he was happy.

He swept down into the human world to drop off his gift. Light Yagami was currently without his memories of being Kira…he could admit to his own curiosity as to how he would react to seeing all he did without the corrupting influence of the death note. He also wanted to see how the detective would react, all the detectives.

It would be the extremely entertaining.

For him, at least.
“Um…” Matsuda trailed off, as he usually did before he mustered up the courage to ask whatever frivolous curiosity came to his mind. L didn’t bother looking away from his screen, though Light did shift a few centimeters, "Did anyone notice that tape there a second ago or did it just appear?"

“What are you talking about, Matsuda?” Aizawa humored the youngest official detective.

“I swear that CD wasn’t there a second ago.” Now Light did turn around, jangling the chain between them. It was mid-September. They’d been chained together for over a month. There was no sign his memories of being Kira were returning, if he were ever Kira to begin with and not some pawn sent to distract him.

It was the near proximity effect which made him lower his guard around the younger man, but he genuinely considered them friends now.

“See?” The hyperactive man continued, "It even came with a note, and I don’t think this is any of our handwriting.” He turned as well, watching as the other picked up the CD case, holding the paper in his free hand. Matsuda was right, it was not evidence they had before, nor did they get mail, "It’s addressed to the Kira task force!” The man skimmed it with a frown, "They want all of us to watch this…but who are Near, Mello, and Matt?”

That got his full attention. He held out a hand, "Give that to me.”

Matsuda obeyed, and he hadn’t read it wrong.

Light sensed his concern, and turned back to the monitor to pull up the security feed. Up until three minutes ago, there was nothing on the small table. Then, as if by magic, the note and CD appeared, "Impossible," The teenager muttered.

“Apparently not.” L bit his thumb, dangling the note in front of him. The note claimed the video would help with the investigation. Was this a trick? Was this another leap in the evolution of Kira’s powers? No, if Kira knew about Wammy’s house then he doubted Watari would still be alive. Was it another supernatural force trying to help them against Kira?

“Do you know those people, Ryuzaki?” Yagami inquired.

“Yes,” He murmured. As far as he knew, no one in Wammy’s house decided to help him with the Kira case and no one left. Beyond Birthday fell to Kira earlier in the year...unless that was faked but he trusted the people he sent to check were competent in their field. BB wouldn’t have known about Near...but no leak in their secrecy explained its appearance.

“If we set up a separate system to play the CD, there’s no harm in doing so,” Light suggested before he could.

L nodded to Watari, who proceeded to do so. His heirs were his best hope of catching Kira should their current line of investigation prove to be a trap. Mello and Near together were far more capable than either of them believed, and he was certain they were more than adequate replacements for him. Especially if they continued working with Light...so long as Light wasn’t who killed him.

It was a risk to introduce them before he was absolutely sure of Light’s innocence. But was it riskier to exclude them when they were asked for by name?

He bit his thumb harder. Out of all the possible reasons, the one where a supernatural entity was attempting to assist the investigation made the most sense. With all the talk of Shinigami and Kira
his mind was open to almost any possibility. If the being wanted the three boys present…would there be consequences if he refused? His heirs…before Light they were the closest people he had to friends.

He didn't want anything bad to happen to them.

Their identities would be safe, so long as they didn’t reveal they were heirs to the title of L he doubted Light would see them as a threat. He sent a quick message to Roger requesting the boys be sent to Japan immediately. He then swiveled his gaze to the teen attached to him, who was watching with curious eyes. Eyes that were so different from the beginning of his confinement he found it hard to believe they belonged to the same person.

“Near, Mello, and Matt are all occupants of the orphanage I was raised in,” He explained, getting a flicker of sympathy and understanding from his friend.

“Are you sure you want them involved in the case?” Aizawa asked, ”If they’re just kids…”

“They are by no means normal children,” L assured, ”The orphanage they attend is specifically catered to prodigal children.”

“So three mini Ryuzakis?” Matsuda asked excitedly.

“In a sense.” Near was a more apathetic version of him, he supposed. Mello's pride matched Light's, but he didn’t have the self-control to maintain his level of perfection. Matt was probably closest to normal, though he showed his peculiarities in certain subjects. They needed the third boy to make sure Mello didn’t kill Near, ”You will see for yourself in about fourteen hours.”

“Until then, we should keep working.” Light went back to the data he was accumulating, running it through various analyses with a fervid determination. He watched the younger man for a few minutes, feeling a slight sadness. If the CD revealed that he was right all along…

No. Light obviously held no memories of being Kira. With no evidence against him and no possible confession, there was no way he could get a conviction to stick. He just needed to find a way to ensure Light would never become Kira again, or be manipulated by the killer, and he would save his friend.

If he could save Light, it would be more satisfying than simply defeating Kira.

He knew better than to put too much hope into an anomaly. He went back to looking at the latest victims. It was the first Kira he was interested in catching, the other two were terrible copies of the original. He could see both were sloppier than the first, and he almost didn’t want to catch them because it was obvious the first Kira wanted him to.

It was beginning to feel like everything he did was playing right into the enemy's hands.

Time always moved faster when one was focused on a singular task. Before he knew it, the other members were calling it for the day and departing to go sleep. He pushed on with Light by his side until the perfect teen yawned, stretching in his chair, ”Are you ready to go to our bedroom?”

The college student knew his limits well. He learned not to argue with the other when it came to matters of self-care. He nodded, and they silently made their way up to their floor. He unlocked the handcuff so they could switch into their sleep shirts, and he marveled at how relaxed the teen could appear. He barely seemed phased by the CDs appearance, though he thought he was innocent so what could he fear?
“Anything I should know in advance about the boys?” Light asked as he reattached the cuff.

“Near is antisocial. He likely won’t interact with you.” Though the same could be said about himself and look how that turned out, ”Mello has an inferiority complex. It gets aggravated by Near. I may require your assistance if a fight breaks out between them.” The teen raised an eyebrow, but nodded, ”Matt is the most normal of them, and the only person Mello will listen to besides myself.”

“They’re all geniuses as well?” The college student sat on the bed.

“Yes.” He crawled over to his side with his laptop in hand, ”So don’t think you’ll be able to learn anything about me from them.”

A sigh, ”For the last time, I’m not Kira.”

Not currently. But he had been, and if he didn’t figure out a way to prevent it, he would be again.

“Yes, you do like to say that.” He opened his laptop while the lights lowered.

Light slept peacefully. It was the only time a genuine calm spread across his face. It was different from the forced perfection present regardless of if he was Kira or not. It made him wonder what it would have been like if Light were an orphan. He would have been picked up by Wammy’s radar, he’d probably be in contest to be one of his heirs.

He wondered if they would have met without Kira.

Light should have caught his attention eventually, or so he hoped.

He stretched a hand out to touch his perfect hair, a lighter brown then was normal for his nationality. It would be a shame if he were Kira. He had such potential.

The power to kill was a curse. He doubted he would have resisted the urge to use it if he was the one cursed with it. He doubted there was anyone in the world that would have before Kira displayed how terrifying power could be without restraint.

Understanding it didn’t make it right.

It just made it possible for him to forgive Light, if they stopped Kira.

When they stopped Kira.

He closed his laptop soon after, deciding he should have some proper rest before dealing with his heirs. He had been neglecting them since the Kira case started, and they were nearly a year into it. Besides, he couldn’t continue the investigation all that seriously when he suspected it was a trap.

When he woke up they would watch the mysterious CD and then move forward from there.

That was his plan.
Near settled on the floor as he watched the investigation team. These were the people L trusted with his face. One of them, the youngest he assumed, hurried forward like an excited puppy, "Good morning! You must be Ryuzaki’s friends!" He held out a hand, and Matt was the only one to move to shake it, "It’s so exciting to have you here! If there’s anything I can do for you, don’t be afraid to ask!"

How was this one of the men L was working with?

“Matsuda.” The oldest of the detectives pinched the bridge of his nose, ”Control yourself.”

“Sorry, Chief,” Matsuda cringed.

“Where’s L?” Mello demanded.

“With Light in their bedroom, probably.” The big man glanced at the staircase.

“Their bedroom?” Matt asked, tilting his head at what that insinuated.

The adults on the team winced at the brunet’s question, the oldest sighing, ”It’s…complicated. You’ll see for yourself.” He moved closer, ”I’m Chief Yagami of the NPA.”

“Aizawa,” The up until now silent man offered.

“Mogi.” The big man nodded.

“Mello,” The blond said, crossing his arms as he pulled a leg up onto his seat.

“I’m Matt.” The third rank smiled.

“I’m Matt.” The third rank smiled.

“Near,” The white-haired child finished apathetically. If L was sharing a bedroom with someone… that could mean a few things. The obvious insinuation was that whoever Light was, they were sleeping together. It was strange to think of the man being in a relationship, considering his only regular contact was with those in the orphanage.

For L to not only show his face, but to sleep next to someone, with someone…he didn’t know what that meant. He hadn’t thought his mentor capable of that type of connection to another person. He admitted he didn’t know the first thing about love. None of them did, and it was that removal from sentiment that made them better detectives than the average person.

As if summoned by his thoughts, two men came down the stairs.

L looked like he actually slept, but Near’s gaze was drawn to the young man walking next to him. He was classically handsome, beautiful even. Perfect hair, perfect clothes, and he walked like he knew that. There was a glint of curiosity in his eyes, but Near was more fascinated by the intelligence he saw there and the manacle connecting him to the world’s greatest detective.

No…L wasn’t so reckless as to chain himself to a suspect in the Kira investigation, was he?

The young man smiled, ”Sorry, Dad. We would have been down sooner but someone.” He shot a
look at L, who merely raised his eyebrows, "Decided to get my shirt dirty with his idea of breakfast."

The Chief’s son was a Kira suspect? What a wonderfully complex situation.

"You care too much for appearances, Light," L said in response, continuing until he was standing in front of them, "I trust there were no difficulties on the flight here."

"None." Mello huffed, "Why’d you want us here?"

"Your presence was requested," The dark haired man non-answered, "We will be watching something pertinent to the Kira investigation."

Near flickered his gaze to the young man attached to his mentor.

Light Yagami sighed, then crossed his arms, "If you couldn’t tell, L suspects me of being Kira."

“So he showed you his face?” Mello frowned, "Risky, L."

Suicidal, almost.

“Light currently retains no memories of his actions as Kira and is helping me to catch the third Kira," L said tonelessly, "As I have no way to prove his guilt, he is technically innocent."

An amnesiac Kira? Even more complex.

“Oh, so you let pretty boy help but not us?” The oldest of the three of them scowled, "And what if he is Kira? He could kill you."

"Ryuzaki may be annoying, but I don’t want him dead," Light said calmly, though he could see the glint of indignation in his eyes. Did he not like being accused of being Kira or was he annoyed that he was caught? "I want Kira brought to justice as much as everyone here."

That seemed to please the Chief.

L brought his thumb to his mouth as he regarded his companion. How much of his observations were clouded by sentiment. The youngest cleared his head of all theories. He didn’t have all the data that led L to his conclusions nor did he know enough about the suspect to form any profile. So long as he kept his distance from the suspect, he could keep his judgments clear.

“You said third Kira.” Near decided to comment, "If Light is the first," Another miniscule reaction. He wasn’t surprised someone who cared so much for appearances had pride that was easily injured, "Then who is the second?"

“Misa Amane. Light’s...girlfriend." Another pause, another complication.

“Wait,” Mello frowned, "Pretty boy’s straight?"

“I would appreciate it if you’d call me by my name, Mello.” The suspect kept a polite smile that would have fooled anyone else. Near gave half a moment to wonder how much about them L had told the young man if he were able to accurately deduce which of them was which, "And my sexuality is not the issue here. Misa will not be joining us because she is not helping with the investigation."

Great avoidance.
“We should get started.” Chief Yagami motioned to his team, who took up chairs so they could all see the screen.

Near brought his knees up to his chest.

Up until he was brought to the task headquarters, he was confident L could handle the Kira investigation. Now, seeing him attached, literally and emotionally, to his prime suspect…he was concerned this wouldn’t turn out well for his mentor. In this high stakes game, a bad outcome was equivalent to death.

He didn’t want L to die.

He would do whatever was in his power to prevent his death, or avenge it, if need be.

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“A fucking anime?” Mello scowled as the opening started, though he did like the music. His mood darkened at the images being shown.

Why did they have to focus on Light Yagami? Wasn’t it bad enough he had to compete with the albino freak?

“Death Note?” Matt muttered as the title was shown.

He just shrugged, never having heard of such a thing. The blond nibbled on his chocolate bar as more images flashed by. Whoever created this was definitely drawing on Christianity, which put him in a worse mood. It was also obvious the main conflict would be between Pretty Boy and L, making the former Kira.

He shifted in his seat when the opening finished and moved immediately into a scene where the world seemed to be made of bone and dust. Humanoid, but definitely not human, beings sat around gambling. They asked another to join their game, but he, Ryuk, declined. Mello narrowed his eyes at the being. Everyone knew Kira used a supernatural power to kill, was this where it came from?

“Those must be Shinigami,” L said, as the scene switched.

It showed a bored looking Pretty Boy staring out the window of his classroom while his teacher droned on about some quote. Mello would be bored out of his mind there too, and when the teacher called on him he rolled his eyes. Typical they would pick on the one kid who wasn’t whispering or doing something else. He gave a perfect answer, and the scene switched again to him walking home.

Matsuda flinched at the news reports, ”Jeez, Light. I thought you were more optimistic than that.”

“I can’t change the news,” Pretty Boy said, though he was tense. Nothing they’d seen so far was helping his not guilty plea, but he also looked confused.

Was this what L meant when he said he didn’t have his memories pertaining to being Kira? Did he not remember being a mass murderer? It didn’t sound like something someone just forgot.

“Were you bored in school?” L inquired.

“It was never that challenging for me.” Pretty Boy kept his gaze glued to the screen, ”But being bored doesn’t make me Kira.”
Mello glanced at the Chief, who looked to be in a heavy state of denial. What was it like to have normal parents, to be raised surrounded by normal people? The suspect had no right to complain about his perfect upbringing, not when they had a whole mansion full of orphans, some of who would give anything to have their families back.

The scene shifted so they were back in school. Matt snorted, "How ironic. You’re talking about extinction."

Any response to that was cut off by the appearance of a notebook. It seemingly came out of nowhere, and they all watched it fall to the ground in the courtyard. Anime Pretty Boy did as well. As soon as class was let out he went to retrieve it. It was called a Death Note, and Mello barely contained an eye roll.

On-screen, Pretty Boy scoffed at the idea of just writing someone’s name in a book to kill them. The blond inwardly agreed, but the background music made him feel like they were building up to something. The older teenager brought the prank home with him, still believing it was a prank but his curiosity piqued enough he didn’t toss it immediately.

L set down his tea, "I take it that is Kira’s murder weapon."

"My son hasn’t used it," Chief Yagami growled, and the other NPA detectives exchanged worried glances.

No one added the much needed yet.

“…” Pretty Boy frowned, ”I don’t remember any of this.”

"On the off chance someone really dies, would that make me a murderer?"

"Yes," Near said simply, "But I doubt anyone would have arrested you at the time."

Now was a completely different story.

Breaking news caught the anime character’s attention. A hostage situation with someone known to be violent and armed. Mello felt something in his gut twist in sympathy and hated it. Light didn’t believe it would work, and if it did work it was better that a criminal died than whoever came to mind first. No one spoke as they waited for the time to pass on screen.

It was better a criminal die, but it didn’t make it right.

Nothing about Kira was right.

Anime Light was about to give up when the announcement came that the criminal died.

“No way!” Matsuda shouted, as L leaned forward to pause the video. How that idiot was on this task force was beyond him, but he seemed to be the only one that hadn’t picked up on the obvious.

Pretty Boy was staring at the ground now, ”How... how can I not remember this?”

“You don’t have the notebook now,” L theorized, rubbing his feet together in the weird way they’d all grown used to, ”Perhaps when it switches users you lose the memory of it.”

“Or you’re lying,” Mello accused, but those eyes, failing to hide his confusion and guilt, told him that he wasn’t.

If this was planned by Kira...he was worse than evil. There wasn’t a layer of hell for his actions.
He was smart enough to separate Light from Kira. At the moment, they were two different beings. They were about to watch one be quickly morphed into the other.

“Let’s keep going.” Matt decided, "If it goes up to now then we’ll have our explanation, won’t we?"

Mello put his chocolate back in his pocket, no longer in the mood for sweets. He was never the best at separating his emotions from the situation. He wasn’t a fucking robot like Near. He wanted to cover his ears when past Light tried to convince himself it was just a coincidence, before leaving to go to cram school.

It was stupid. He risked killing another person just to prove he hadn’t killed the first person, but that was guilt. It made people do stupid shit.

Then the justifications began. There were people the world was better off without. A sentiment Mello hated to agree with. Wammy’s house gave him the opportunity to rise above regular people, and he strove to be the best by any means necessary. If he was the one to pick up the notebook…it would have become one of his means he would deem necessary.

Another situation presented itself, another set of circumstances where he could save innocents at the cost of the criminal. The cops wouldn’t arrive in time to save the woman from the gang. No passer-by would interfere, and even if Light went in with his fists instead of his magical notebook, he was no match for the men.

He shouldn’t sympathize with Kira. He shoved the emotion down.

“Kira can kill by means other than a heart attack,” Aizawa noted as Takuo was hit by a truck, confirming the Death Note’s power.

Light made a strange noise, ”I guess that means we have no idea how many people I’ve killed.”

“Kira’s killed,” L corrected.

“At this point it’s pretty obvious I am Kira, Ryuzaki.” The older teenager pinched the bridge of his nose, covering his too revealing eyes, ”You were right all along. Happy?”

“No," The detective blinked, "You were Kira."

“Amnesia isn’t an acceptable defense in court,” Light countered.

“This case was never going to go to court anyways.” The man he hoped to one day replace hugged his knees, ”As long as Kira is stopped, the world will be happy.”

“Ryuzaki…”

“Shut the fuck up,” Mello snapped, ”Do you want to be fucking punished?”

“For killing thousands of people? Shouldn’t I be?” The teen snapped back.

“Looking at you without the influence of the Death Note,” Near interjected, ”It’s obvious it has some effect on your psyche.”

“Just stop.” The Chief shook his head, ”Light…I’m disappointed.”

That seemed to just crush the older teen.
Another awkward silence descended on the room as they continued. Ryuk re-entered the storyline, but Mello tensed at the scene between Pretty Boy and his mother. She didn’t even care to ask him about his day, or listen to his explanation for why he was home early. She just wanted the results of his tests.

It was a familiar feeling.

Wammy’s changed a little since A committed suicide and B went psycho, but he still remembered what it was like before. A was the one on top, the one set to become L’s replacement should the man die or retire. Then he came along. He took the number one spot. Suddenly, no one cared as much for A. He started slipping. The more he slipped the less they cared, until it was too late to save him from falling.

He’d be damned if he let Near make him irrelevant like that.

He noticed Matt sending him and the younger Yagami a concerned look, and scowled. They were all geniuses, of course they were going to have shit in common. So long as Light continued to perform how his parents expected him to, they wouldn’t notice the subtle changes in his behavior.

His family didn’t notice he became a serial killer, just as Wammy’s hadn’t noticed A becoming suicidal.

Not even that similarity stopped him from laughing when Light freaked out. Just because L saw something in him didn't mean he needed to.

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Aizawa frowned at the insane laughter. Light was eleven the first time they met, a long six years ago. To see him fall so quickly to insanity…what did they miss? Where was the sweet young boy who wanted nothing more than to become a detective and help his father? It wasn’t like the Chief was a bad father. They just expected the best from Light and the boy was always able to deliver.

He put a hand on his boss’ shoulder as they watched Ryuk talk to Light in his bedroom.

There were no consequences to using the death note?

Ryuzaki paused it, "You gave up ownership of the Death Note and thus lost your memories of it."

Light shook his head, "This has to be part of my plan-"

"Kira’s plan."

"Why do you insist we’re two separate beings?" The teenager rose from his chair.

Ryuzaki didn’t respond, only continued the video, tugging on the chain until the younger man was seated again.

The detective shuddered when he learned what the consequences were. To not be able to go to heaven or hell…to live a life filled with fear and pain…to be the only one able to see the monster constantly lurking in the shadows…he would go insane. And for all of this to have happened on accident? Because a Shinigami was bored?

"In a way…” Matsuda commented as the scene seemed to go to a flashback, forcing Ryuzaki to pause again, "I guess we’re lucky Light picked it up.”
“Matsuda…” Aizawa warned.

“No, think about it. Light said it compels people to use it, and he’s using it in a way that draws attention.” The youngest of the NPA detectives fidgeted, ”Can you imagine what would have happened if someone more discreet picked it up?”

Mogi hit him on the back of the head, ”There are better ways to say that.”

The other agent felt the Chief stiffen, ”Discretion would have a lower body count.”

Aizawa knew where Matsuda was trying to go with his comment. If the Death Note were picked up by a politician, they could use it to eliminate the competition and lead to them in power. If it were picked up by a businessman it would lead to them becoming rich. Light was trying to make a better world for everyone.

The path to hell was paved with good intentions, after all.

Ryuuzaki continued the video. The flashback revealed that Light had felt guilty, guilty enough to throw up in an alleyway. Light was aware he was destroying himself, yet he gave himself to the task in order to make a better world. He couldn't bring himself to hate Light. His sense of justice was too similar to his father's.

He already saw on a smaller scale how his power could be used to help.

Those hostages made it out alive because of him.

That woman wasn’t raped because of him.

It was still despicable. He couldn’t condone mass execution or judgment being passed by one man without any restraints. He didn’t want to live in a world ruled by fear.

A world ruled by a boy masquerading as a god.

“Arrogant much?” Mello muttered in Light’s direction when the end song started, showing much darker pictures. The image of the Chief’s son with glowing red eyes would haunt his nightmares.

“He spent his entire life being told he’s the best.” Near countered before either Ryuzaki or Light could answer, ”The better question would be if Light had ever failed at something before?”

“Not that he’s failing now,” The last of the mini-Ryuzakis pointed out, ”Violent crimes have decreased dramatically since he started killing.”

“The end doesn’t justify the means.” The Chief scolded, still unable to look at his son, ”Two wrongs don’t make a right.” The children fell silent, and he looked pointedly at the screen, ”Let’s keep going. I want to see how much my son has lied to me.”

“Dad-“

“Don’t.”

Aizawa hoped the Chief didn’t blame himself for Light becoming Kira.

And he hoped the knowledge that he had become Kira didn’t destroy the Light they currently had.

Why? Why did Light have to be Kira?
Because the world can't go on like this.

Except it had for centuries. The justice system was flawed. It was by no means perfect, nor did they claim it was. But it was the best they as flawed humans could have. It was when they lost faith in the system that it truly began to fail them all.

When did Light lose faith?

Chapter End Notes

And thus the first episode has been watched. Let me know what you think! Leave a like or a review or a correction!

Thank you!!
Matt wasn't ambitious. He didn't have the hardworking attitude Mello did. He wasn't passionate about puzzles like Near was. He liked his video games and he helped his friend when he needed it, otherwise he didn't really care about anything. He found it hilarious anyone called him the third in line to succeed L. He didn't want the title nor would he be a good fit for the job.

In a way, he admired Light's passion. It almost reminded him of Mello's drive. But there was a difference between Mello's complete willingness to kill a few people to reach his goal and Light's decision for an entire sector of humanity to die for his ideals.

He lounged comfortably in his seat, trying his best to ignore the tense atmosphere settling in the room. He didn't see what the big deal was. No one here could claim moral supremacy. L and Nears' methods were hardly legal. Mello was definitely an end justifies the means type of guy. Matt didn't think his apathy was indicative of good morality. If he did care about something he was sure he'd too ignore the law.

He just didn't cared about a cause yet.

It didn't make him a good person. He just hadn't been put in a situation which required him to be a bad one.

He snorted again at the quote Light was required to say in class. Seriously? Someone overwhelmed by the magnitude of their achievement and the joy it brought them? He wondered who that was supposed to refer to.

The more they watched the more he was convinced there was a God, and it was Light's fate to be the one to use a Death Note.

How lazy was the teacher that they would pick the best student to answer questions? And then they praised him for being right, undoubtedly encouraging his superiority complex instead of dealing with the other gossiping students. He could have sworn he saw a few handheld games as well.

Was this what normal school's like?

No wonder Light held such disdain for others.

Matt found it oddly amusing how the human interacted with the Shinigami. A normal person would be cautious of a being they'd be helpless to defend themselves against, but not the Chief's son. He was fine with ignoring Ryuk and speaking to him like he was just another stupid human. He snorted at the being's confusion over Light's refusal to spend time with others his age.

"Hey, Light. I'm talking to you."

He smirked at the dismissive response from said teenager. Who would talk to a death god like that?

Well, he would, if he was given the chance to meet one. He wondered how fast a Shinigami could travel, and if they could break in anywhere. He'd have fun with them, that was certain. So long as
they didn't try to kill him or anything.

"You still care about grades?" Matsuda asked while the teen on-screen explained he had to maintain appearances.

"Any shift in behavior would be suspicious," L replied, "And Light wouldn't let himself be second to anyone."

There wasn't even a reaction from the college student.

His killings were interrupted by his little sister asking for homework help. Matt tilted his head as he stared at the screen. This was his first real interaction with another human being. With his mother and classmates, everything was in passing. He half expected the older teen to refuse to help, but to his surprise he let the younger girl into his room.

So even though he was Kira, he still cared about his family? Or was this also to keep up appearances?

He contemplated the brief moment of panic when Ryuk revealed all anyone needed to do to see him was touch the Death Note. It was the first time Light used a swear word, if damn counted. It also caused him to show enough emotion his normal little sister picked up on it. He recovered, but he notably leaned on the drawer he put the notebook in.

If anyone found out he was Kira, he would have to kill them.

He wondered if the topic would come up. Was Kira so far removed from Light that he would kill his own relatives?

The scene cut to the ICPO headquarters. Mello huffed, "Finally."

Matt rolled his eyes. Unlike the other two, he actually watched television. If this was a tv show and the time between the opening and closing music sequence was around twenty minutes, then every scene had something important attached to it. He was sure everything they learned in these boring moments would come up in an important way later.

Though he was equally excited for L's introduction. He hadn't been able to watch the original broadcast, but he heard it was epic.

"Why did they send Matsuda to this meeting?" The blond muttered.

He smiled at the description the Chief gave of L. Their trump card? That was certainly one way to look at their mentor and it was exactly why he never wanted the position. L only took cases that interested him, and he didn't find crime interesting. He'd be a terrible person for the world to depend on.

He glanced at L, who was alternating his gaze between the Light in the show and the Light attached to him. He couldn't even tell if the older teen was paying attention anymore. He seemed lost in his own head.

What would he do if he was being shown crimes he couldn't remember doing? How would he feel?

He didn't know.

He didn't want to know.
He didn't really care either way.

Though he did have to wonder why the maker of this would request their presence if they didn't eventually get involved. Since they weren't currently involved, did that mean they would be shown the future?

That would be cool.

*****************************************************************************

"I don't want to think about it, but if I make one mistake, I might end up killing my own family."

"Pause it," Souichiro ordered.

He contained himself thus far. He watched his son murder without any qualms. He watched the boy he raised twist into a cold, unfeeling monster. By his own choices no less! He didn't want to believe it, but seeing his own actions at the Interpol conference only confirmed what he knew all along. This video was the true retelling of the Kira case.

Light Yagami was Kira.

The monster he swore to bring to justice was none other than his own flesh and blood, his pride and joy.

He didn't want to believe it was true, but there was a reason he had earned the title of police chief. He couldn't ignore the evidence before him.

"You would kill your own family." He didn't ask. He knew what the answer was.

It was the basis of the test which secured his release. That Light, no, Kira would be willing to kill him if it meant ensuring his own survival. The only reason he went with the extreme idea was his faith in his son. He couldn't bring himself to look at the killer. Even if he couldn't remember his actions, the blood of all those he slaughtered was still on his hands.

His son never disappointed him. He always ranked at the top of his class. He excelled at any activity he pursued. He was always obedient, never had a rebellious phase the other members of the force told him to worry about. He had a loving mother, a little sister he never doubted Light would protect with his entire being. He sat down with his son and explained many times what was right and wrong.

He thought his son shared his ideals of justice, that he understood that the flaws in the system were there because nothing could be perfect. If the police held more power it would lead to corruption. Their duty was to follow the law and be upstanding citizens, to be a constant light that kept the darkness at bay.

When he turned his back on their principles, he turned his back on his name.

Kira was not his son.

"Chief-" Mogi started but he held up a hand.

Ryuzaki could insist all he wanted Light and Kira were separate, but the monster had a point. There were very few people who could have become Kira, who could have such blind dedication to their sense of justice. Of those, he doubted there were many who could hide the descent into insanity.
His son was always an earnest and honest boy. He was popular, likeable.

Perfect.

For Light to become Kira he had to be wrong about his son. There was a crack in his foundation somewhere, a place where the lies started and never stopped. A flaw he kept hidden from all of them, from everyone.

"I'm sorry," Light offered, in a tone he would have believed before they started watching this.

Before it was revealed to him not even he could see through his son's lies.

"You're sorry until you remember who you are," Soichiro corrected, then remembered, "No, you're not sorry at all. You agree with Kira, don't you?"

He finally turned to look at his son. Light was staring at his own hands. Was that what his son looked like when he was struggling with something? His jaw clenched and then he seemed to decide something, "Kira's ideals are not far off from my own, but as I am presently, I would not kill for them."

Neither a yes nor a no, but at least it wasn't an outright lie.

He thought he taught his son to value life. All life, indiscriminately. His gaze hardened, "You think some people are disposable?"

Another internal battle. Was it so hard for his son to tell him the truth? Was lying instinctual to him?

"Japan still has the death penalty," Ryuzaki replied, "By your law, some people are disposable."

"That doesn't give him the right to pass judgment on his own." Souichiro turned his glare on the world's greatest detective, who was as unreadable as ever. If anyone here should agree with him, it was the man who suspected from the near beginning who Kira truly was. That he could still stand to be so close to the body of that monster…

"It would be unfair to hold one's thoughts against them," The young man said, "We all make judgments about each other without much conscious thought."

"You know that's not what I mean." The police chief clenched his fists, "Where did he get the idea that it was right to execute others?"

"Right and wrong…those are subjective terms." Ryuzaki's steel eyes stared at him, "We can say it's wrong to kill someone, but make allowances for self-defence and accidents. We can amend that and say it is wrong to sacrifice thousands of lives for a cause, but still have armies who will kill for a cause if ordered to. They are granted that exception by the people who support the cause."

"If Kira were to continue without being stopped, he could gain enough support to be that exception as well." His finger hovered above the button that would continue the video, "The definition of good would change, and that would mean Kira wins."

Souichiro couldn't begin to form an argument against that. There were lines people did not cross. There were moral absolutes. There was good and evil, black and white amidst these shades of grey. But before he could voice anything the video kept playing, going back to L's address of the ICPO. It went exactly as he remembered.
Then it went back to his son, showing the lengths Light would go to protect himself.

A fake diary. A false bottom of a drawer. Not only a false bottom, but a false bottom that would start a fire should it be opened the wrong way.

"What if your sister or your mother set that off?" Souichiro asked.

"They don't snoop around my stuff," Light answered. "Likely the one doing the searching would be someone trying to catch Kira, and seeing as there's insufficient evidence for a search warrant, they would be the ones intruding."

His team shifted at the reminder that Light didn't know how extensive the observation of his room was, only that there were cameras at some point. He wasn't comforted by his son's words, but he was learning the words he always found comforting were lies.

He preferred an uncomfortable truth to more lies.

L decided to eat cake in hope that doing so would discourage discussion. It was fascinating, watching how the case had developed from a different perspective. Though he was focused more on how Light acted when there was no one around to see him. He was finally getting a look at the teenager behind the mask of perfection, the one with the pride and arrogance he suspected were present, but were hardly evidenced.

The real Light Yagami, who functioned so well in society while simultaneously despising it.

Or as much as he could see of the real Light Yagami when he filtered out Kira's influence.

"Humans are always trying to maintain appearances when they're in public. That's just how we are."

The world's greatest detective paused with his fork in his mouth. He knew there was a time limit on the Kira investigation. A year was almost passed, and the lack of progress made people put more of their faith in Kira's justice than the agencies around the world. That trend wouldn't change with more time.

If the people supported Kira, soon politicians would, and once the politicians supported Kira, the police agencies would be ordered to stop investigating.

In the eyes of the law, Kira would be innocent.

It was a good thing he didn't care much for the law. He took on this case because it interested him, and he would continue it because he hated to lose.

If winning happened to coincide with the current system of justice…that's what made him justice.

He set down his meal when his broadcast started. He wanted to see Kira break composure. He leaned forward. He didn't break at the thought of the police coming after him. He was confident the police would not be able to get their hands on a Death Note, which was the only evidence of his crimes. That was still true, though he worried what would happen if he put Light near the notebook.

He brought his thumb to his mouth when he finally got a reaction.
Hm, so it was to being called evil? Interesting. And the claim that those that opposed him were the truly evil ones…that only proved how quickly his mind was warped. He watched the teen use an entire page to write out Lind L. Tailor's name and then stare at his television with maniacal excitement. He bit down when he saw him laugh at Tailor's death.

Kira was truly evil in this scene, where he took pleasure in killing someone he was not certain was guilty. As much as he liked to see a genuine expression of emotion from Light, he didn't want to see it twisted like that. He knew there was worse to come, but he was already feeling depressed at how far his friend had fallen in two of these episodes.

If Light regained his memory, was his current mental state enough to stand up to a God complex? The monster lurked within him, a mass of rage and righteousness, how could he win against that? How could he anchor his friend in a hurricane?

He bit down harder. No. There had to be a way. He would not admit defeat.

Mello cackled when his letter reappeared.

"That was a good plan," Near murmured.

He watched the growing look of rage on Kira's expression while the past him taunted the killer. He could hardly believe the depths of emotion he managed to hide. He released his thumb as the teen calmed down, sinking back into his chair. The outrage was gone, replaced with more arrogance and a glimmer of interest.

So Kira saw this as a challenge as well?

It was reassuring to know this was as much about ego as it was morality for both of them.

"L...."

"Kira...."

"I will hunt you down wherever you're hiding and I will eliminate you."

"I am..."

"I am..."

"Justice!"

Interesting. The last part was what he said when he was alone. There was no way anyone knew that. Which meant these were an accurate representation of past events. He had been considering them as if they were but it was always nice to have confirmation.

"That was..." Matsuda trailed off.

"Creepy," Matt finished.

L always knew he and Kira were similar. Just as he saw similarities between himself and Light. It was somewhat off-putting they used the same words, but the behavior was about what he expected. He paused before the next section could start.

Light was beginning to fail in keeping up his mask. It was a promising sign he felt guilty, but guilt
was a dangerous emotion. It would be worse if he lost Light to himself than if he were to lose him to Kira. He hoped to bring both Yagamis around to his perspective, but the Chief was too caught up in his anger to notice he was pushing his son towards another dark future. Light was too caught up in his own guilt to see clearly.

"We'll defeat Kira," He said in a low voice to the teen he was handcuffed to.

"I don't see how." Light returned in an equally low voice.

It was a strange reversal of their situations. Not too long ago it was Light telling him he needed to be more optimistic about the investigation when he was depressed, accompanied by a punch in the face.

From what little he knew of acceptable human interaction, he presumed violence would not be helpful in this instance.

"You're not thinking of killing me now, are you?" He asked.

"No," The handsome young man hissed, "Why would you even ask that?"

"To remind you that you are not Kira," He said, hoping this was comforting. He looked forward to a future with Light at his side, knowing that his people skills would be a great help. Even if, in that future, they were only partners against crime.

"I am Kira," Light insisted, "Or, at least, I have the potential to be Kira. Either way, you are better off locking me away forever."

"That would be a waste," L murmured.

"That would be justice." The teen finally met his gaze, "Didn't you say you were justice?"

"I did say that." He broke his gaze.

He cared for his heirs and Watari, but he never was put in a position where he needed to comfort any of them. The few times he was in need of comfort, Watari was there with his favorite sweets and a listening ear. He trusted the inventor, and would talk through whatever it was that destabilized him. It was the only form of comfort he had ever known.

Light didn't like sweets. Light didn't trust him enough to talk to him.

He's going to sentence me to death?

There was probably a part of Light that still thought he was going to kill him.

L would turn to Watari, the closest thing he had to a father, if he were in a similar situation. Not that he could begin to understand the other's situation until they were further along in the retelling.

But Light's father was actively turning away from him, which meant he needed another solution.

Any plan he put into action to fix this had the potential of backfiring and making it worse.

He was, once again, at a loss for how to move forward in regards to Light Yagami.

But he hadn't admitted defeat before. He wouldn't do so here.
I never realized until I was writing this how much of a difference there is between US English and Commonwealth English. But it's too much of a hassle to switch the settings back and forth, as I tend to write stories while working on school papers and I doubt I'll finish the story before I have to head back stateside...let me know if there are any obvious errors.

Thank you for all the support! Like and review if you have any suggestions! Light's POV will be in the next chapter probably!
Matsuda was probably the stupidest person in the room. Actually, now that he thought about it, strike the probably. He was definitely the stupidest person in the room. Not that it bothered him much. As long as there was something to do he would do it. The Kira investigation needed all the help it could get even if it was becoming increasingly more frivolous tasks.

If he could be useful in any way, he would endeavour to be. Eventually, he would prove he deserved his spot on the team.

Besides, he kind of liked being MisaMisa’s manager.

Wait, if Light was definitely Kira, Misa was the second Kira, wasn't she?

How he felt about Light being Kira was complicated. He was still having a hard time believing it to be honest.

Light was always amazing. He remembered when he first joined the force, straight from university, almost four years ago. Light was fourteen, just about to finish junior high school. He came into headquarters after tennis practice offering to help. He apparently helped the year before on a series of heists, and he wanted to help in the serial torture/murder case they were stuck on.

No one really wanted to expose the teen to that, but the Chief said his son could handle it, so they’d shared evidence.

Maybe that was a sign. At fourteen, he wouldn’t have been able to look at those pictures without throwing up. At twenty-two he barely was able to stop himself from vomiting. Light had paled, but he quickly recovered.

The Chief’s son was brilliant. He found a connection between the victims that led to the abduction zone. From there, they got lucky and managed to arrest the culprit. He’d been impressed. They’d all been impressed. So impressed that a few of the officers went to cheer him on at the tennis championships.

Hindsight really was perfect, wasn’t it?

He always felt that Light was on a different level from everyone around him, but the teen did his best to act humble. He was always polite, he would listen attentively whenever anyone spoke to him. He gave good advice and seemed to genuinely care. Matsuda thought he might be a little on the lonely side, but he appeared happy.

He still couldn’t believe Light would do this to his father.
He meant it when he said they were lucky it was Light. He couldn’t imagine the damage that would have been done by someone who disguised the deaths instead of making most of them heart attacks. It would have gone undetected, and while discretion may have had a lower body count, they managed to catch Light and Misa. It was only a matter of time before they found the third.

They were lucky it was Light, but it didn’t make it good. There were no good murderers.

He tried to see it like Ryuzaki did. He was trying to separate Light from Kira, but every time he saw the way this was affecting the Chief his own anger flared up. The Chief had taken him under his wing from day one, he was more a father to him than his own father ever was. He’d been able to go to the ICPO conference because Yagami believed in him.

Chief Yagami believed in Light too. How could they have ended up so different?

Maybe he didn’t understand because he wasn’t a genius.

“Um.”

Matsuda was drawn back to the current events on the screen. He was there for the briefing, and it was nice to know that many of their initial suspicions were confirmed. They nearly pinned down the limitations of the Death Note. He blushed when he saw himself standing, and at all the annoyed expressions of the other officers.

Was he really that much of a bother?

“I’m not saying this to support Kira, or to condone the murders, but in the last few days throughout the world, but especially here in Japan, we’ve observed the dramatic decrease in the number of violent crimes committed.”

Matt’s eyebrows shot up, ”I’m surprised you said that.”

“I know.” He scratched the back of his head,”It was stupid.”

“Someone had to say it.” The relaxed looking teen shrugged.

Was that a compliment?

He wasn’t sure what to think about the three orphans. Like Ryuzaki had said, they weren’t normal. He could tell they were all geniuses, but they all had quirks. None of them would fit in his definition of normal. They too, all seemed to be able to ignore that Light was Kira, but they weren’t involved in the investigation up to now, nor did they know the criminal in question.

He also doubted they felt emotion like the rest of them. Ryuzaki sometimes seemed more robot than human. And Light apparently acted more than he was sincere…

The scene went to Light and Sayu working on the latter’s homework when the Chief came home. He almost smiled at the sibling interaction. How was that caring older brother secretly a mass murderer? He watched Light enter the room with the rest of his family and act perfectly normal person. Even with the knowledge he was Kira, he couldn’t see any signs.

“The first thing you ask about is his studies?” Mello asked, and it was hard to tell if the blond was angry or if that was just his normal state.

“What’s wrong with that?” Matsuda defended, because the last person that deserved to be attacked
right now was the Chief.

The teenager simply scowled, and muttered something that suspiciously sounded like, ”Hopeless.”

Matsuda had barely opened his mouth before the scene revealed that Light could hack into the police network. Yagami stiffened, ”That isn’t the first time you’ve done that.”

“No,” Light said, ”I’ve accessed files before to see if I could help in investigations.”

Help, back when he helped others and not just himself.

He frowned when Kira began to experiment, already knowing the results of most of these experiments. He killed one person every hour for two days. He remembered that revelation, and how much it had thrown them off the idea that Kira was a student. His frown deepened when they all got more insight into Ryuzaki’s thoughts.

“This can only mean that Kira has access to police information.”

He’d known. This was when he had begun distrusting them, when he probably called the FBI agents in.

“If L is as good as they say, by now he should be starting to suspect someone with connections to the police.”

Kira wanted Ryuzaki to distrust them. He didn’t see how that helped either of them. It was only because of his connection to the police that they even suspected Light. Like the Ryuzaki on screen, he didn’t see what the end goal was.

“My real agenda is to get close to L so I can eliminate him.”

Oh. And he succeeded. He was currently the closest one to the brilliant detective. Light then continued to explain his plan, and he shuddered at how close to the truth he was. Ryuzaki had begun investigating the police. A lot of the officers left because they couldn’t trust L. There was a reason their task force was so small.

“You miscalculated,” Near said as the scene switched to officer’s resigning just as Light predicted, ”There are some officers willing to work with L without trusting him.”

“It still brought L to Japan,” Mello argued, ”He knows his face.”

“But not his name,” The white-haired kid replied.

“So what? If things got truly desperate I’m sure Kira could just kill Watari and L with his own hands and use the Death Note on the rest of the task force,” The blond snapped back.

“Can we not argue about this now?” The third interrupted, ”I kinda want to see where this is going.”

Matsuda took a drink of his water. It was a chilling thought. Light could turn on Ryuzaki at any time. They slept together, and while he was sure the other was an insomniac, he still required some sleep. They were equally matched in a fight, but the teenager already showed he could be ruthless. As for Watari…he was an old man. He’d be easy to take out.

They all already knew about the FBI being called in and that, obviously, Kira had to know about
them to eliminate them. He was just surprised it was the Shinigami who pointed out the tail. No one commented on Kira’s decision to kill them.

He didn’t think any of the information about Shinigami was useful to them now. They were dealing with humans with Death Notes, not the gods of death themselves. It wasn’t until they started talking about the eye deal that they finally understood the difference between the first and second Kira.

He couldn’t tell if he felt sad Misa had cut her lifespan in half, or relieved.

“So what’ll it be, Light? Is it a deal?”

“To think,” Ryuzaki commented, ”If Kira had taken the deal, I would be dead.”

“I’d rather not think about that.” Light pinched the bridge of his nose.

Matsuda wasn’t a genius.

But maybe he didn’t want to be a genius if that meant he could rationalize Light’s actions.

It shouldn’t be that easy to sit next to a murderer.

*********************************************************

Light wasn’t a religious person, but he read many books regarding religion. It was an interesting subject, and gave him something to do with his free time after he quit tennis. All he read came to mind at the images in the opening, but he focused on the last image before the apple turned into the Death Note. The image of him in front of some angel.

There was no doubt in his mind he was being compared to Lucifer.

Lucifer, the morning star, the light bringer. The traitor who was charismatic enough to lead his fellow angels, along with the original humans, down the road to damnation. The angel who rebelled against God’s authority due to his own pride and arrogance. The angel who had looked down on humanity and thought they should be gods compared to them.

Lucifer became Satan. He ruled over hell and he convinced himself he was content.

The mind was its own place and in itself could make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

He closed his eyes as he heard his own voice explain why he was rejecting the deal. He could analyse every aspect of this show until there was nothing left, but it wouldn’t change his reality. Nothing could change that he was Kira. He killed hundreds of people, he nearly killed his own father from stress alone.

His father…if he had any right to call him that anymore.

He never disappointed anyone. He did everything expected of him. He got good grades, he dropped tennis so he could put more focus on his studies when prompted, his test scores were always immaculate, there were no marks on his record…he knew he wasn’t perfect, but in the eyes of society he was closer than most.

Appearance mattered more than anything.

He walked the path set before him. He excelled in the area his parents cared about. While it was boring, mere boredom hadn’t been enough to make him rebel. He didn’t risk their love.
He wanted his parents to be proud of him. When they were proud of him, he was certain they cared for him. Like most humans, he craved reassurance and acceptance only other humans could give. No one could exist alone. There was a small part of everyone that craved approval.

Kira kept going because he was sure he would win the public’s approval. He convinced himself what he wanted was what the world wanted.

Light was disgusted with himself. He’d let power get to his head. Killing criminals he could understand, but the second L had entered the picture and he decided anyone against him was evil… he knew there was no sane justification for that.

“I’m a human using this death note to make the world a better place for other humans.”

He was a human that thought himself a god. He was the devil incarnate.

Was it better to rule in hell than serve heaven?

Ryuk said he wouldn’t be able to go to heaven or hell regardless. Did that mean his soul was going to the Shinigami world? It was the only option that made sense. If that were true, then he was even more like the devil. He listened to himself and the death god discuss the other realm. If an idiot like Ryuk couldn’t find a way to entertain himself, all he had to look forward to in death was more boredom.

Though wasn’t that a fitting punishment?

His boredom had, in part, started this whole thing. Now he was cursed to be forever bored.

And he still had arrogance left to think he could change another world?

He shifted in his seat, fighting to keep control of his emotions. The last thing he wanted was for Ryuzaki to see him break. Even if it led him to a terrible end, he still had his pride. He was defeated here, but he would not give the man he was chained to the satisfaction of his humiliation. He wouldn’t make a fool of himself.

He forced himself to watch the experiments he performed with the Death Note. As if it wasn’t bad enough he was a killer, he essentially tortured them as well.

What he hated most was the determined look in his own eyes.

For most of his life he lived within the expectations set by others. He held no true motivation. Nothing was a challenge. Nothing, until the Kira case, until Ryuzaki.

Now, knowing he was Kira…

At least when he was bored he still knew what he was doing. For the first time in his life, he was lost. He didn’t want to go back to killing. Not that he had much of a choice if his memories were to suddenly return. Even if Ryuzaki said they were two different people, he didn’t want his crimes to go unpunished. He’d be sent to jail for life if he wasn’t executed first.

Ryuzaki… he wished now more than ever he knew what the detective was thinking. He must be happy he was right. He should be content in his victory.

“He’s playing with people’s lives as if this was just a game. It’s unforgiveable.”

It was unforgiveable, and he was willing to face whatever punishment they deemed necessary.
He wanted a punishment, some external pain that would match how he felt on the inside.

Past him easily found out the results of his experiments. He learned just how much control he had over his victims before he killed them off with a heart attack. He learned what his limitations were. It was a small comfort to know those existed. That was ruined by the knowledge he would have relished the challenge the limitations gave him. A game was no fun if one side had too much of an advantage.

He internally grimaced. There he went, proving to himself he was messed up with and without those memories.

“Why am I not surprised you can get a date at the last minute?” Mello scoffed.

He reminded himself the younger teen had issues, and refrained from responding. He remembered this incident. The bus jacking. Now that he knew he was Kira, however, he knew this was no longer a freak accident. This was all a plan to get the FBI agent’s name.

“You do have a way with the female population,” Ryuzaki commented as they watched the girl cling to him, ecstatic at the prospect of a date.

He did. He was expected to get married some day and have kids, so he made sure to learn to be as charming as possible so he could have his pick of women, ”Too bad I don’t share their interest.”

No one he knew was intelligent enough to keep his attention, much less earn his affections. He needed someone he couldn’t manipulate, someone on his level. Failing that, he needed someone his family would like and who didn’t annoy him.

“Chief Yagami’s son, Light Yagami. No cause for suspicion.”

The admission was like a punch to the gut. He couldn’t contain his reaction when he learned that was the last day of surveillance. He brought his hand up to hide most of his expression.

“If Kira was a little more patient…” Aizawa trailed off.

If he’d moved his plans back one day, they wouldn’t have been necessary. If he hadn’t been so quick to judge them as the enemy, they would still be alive. It wouldn’t have been necessary to kill them.

He didn’t think it could get worse than the experimentation, but it had.

He overestimated L. He thought the tail would be around longer. He was paranoid.

“Are you feeling alright?” Said detective inquired.

“I’m fine.” He had to control himself. He was the only thing he could control anymore.

His friend (though how he could continue to claim to be was beyond him) stared at him in obvious disbelief. He pointedly ignored him.

“A bus jacking?” Matsuda asked in time with the FBI agent.

He watched himself reassure his date. It was exactly what he would have done regardless of whether he controlled the situation. He knew how to neutralize a threat. He refused to shut his eyes as the FBI agent told him not to be a hero and continued talking to him.
“Do you have any proof that you are not his accomplice?”

“So that’s how Kira compromised him.” Ryuzaki bit his thumb, a terrible habit.

He didn’t respond to that. He didn’t think he could speak if he wanted to.

“I… I have no choice. I’m sure Light Yagami isn’t Kira.”

Another stab of guilt. Another person he successfully manipulated. Another person that couldn’t see through his lies.

Though, at this point in his life, he doubted anyone could. He was perfect at everything he set his mind to. That included lying.

The criminal picked up the piece of paper he dropped. To his surprise, it was not the same paper he used to communicate with his date. His past-self smirked darkly and a few seconds later the bus hijacker started panicking. He blinked, realizing the criminal could now see Ryuk. So he had dropped a piece of the Death Note…and the agent thought he was hallucinating.

It was a strange thing, to wish his own failure, but he hoped for it with all he could.

“I know he said we couldn’t kill them.” Aizawa muttered, ”But bullets having no effect whatsoever?”

The Shinigami repeated all the rules that made his plan work until the hijacker demanded the bus be stopped. The man rushed out of the vehicle, got struck by a passing car, and died. Past him was staring out the window as he repeated what he wrote down earlier in the notebook.

“You will be next, Raye Penber.”

Light focused on breathing. Logically, he knew what was next. He was going to see how he killed all the FBI agents. He was going to watch himself enjoy the deaths of innocents, all because he wanted to beat L.

Yesterday, all the college student had wanted was to prove Ryuzaki wrong.

Now he just wanted to skip to the end.

His end.

Chapter End Notes

Paradise Lost is the basis for Light's thoughts on the devil. I know its debated whether Satan is a tragic hero in that story or not, but I thought it the best comparison to Light out of everything I've read regarding the devil, which isn't much.
Matt didn't find the show funny anymore.

Not even his twisted sense of humor could find anything funny in what was coming up. The entire world heard how Kira killed twelve FBI agents, their only crime being they came after him. For the fifth time, he watched the animated Light on screen bite into the apple. For the first time, he almost felt afraid.

Which he shouldn’t be. No one was going to hurt him here. Probably.

The chief of police still looked like he was on the verge of snapping. Would he kill his own son for turning into Kira? What would happen if a fight broke out in here? He shifted his gaze to his friend, who was fiddling with his bracelet.

Mello always wore that and his rosary. It was only due to that rosary that he bothered reading anything about Christianity.

The apple in the opening represented sin, like the forbidden fruit that got Adam and Eve kicked out of the Garden of Eden. He never really liked that story. Why was it only the tree of knowledge they couldn’t eat from? Who would be content living in ignorance? Granted, since they did, he wasn’t sure what it was like to live without that knowledge and people said ignorance was bliss.

The serpent promised Eve she would be like God if she ate the apple, or whatever the fruit actually was. He didn’t study dead languages and he doubted it mattered.

And there Kira was, thinking himself a god because he ate the fruit. He wrote in the Death Note. He thought he knew what was good and evil, when it would take a being much higher than any of them to make a real judgment about that sort of stuff. They could come close, sure, but they’d never know everything.

Humans then lived in sin for a long time, until Jesus died on the cross and they were somewhat redeemed. Or something like that. Mello was better about matters like these.

It wasn’t like other people hadn’t used religion as an excuse for their crimes before. And if people really believed in the stories in the Bible, they’d see Kira’s actions as similar to those of the Old Testament God. The one that flooded the world because of how low humanity fell. The one who killed the firstborn son of all those Egyptian families because of the decision of their Pharaoh, who was born into his position, not elected.

Seriously, Old Testament God killed a lot of people.

Religion could be good, but too often it was not.

Matt was too selfish to see how his potential suffering worked into the bigger picture, so he didn’t put his faith into a higher plan existing.

He watched Pember and Kira agree they wouldn’t speak about their meeting. He felt bad for the agent. He didn’t even see the betrayal coming. Though the police should have known Kira’s method of killing wouldn’t be obvious, especially not through distance observation. Maybe they
thought Kira would be like most psycho or sociopaths and be unable to function well in society.

No one expected Mr. Perfect over there. Though he wasn’t looking so hot now. The college student was doing an admirable job of keeping his emotions in check, but when his own voice admitted to knowing that Pember thought he was innocent, another crack appeared.

How long would it take for him to break?

He listened to Pember’s fiancee raise suspicions over the encounter. Now that was a woman who should be investigating Kira. He rolled his eyes when the actual agent dismissed her valid concerns, trying to force her to forget a part of her. He couldn’t imagine any boy asking Linda to forget about her art so she could focus on being a house wife. Actually, he could and he almost smiled.

That was the first amusing thought he’d had in a while. Maybe this wasn’t too bad.

Though if Linda was in love…was that love? Compromise, sacrifice, change?

His gaze flickered to Light and L.

L already changed a bit. While he did care about the people under his command, this was different. Most of the time, he cared because if something happened to them, it was partially on him and they shared a common goal. With Light, he cared despite it being a detriment to the investigation.

He wondered if saving Light was now more important than the investigation.

Kira had the patience to wait until a week passed to avoid more suspicion, but not the mind set to think he shouldn’t kill all the FBI agents. In the long run, it would have made him look less suspicious. And if they found out he did know Pember’s name and face and didn’t kill him…that would have gone even farther for proof of innocence. It also would have made Kira look better in the eyes of the public.

But it wouldn’t have furthered his efforts to drive a wedge between the police and L if the agents lived. Nor would it have appeased his God complex if those standing against him weren’t punished.

He wondered when defeating L became more of a priority than his ideal world.

Matt forced his gaze away from the two. They had quite an impact on each other, but they were both stubborn. He didn’t see them being able to compromise, or whatever they managed to form ending well. Even if they only had a friendship.

He refocused on the scene and Kira’s continued experiments. Another unnecessary risk the mass murderer was only taking to get at L. His mentor had no reason to believe that the notes were just a distraction, and he couldn’t blame him for shifting his focus to that. However, with the distraction in place it meant Kira was going to take action.

They were about to watch him slaughter innocents.

He took in a steady breath. It wasn’t like he knew any of these agents. They shouldn’t matter to him. He should be able to treat this like another video game, another show. Events happening on screen to another person, but not to him.

Except it could happen to him.
He slid slightly closer to Mello. The blond noticed and raised an eyebrow. He shrugged as the scene switched to Ryuk and Light. He was usually more confident than this, and some of it returned when Mello switched legs so they were touching.

Kira was more of a monster than he had originally thought. He might be enough of one to swallow L. If that happened, either Near or Mello would become the new L, and that would pit them against the monster.

“Focus, Matt,” Mello said quietly, “This is real.”

Which was precisely why he didn’t want to take this too seriously. He liked being able to laugh at what he was facing. He much preferred virtual reality, where he was safely behind a screen, where it wasn’t real, to this.

This was getting too real for him.

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“Mr. Raye Pember. Turn around and you are dead.”

A direct approach? How unexpected, but L didn’t know what Kira’s entire plan was. He only knew the outcome.

“How did he not recognize your voice?” Mello scowled.

“He was lucky,” The greatest detective answered, though it was possible that Kira was already controlling Pember’s actions. If his actions were controlled, did they retain freedom of thought? Were they trapped in a body they couldn’t control? He glanced at Light, who probably thought along the same lines as him. He hoped he wouldn’t be too hard on himself.

At least, Kira was extremely lucky that they only had the footage of Pember entering the Yamanote line and then him getting off of it. He wondered if he could request more footage, but it was likely too late, and due to the video quality it wouldn’t be possible to get visual confirmation of his identity. And the outfit was different from anything he ever saw Light wear.

He watched Kira kill the sweeper. That hadn’t come to his attention, though even without it he managed to narrow in on the right agent.

He got his first glimpse of what Kira was truly like. The cruel amusement, the casually said threats. It was the first person to die directly in front of him since he became Kira, and he didn’t flinch at all.

“I could easily kill all these people right now if I wanted to.”

Deceptive to the end. He had to make it personal for the FBI agent, even though he was a good enough man that a general threat to the bystanders likely would have been enough. Pember gave up Misora’s existence. Was that how Kira got to her before him?

“She will die, and so will the rest of your family.”

The agent consented to do as Kira commanded, admitting he had his laptop and then accepting the envelope. So it was important. He rubbed his feet against each other as he saw the transmitter. Ah, so that was why Kira had risked being there in person. Pember got on the train and took the seat that he was told to. He told Kira how many FBI agents were in Japan.
Then he was told to take the papers out of the envelope. They were mostly covered, leaving small
openings for names to be written.

Kira revealed earlier he could write down details of a death, fill in the name later, and it would still
work.

He was going to have Pember kill his fellow agents.

And the man was none the wiser. He thought he was safe giving up the names since he wouldn’t
be giving Kira the faces.

Though his only other option was death. He had no way of knowing that Kira did not have
information on his family. The killer successfully built up his powers to be both more and less than
what the agent thought. He watched as Pember continued to follow instructions, unknowingly
signing the death order for his fellow agents.

“That’s twisted,” Light said as Pember struggled to connect the voice to a person. He got up to exit
the train, and barely stepped out before he collapsed, managing to fall so he could see back into the
train. He could see Kira smirking down at him as the doors closed.

“Light Yagami.”

“Farewell, Raye Pember.”

Light’s shoulders slumped, and he bowed his head, his hair sliding forward to mask his expression.
For a moment, he thought his friend stopped breathing, but then his torso shook as he inhaled. He
felt the urge to reach out and touch him, reassure him of…something. He thought he would see the
teen cry while Kira explained his plan.

“Did you not think that it’d be strange for Pember to ride the train for so long?” The Chief asked,
and he reluctantly paused the video. They had been doing so well without interruption.

But if he didn’t let them speak, they couldn’t improve their relationship.

Without that, Light would break.

“That alone wasn’t what narrowed down the suspect pool,” L replied, giving the college student
some time to pull himself together.

“It might have,” The Chief said, "He was the only agent to exhibit strange behavior before his
death."

“I must have thought the police wouldn’t look that deeply after the revelation that L had been
investigating them," Light managed to say, and he once again admired his emotional control, "I’m
glad for my oversight."

“Are you?” Yagami almost sneered.

“I can’t change my actions.” The eighteen-year-old looked towards his father, "And we both
wouldn’t believe it if I said I regret them, but I am willing to accept whatever punishment you see
fit.”

Punishment? Earlier he had only mentioned imprisonment.

“I don’t want to hurt anyone,” Light continued, "Not as I am currently. But we don’t know when
that’ll change-“

“If it will change.” L cut in, because the if was important.

“When,” Yagami replied, and he was not helping the situation, ”Even if he doesn’t recover his memories, even if we don’t have the evidence to convict him of being Kira, he can’t be trusted.”

“You’re right,” Light agreed, also not helping.

He moved his chair closer to the teenager, ”You seem to be forgetting this.” He held up his wrist, that still had the manacle attached to it, ”As long as we’re connected we share the same fate.”

“Then let me go,” The beautiful teen said, his eyes begging for him to let him fall.

“I can’t do that.” He smirked, ”We haven’t finished this case yet.”

“Ryuzaki…” Light trailed off, then shook his head, ”Don’t act like I’m still allowed to help catch the third Kira.”

“I leave the acting to you, Light.” The detective stared, noting the minute flinch at his words, ”Though I do wish you’d stop.” He leaned even closer to make sure his words could only be heard by the teenager, and not those who were listening in, ”I am very much interested in learning who the real Light Yagami is.”

A barely detectable scoff, ”I’m whoever people expect me to be, and when I’m not, I’m a monster.”

He sat back. He was impressed at the honesty in his response, if a little disheartened by the answer itself. The children at Wammy’s house were certainly raised with expectations, but it was to be the best at whatever they wanted to do. He was the first to become the best at solving crimes. People recognized him as such for nearly ten years after two years of building a reputation for himself.

In a way, it was a luxury. He never had to change how he acted based on circumstances.

Most people faced this issue when thinking about themselves. There was how they acted around their parents, how they treated their siblings, how they responded to their friends, how they reacted to strangers and how they were when they were completely alone. For a normal person, there were few similarities across the board. Who they were changed based on what was around them.

Which raised the question of if there was a real them.

The search for identity was common in Light’s age group. It would be perfectly normal for him to feel lost…

Ah, so he finally figured out another piece of the puzzle.

“We should keep going,” Light said, ”It looks like they’re almost done with their discussion.”

So they were, and he hoped he hadn’t given them the opportunity to make things worse. His friend was keeping himself together through sheer power of will. Willpower wouldn’t last forever.

And there was still the unexplained disappearance of Naomi Misora to cover before the two of them met on screen.

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Mogi was quiet.

He didn’t have anything to say. The Chief was the one with orders and determination. Ryuzaki and Light were the ones with the long, thought out explanations and theories. Matsuda was the one with happy distractions, and Aizawa was always quick to snap at him or offer his opinion. The most he had to do, communications wise, was agree to suggestions.

He was quiet, but he was observant.

When the two older geniuses went off into their own private discussion, he looked to his boss. He couldn’t imagine the betrayal he was feeling at all these revelations. It was one thing to be given reports about murders and another to watch those people die. It was one thing to be told that Light was likely Kira, and another to see him in action.

But he found a way to reconcile it in his mind.

He wasn’t focused on where the guilt fell. There was no question about that.

“Chief,” He said, drawing their attention, ”Kira is using your son as much as he used the rest of us.”


Mogi wished he was better with words. It made sense in his head. The Light they had was temporary, a tool to earn their trust. He was being used. That didn’t mean they didn’t deserve to feel angry and hurt, nor was he suggesting they trust him, but all of them knew the Chief loved his son. This could be his last chance to try to reach out to him.

Ignorance wasn’t innocence, but the teenager currently in the room with them wasn’t a murderous psychopath with a god complex.

The Chief’s son felt guilt.

Aizawa seemed to understand, thankfully, ”Mogi’s saying Light’s suffering and we shouldn’t just ignore that.”

“He should feel terrible.” Yagami huffed, ”He’s lied for years.”

“But has he ever disappointed you?” Mogi asked.

The Chief paused, ”What is that supposed to mean?”

“Maybe he wanted to be the son you wanted,” Aizawa said softly.

The older man still reacted as if insulted, ”Are you suggesting this is my fault?”

“No,” Both of them said together, and he let the more talkative of the two of them continue, ”His choices were his choices, but those before he used the Death Note are forgivable, and those after he doesn’t even remember. Didn’t you hear him? He wants us to punish him, and I don’t think he means by locking him away for the rest of his life.”

Mogi was half certain he meant he wanted them to execute him. A smaller part wondered if the college student was asking for corporeal punishment.

It made him hate Kira more. The monster was giving them the perfect opportunity to stop him, but he didn’t think any of them would be able to go through with it.
“If this was your daughter, Aizawa…” The Chief trailed off.

His friend closed his eyes, ”If I had to choose between being a father and being an officer of the law first…” He contemplated his answer, before looking at their boss, ”I’d be a father.”

Silence descended on the four of them. It lasted long enough that Ryuzaki continued the episode. He could have guessed how the call between Ryuzaki and the FBI director went, and he remembered the Chief’s phone call. He was there for the outrage in the office, and he saw the last of the suicide notes. However, he did not know about Misora.

Nor did he ask how Yagami’s family meeting went. He noticed his boss stiffen when Light encouraged him to stay on the investigation, but from what he remembered of the teen that’s what he would have said if he were not Kira anyways.

“And if anything should ever happen to you, I’m going to find Kira and make sure he gets executed.”

That was the same sentiment Light had when he lost his memories.

Mogi grimaced at the day they were given the option of backing out of the investigation. It cut away to Misora interviewing the bus driver and confirming the details of the bus jacking. She came closer to the truth than any of them. He felt his heart sink when he remembered they would soon be finding out what happened to her.

The scene moved on to the group they almost had now. He stared at Ukita, glad that Misa was not in this room. That man was more of a friend than a colleague. It was hard to think that he’d been murdered in the line of duty. That he’d been murdered when they all thought they were safe so long as they kept either their name or their face a secret.

They got another look into L’s thoughts, his plan to use himself as bait to draw in Kira. Then it went to Light, who was looking over his actions, knowing his increased activity would draw attention but unsure if he missed anything. Of course, he had no way of knowing about Naomi Misora and that she was a highly skilled detective herself.

As the episode ended with them about to meet Ryuzaki face to face, he let his mind drift back to their conversation. He hoped what the two of them said got through the Chief’s sense of justice. He might pick his role as police chief over his role as Light’s father. If he did he feared for what would become of Light.

He wanted Kira to face his punishment fully aware of his crimes.

Not…not like this.

Chapter End Notes

Matt copes with humor, if that wasn't clear.

I don't mean to offend anyone with the talk of religion. While writing that part I was thinking of my theology class last year. I sat next to a girl from Vietnam, and she knew literally nothing about the Bible. Since our class operated on the assumption that the students knew the main stories, I would try to whisper explain them in under a minute.
Suffice to say, I don't think she has the best impression of Christianity.
Mello nudged Matt’s leg with his own, sensing he was getting twitchy. They’d been watching these for a little more than two hours. It was fine with him. He wanted to see L kick Kira’s ass, but Matt rarely went so long without something to distract him. He never found cases interesting. When his friend got twitchy it put him on edge.

Who the fuck thought it was a good idea to have Matt there?

His expression must have darkened, because his friend nudged him back, ”You look like you’re about to kill someone, Mells.”

Ha. They were in the same room as the world’s greatest mass murderer in recent history and he said that to him?

“Maybe I am,” He smirked.

It made his friend snort, but stop fiddling with his goggles, ”Don’t tell me if you do.”

Kira couldn’t possibly win if they just killed Light right now. Boom, end of story. He wasn’t completely sold on him not having his memories anyways.

However, L was, and that was the only reason he wasn’t plotting against the college student.

He wasn’t going to prove the detective right by acting rashly.

Seeing Naomi Misora only reminded him of the conversations he had with the man he hoped to one day succeed. L explained what happened to BB, the crimes he committed, how he was stopped before he could kill himself and make the case unsolvable. That he was now the most likely candidate to be his heir, seeing as his closest competition didn’t want to be.

It concerned L that he was in that position. L flat out told him he reminded him too much of BB. Brilliant, but emotional. The older man feared he too would reach his limit one day and decide to leave Wammy’s house. He thought he would eventually come to disregard the law.

Which was bullshit. B resented L because he thought he could have saved A. Losing A was like cutting his anchor to reality. B no longer wanted to be like L. He decided he wanted to be the opposite, and he tried to pull off an unsolvable crime, to become the World’s Greatest Criminal to match the World’s Greatest Detective.

L kept him anchored.

Then Near joined them at Wammy’s, and he started to see what his own shortcomings were. He was trying harder to contain his emotions, but he wasn’t a fucking robot. So he worked twice as
hard. If he wasn’t naturally better than the antisocial shit, then he could work to become better. But if L were to pick right now between him and Near…

He would probably pick Near. He hated to even think that.

Not that it would happen. L promised him he would win against Kira. He wouldn’t need replacing for a while. He had time to take back the number one rank.

He watched the task force introduce themselves to L, rolling his eyes at their stupidity. He watched L raise his hand and mirrored him, pointing at Matt and saying in time, ”Bang.”

That brought more of a smile to his friend’s face.

All members of the task force turned off their cell phones and set them on the table, before L launched into his explanation. Mello couldn’t help but glance at the detective. He had to know he was using the same alias as BB did during his crime spree. What was the point of that? It wasn’t like his character was aware of Misora’s presence yet.

Of course Matsuda offered a stupid plan, but he refrained from commenting. He forgot that some people needed shit spelled out to them. He tightened his grip on his leg. Childish and hated to lose, huh? That described most of them in the room. And none of them were good at backing down from a direct challenge.

He rolled his eyes again at the plan L announced, ”That’s the same trick as earlier.”

“It worked once,” Near responded.

“And if Kira were stupid, it might work again.” He despised the criminal, but he couldn’t ignore that he was also a genius.

Light would probably rank higher than him. Again, because he had a death grip on his emotions. Unlike Near, he still expressed something. It was just a load of bullshit somehow everyone seemed to buy.

He wouldn’t have trusted anyone that perfect.

He still didn’t trust the Japanese teen.

L continued to explain his thoughts on the case as he drew out his timeline. It then cut to Light drawing the same timeline. The major difference was that Light didn’t know when the FBI came to Japan. He focused on his own actions between the nineteenth to the twenty-seventh, where he shifted to alleged criminals instead of those declared guilty. He didn’t realize there was only a five day time between the FBI coming, and his shift in behavior.

The Chief asked him if coming to Japan was a defeat.

“I have lost the battle, but I’m not going to lose the war.”

Like hell L was losing to that maniac.

“Justice will prevail no matter what.”

He could see why the task force got so motivated, though they weren’t in the clear yet.

“Just one clue. A single decisive factor is all I need.”
It switched to Light, still thinking.

“Just one oversight. A single piece of evidence is all it would take.”

It creeped him out when they did this, but it proved they were nearly equally matched.

“Just one thing.”

Kira managed to assure himself he was fine. His biggest concern was anyone finding out about the bus jacking. He didn’t know a vengeful woman was investigating that very incident. Though he was right about no one knowing he could kill with more than heart attacks. He watched the older teen finish studying. He went downstairs, where his mom was trying to convince his little sister to bring the Chief some fresh clothes.

The teen volunteered to do it and on his way there revealed he carried a piece of the Death Note on him.

Mello wondered if Light had any pieces with him right now, but to find that out he’d have to actually get closer to the teen. He didn’t want to do that. He doubted L would let him keep anything he had with him when he was apprehended. The amnesiac murderer brought a hand up to fix his hair as Misora figured out what no one else had.

His eyes narrowed at the watch on his wrist.

It wasn’t digital, which meant it had an inside. Maybe enough room for a piece of the Death Note…

It wasn’t entirely out of the question.

If there was a piece of the Death Note in there, what would happen if Light touched it? Would they have Kira back? He turned his attention back to the screen and shook his head, ”You are one lucky son of a bitch.”

Of course he would fucking run into Misora.

Of course he would hear her say she had important information about Kira. Then the receptionist just had to bring up his past accomplishments in crime solving. Seriously, he thought Wammy’s was the only place insane enough to encourage minors to help in investigations. Then the convenient plot device asked if the high schooler would be helping with the Kira investigation, catching Misora’s attention.

Except it wasn’t a convenient plot device. It was a real person and this was a real life coincidence. Up until now, he didn’t believe those genuinely happened.

Then Kira turned on the charm, revealing what he knew about the investigation so that she would, as they walked around the city. It was all under the pretence of waiting for the Chief to call them back, and the only reason the older man didn’t have his phone on was because he was meeting with L. Things would have been different if L didn’t find phones distracting.

The blond laughed when Misora gave a fake name. So did the Shinigami.

The two kept talking, as she revealed how she came to her conclusions.

“This woman, if she’d spoken to the police before I met her…”
They might have been able to have solid evidence against him of his crimes.

“But it seems there’s a god on my side after all, and not just a god of death.”

Mello scowled at that.

The blond believed in God. He believed everyone got what was coming to them, that’s why revenge was the strongest of motivations. Bad shit happened, but that’s because humans were given free will and just sucked at using it right. Free will gave them the option of fucking everything up, but without it they wouldn’t have the option of doing good.

His scowl lessened as he watched the doves in the ending reveal themselves to be crows.

Kira may think he had God on his side, but his godly powers would only bring him death and misery in the end.

Just what Kira deserved.

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Souichiro watched the glass shatter for the seventh time. That represented his son, didn’t it? He tried to balance his newfound power with who he was, but ultimately fell and shattered. The son he thought he knew was gone, though he did understand what Aizawa and Mogi were telling him.

If the person in the room with them was Kira, he wouldn’t be willing to face punishment. He certainly wouldn’t look that guilty.

Unless this was another trick, another manipulation.

No, it was a trick. A cruel misdirection that worked best because Light genuinely had no memories of his crimes.

He wasn’t the young man they saw on the screen talking to Naomi Misora. He wouldn’t know for certain until video covered his imprisonment…but Aizawa had a point. If this was truly his son in the room with them, he was suffering.

If this wasn’t an act, he might not make it to proof of his amnesia before he broke again.

If it turned out he was wrong…he wouldn’t forgive himself for destroying his last chance at being there for his son.

But could he handle it if it turned out to be another betrayal?

On the other hand, if there was a chance his son needed him…could he turn his back on him?

He already knew the answer to that. He had requested to be locked up when they imprisoned Light. He knew he was emotionally compromised when it came to his children. He couldn’t ignore his pain, even if there was a very real possibility of him being Kira at the moment. Even if it turned out he was just that good of a liar…

The performance that ended their imprisonment…it wasn’t much of a performance even though he genuinely believed in his innocence.

He would take Light's execution into his own hands if need be, and then take his own life.

Because he loved his son, even if that ruined him.
His men assured him it wasn’t his fault, but he had to accept some responsibility. Excluding Kira for the moment, his son lied to him, but he was happy with those lies. He was so proud of his son for how he presented himself to the world. Never once did he think his son wasn’t happy. Not once did he think he was bored. He’d never been disappointed.

He sighed as the scene briefly switched to the task force, where L revealed he trusted them and then took a call from Watari.

The first time Light disappointed him, he turned his back on him.

Was that what he was afraid of? Did he think if he wasn’t perfect they would stop caring about him?

He remembered hiding that he wanted to be a detective from his parents for years. He knew his mother thought it was a dangerous profession. His father told him if he was so interested in justice, he should become a lawyer. When he graduated with his degree in criminal justice and taken it to join the NPA, it surprised them. He thought he would be disowned. It became his biggest fear during university.

The Chief of the NPA slumped more in his seat. Aizawa was right. Light’s lies before he became Kira were forgivable. He wasn’t as perfect as he thought, but Sayu wasn’t the perfect daughter and he still loved her. If he couldn’t remember being Kira…

“Are you alright, Chief?” Matsuda asked.

“Yes,” He answered.

He was still angry, but he couldn’t bring himself to channel it at his son anymore.

Especially if this was his son and not the killer.

He watched Kira’s first attempt to kill Pember’s fiancée fail, the monster wearing his son’s face realized he was lied to. The scene switched to them meeting Watari without his usual outfit. They were each given the fake IDs they now carried. It went back to Misora and the murderer. He almost found it amusing how he panicked about his call when he could just turn off the phone. Any humor faded when the Shinigami brought up the eye deal again. At least Kira could resist more power. The scene switched after Misora said she wanted to return to the police station alone, showing them receiving the rest of their equipment. Matsuda blushed at his past excitement, but no one commented on his lack of professionalism.

The scene changed again, and he tensed at the music in the background. He was starting to assume anything choral meant that Kira was about to kill or take action. It stopped while he admitted he only had five minutes. The music restarted when he caught up to engage in another conversation with Misora, but it was the normal guitar.

He wasn’t sure what any of it meant. He was not an expert in musical composition.

Kira certainly had a silver tongue, though he didn’t know some of his lies were close enough to the truth. At that moment in time, it was impossible for her to meet anyone from the task force because none of them were at the police station. Of course, Misora became suspicious of how knowledgeable the murderer was of the investigation’s progress.

Without missing a beat, he pretended to be resigned, then lied about being a member of the task force, surprising the death god. Kira was right about L leading the investigation, and just how
small their numbers were, and they eventually brought him in to help.

It still didn’t work.

The killer’s desperation was starting to leak out, but the scene changed once again to their realization that they should have someone at the police station.

They had realized it too late.

Kira got her to stop again, and she revealed that she had worked with L before and told him of her past as an FBI investigator. Enough information for the killer to use to manipulate her.

“One lie after another. You make it look easy.”

Years of practice would do that, but he wouldn’t let it continue.

Misora then revealed that she trusted him, that there was something in his eyes that reminded her of L. The similarity that kept being shown through the show once again reinforced.

Ryuzaki already showed he had near unlimited resources. He had the ability to do whatever he wanted. He used it to take on cases he found interesting. He wondered what his son would have accomplished if he lived a similar life. Could he have become one of the world’s greatest detectives? If he actually was challenged, raised like those young geniuses in front of him…no, it was a fruitless endeavor to ponder what ifs.

Kira pushed his advantage, offering her the chance to join the investigation if she had a valid form of identification. The choral music grew louder, more ominous. He got her hooked on the idea, and then backed off a little, forcing her to make a decision without thinking on it too long.

She handed over a Japanese driver’s license.

The music stopped, and snow began to fall. On screen, Aizawa paused to open his umbrella, shielding his view of the two on the street.

“Seriously?” Matt asked as the agent on screen walked by without noticing, ”No one should be that lucky.”

No one knew how to respond to that.

Kira finished writing the details for Misora’s suicide, and then checked his watch.

“Why do you keep checking your watch?”

“Oh, well, I guess it’s because…” The clock was five seconds away from the set time when he finished, ”…because I’m Kira.”

Sad orchestral music played as the horror spread on her face, before the Death Note took effect and she lost all expression. As her fiancé, she died soon after finding out the identity of Kira. The murderer asked some questions, to which she answered without giving any information away.

“Goodbye, Naomi Misora.”

That was also similar to what he had said to Pember. They watched her walk up some steps towards a noose, to her death.
As the ending song played he stood up, "Ryuzaki, I would like to speak to my son."

The detective paused the video and stared, before also standing. "We can speak in our room."

"I’d prefer if it were only the two of us," He said.

"Forgive me,” The young man replied blankly, "I don’t think that’s the best idea.”

"Do you not understand the concept of privacy?” He narrowed his eyes.

"Dad.” Light cut in, rising from his seat, "You know he doesn’t. He’ll just watch on the cameras if he can’t be there in person.”

A valid point. He nodded once, then started for the stairs.

“Hey, Pretty Boy,” Mello called after them, causing them to turn back, "I want to look at your watch.”

“My watch?” Light covered it with his hand, "It was a gift from my Dad when I entered university. Why’re you interested in it?”

“I don’t have to explain myself to you,” The angry blond growled, but held out a hand, "Let me see it.”

The college student sighed, “Be careful with it.” His son unlatched it, dragging Ryuzaki with him as he placed it in the younger teen’s hand, "It means a lot to me.”

Mello rolled his eyes, "Whatever.”

“Thank you for that, Light.” Ryuzaki murmured as they made their way up the stairs.

“He’s the same age as Sayu,” His son replied, "I’ve always found it easier to give in to her whims than fight them.”

He said that wistfully, and he forgot how long it was since Light saw his sister and mother. He was allowed the occasional phone call, and communicated by email, but that was to keep up appearances since they couldn’t say he was being held under suspicion of being Kira. His son was so good at hiding his emotions, he sometimes forgot he had them.

The door closed behind them.

“Light, look me in the eyes.” The teenager obeyed, "Do you remember any of that?”

A pause, and his eyes filled with frustration and distress, "No.” And he did something he hadn’t since he was a child. Something he was certain Kira wouldn’t do in front of L.

Light Yagami started crying.

The tears streamed down his cheeks, "It doesn’t excuse my actions. I killed all those people. I enjoyed killing all those people…”

Souichiro Yagami decided to do something he also hadn’t done in years. He stepped forward and pulled his son into a hug, silencing his words. He couldn’t say everything would be alright. More lies would not help the situation. However, he could say one thing with certainty.

“I’m here for you.”
He was a father before he was the Chief.

Chapter End Notes

In St. Augustine's 'On The Free Choice of The Will', he argues that free will is what makes good and evil.

Free will is an intermediate good, neither fully good nor evil. When a person's will is aimed towards God, then they will do good. When it is aimed at the material world, it leads to sin and evil.

Hence, Mello's thoughts. The revenge part is his own, but the other part is this.

Augustine also claims that attachment is the root of all suffering, but in a different book and slightly unrelated if no less fascinating.

If you can't tell, I read too much.

Granted, my interest in St. Augustine started because his full title is St. Augustine of Hippo and my mom loves hippos, so it's not like I read it to better myself. It's also been some time so the argument is overgeneralized.
“So…” Mr. Matsuda trailed off as he dragged his chair to sit directly behind their couch, ”Why did you want the watch?”

“Isn’t it obvious?” Mello snapped, examining the device.

“Er…” The youngest of the NPA agents squirmed, ”No?”

Near rose, turning to face them, ”The Kira we are being shown is extremely paranoid. He begun to carry around pieces of the Death Note. There is a chance that Light is currently carrying a piece right now.” Whether he knew he had it depended on his memories, though it would support him lacking them if he so easily surrendered his watch and it ended up containing a piece of the Death Note.

“He’s always wearing a watch, and it's benign enough to pass scrutiny.” Matt frowned at it from his friend’s side, ”Plus, it’s not like L knew to look for a slip of paper hidden somewhere.”

“Be careful.” The white-haired kid moved closer. He had his own suspicions, but wanted to wait a little longer before acting on them. It was the one advantage the second rank had over him. He was willing to act quickly, and when he was right it worked out in his favor. He thought they would work well together, if the other could put aside his feelings, ”It could be set to self destruct.”

He was ignored. He was used to that.

The blond always either ignored him or argued with him. Both were annoying, but at least the former allowed him to get his thoughts out.

“I doubt Light could rig a bomb in a watch,” Mr. Aizawa commented as he also moved to sit behind them.

“Perhaps not a bomb,” Near wished he could examine the watch himself, ”But there are other ways to destroy a piece of paper.”

“Do you think Watari could get us some tools?” Matt asked, looking to the camera, ”I could probably take it apart without damaging it.”

“Probably?” Mr. Mogi asked in a disapproving tone, as if that could stop Mello. The only one that could stop Mello was L and, if he felt like it, Matt.

“How likely is it there is a piece of the Death Note in there?” Mr. Matsuda inquired.

“It’s hard to put an exact probability on it…” The youngest of the Wammy boys explained, seeing as Mello wasn’t in the mood to, ”From Kira’s actions, I’d be almost certain it’s somewhere.”
“What do you think’ll happen if there is and Light touches it?” Matt asked.

“We only know that we will be able to see a Shinigami.” Which would also prove Light’s potential current innocence. If he were still Kira, then Ryuk was likely watching in amusement as he manipulated them. He wouldn’t leave to prove Light’s innocence since he was a neutral party. But if he had given up possession of the note, and Ryuk was now attached to another human…

Did Shinigami leave if the human gave up the killer notebook? Or did he have to stick around until he decided to kill Light by writing his name in his Death Note?

The ability would still be useful in catching the third Kira.

Unless there were more rules they were not yet aware of. Ryuk wasn’t exactly forthcoming in sharing information about the Death Note’s intricacies.

“Though the potential exists for it to restore Light’s memories of being Kira,” Near admitted.

“We should wait for it to come up in the videos then,” Mr. Aizawa advised.

“I don’t think it will come up,” Matt replied, "This is a tv show more than it is a look into the past. Kira doesn’t explain his plans until after they happen…and I don’t think this one is over yet. Unless we are shown the future-“

“You think we will be shown the future?” Mello interrupted. Of course he would care when his best friend was speaking and not for anyone else.

“Whatever gave us this doesn’t just know our actions, but our thoughts too,” The computer genius fidgeted, ”To me, that suggests some omniscience. And why ask us to be here? We haven’t been involved in the Kira investigation, we wouldn’t be able to do anything with this information.”

Near considered his argument. It was plausible, given they didn’t understand the extent of the powers they were dealing with. It was just…absurd.

But so was the idea that someone could kill just by writing down a name and picturing a face.

It was hard to solve a puzzle if he didn’t have all the pieces.

“We’ll see.” Mello turned his attention back to the watch. ”But we shouldn’t put too much faith in these videos. I’d like to figure some things out for myself.”

The one currently ranked first wished they could figure these things out together, but he knew offering his help would only be met with rejection. So he settled on the couch next to Matt, where he could keep an eye on the watch. The hacker looked at him curiously, but didn’t comment, moving closer to Mello to give him more space.

He almost envied the two of them on their ability to work together.

“We could just ask Light if there’s a-“ Mr. Matsuda started.

“I said,” Mello interrupted, ”I’d like to figure this out on my own.”

Near pulled his legs underneath him. On his own, with Matt’s assistance.

Why couldn’t he just accept his help as well?

******************************************************************
Light hated crying. It was the worst display of weakness, a desperate plea for attention.

As much as he hated it, he couldn’t seem to stop.

He was just…the emotion was almost too much to describe. He was angry at himself. He hated the twisted expression on his face when he gloated over his kills. He was sad so many people died. Good, innocent people like Naomi Misora. He felt like he didn’t have control over his own life anymore. He couldn’t feel safe even in his own mind, which had always been his safe haven.

To make everything worse, his guilt was unbearable. There was so much blood on his hands. No amount of tears could wash that away. Nothing could absolve him of this. The more he watched himself kill the more he felt like he was drowning in their agony. He was causing so much misery.

And how did they treat him?

Like he’d done nothing. They were suspicious of him, angry at his betrayal, but that had faded within a few hours. Even his father, with his deep sense of justice…

Light offered no justification. He didn’t bother explaining what was going on in the parts where his thoughts weren’t on display for them all to hear. He wanted them to remain suspicious. He deserved it all. He wanted them to direct their hatred of Kira at him.

Because what was happening now was exactly what Kira wanted.

He knew that, but he couldn’t bring himself to push away his father and save him.

He really was a selfish creature, wasn’t he?

Pathetic.

He couldn’t remember the last time his father embraced him. Neither of them were the type to be physically affectionate. When he was shorter and cared less for his physical appearance, his father always went to ruffle his hair when he was proud. As he got older it turned to firm pats on the back or a squeeze of his shoulder and eventually nothing at all.

He didn’t deserve this comfort. He didn’t deserve his father’s love.

But he was weak. Too weak to step out of the embrace.

He was grateful for Ryuzaki’s lack of tact.

“I am once again amazed at the depth of emotion you manage to hide, Light.”

That was the reminder he needed to pull himself back together. He then inwardly hit himself. Hadn’t he promised not to give Ryuzaki the satisfaction of seeing him break?

People who said it takes ten times as long to pull oneself back together as it does to fall apart had never met him. Though he was fine in pieces. He could hide it. If he self-destructed he wouldn’t be able to cause anyone else harm. He composed himself in a matter of seconds, stepping away from his father and half-turning to his captor. He stared at him with the best blank face he could manage.

The detective tilted his head, ”Don’t let me ruin the moment.”

“Too late.” He sighed, bringing a hand up to wipe the tears from his face, taking in a calming breath.
“It isn’t healthy to bottle up your feelings like that, son.” His father kept a hand on his shoulder.

“I know.” He said, trying not to snap. He knew it wasn’t healthy before, but it wasn’t like he could be honest back then, and now he didn’t care.

“You can tell me anything.” The older man continued, and he looked back to find him still staring at him, ”After what we saw in there…I think I can understand. You don’t have to act perfect anymore.”

How else was he supposed to act? He’d spent years crafting this persona with the assumption he would never be able to abandon it. Then he’d gone insane and now he was exposed as the monster he truly was. A manipulative, deceitful, monster.

He nodded absently, and his father’s grip tightened, ”I mean it, Light. I can’t imagine why you felt the need for this act. You’re only human, you’re allowed to have flaws.”

“I know,” He repeated, ”I just wasn’t sure…” He breathed out.

“If we loved you?” He barely contained a flinch. That sounded so needy, ”I used to hide things from your grandparents too when I was your age. But it always came out in the end, and their reactions were never as bad as I thought they would be.” The man he always looked up to smiled sadly, ”Whatever it is, it can’t be as bad as Kira.”

No. It wasn’t as bad as Kira.

But he’d already cried in front of Ryuzaki. Like hell he was admitting what it was with him standing so close.

He returned the smile, feeling it shake, ”I’ll tell you…just not now.”

“I’ll hold you to that.” His father turned to Ryuzaki, ”When that time comes, do you trust me to speak to my son alone?”

“Of course.” The socially stunted genius looked at him, and he could just feel him trying to deduce what the later conversation would be.

Light still felt as if this was all wrong. Someone should be enforcing some type of punishment. Someone should be concerned about stopping him.

His father ruffled his hair like he had before life got so complicated, then reclaimed his seat with the rest of the task force. He was surprised to see the three boys now sharing the couch, with the investigators having moved their chairs behind them so they could discuss his watch. They fell silent when they sat down, and Mello looked so invested in his timepiece that he didn’t ask for it back.

If no one else was going to stop him, he’d just have to stop himself.

Maybe he could do some actual good for society.

********************************************************************************************

L hardly paid attention to the events happening on screen. It was him that narrowed down their suspect pool, he hardly needed the process repeated. Nor did he react to the irony of him asking if Kira could have been on the train. It was irrelevant at the moment, seeing as he couldn’t prove it. He also didn’t care for Kira’s paranoia. No, he had much more important matters to occupy his
thoughts with.

It was encouraging to see Light cry and make up with his father.

But it also revealed there was something else he was hiding for a lot longer than he’d been hiding Kira.

Something sparked the need to be perfect, to shape his identity around what others wanted instead of who he was. The first crack in the beautifully tragic teen sitting next to him. He bit his thumb. Besides Ukitā’s death, which was by Amane’s actions not Kira’s, nothing particularly upsetting would occur in the next few episodes. In fact, their first meeting should be coming up shortly.

That should give Light more time to center himself.

He could be strong enough for another confrontation, this time on what else he was hiding.

Knowing Light, it could be anything he thought would disappoint his parents, anything that wasn’t what they were expecting. It couldn’t be an academic or physical failing and they never would have known about the state of his mind...perhaps it was social? Though he couldn’t see Light failing there either.

Matt snorted at the lewd comment Ryuk made. L noted the Chief tensing, and then whispering something to his men, who all moved slightly behind his heirs. The boy in the striped shirt then started snickering at Kira insinuating the death god was ugly.

The scene switched to their debate about security cameras, which ended in the agreement to use them. Kira said goodbye to some unknown boy, before heading into his house. He rewatched him enter his room, laying on the bed while ignoring Ryuk.

“You play video games?” Matt asked, kindly ignoring that he played video games with a Shinigami.

“In my free time,” Light answered easily as on screen, he and the Chief commented on his security measures.

“Maybe we can play something next time we take a break.” The boy smirked, “If you want to work on shrinking that ego of yours, of course.”

None of them could resist a challenge, ”Have you learned nothing by watching this about getting overconfident?” The college student leaned back, crossing one leg over the other, but barely looking away from the screen, ”It’ll lead to your downfall.”

“Oh it’s on.” Matt looked motivated.

A few times, on the days where he convinced himself Light’s Kira percentages were lower, he had thought how the teen would react to his heirs. At the moment, he didn’t appear to be trying to make them like him, as he would have before this video, and that threw off all his predictions. Though he was still right that Matt would be the first to make a connection.

He hoped it would lead Mello to finding one. Light could teach the blond a lot about emotional restraint or, perhaps, how to use his expressiveness to manipulate others. It would give him a skill Near did not have, which would help with is inferiority issues.

Or so he hoped. It was likely Mello would see the budding friendship as a threat to his best friend and get more hostile.
Kira checked his clothing for bugs before responding to the Shinigami. L bit his thumb. He hadn’t known about the door handle, or the lead on the side. Granted, he wasn’t the one to place the cameras and wiretaps. If his people hadn’t replaced the piece of paper, it might not have caught Kira’s attention at all.

It was little details like that which made the game dangerous. The tiniest of details could give away too much information.

The killer went and bought something before manipulating Ryuk into helping him find the cameras. He didn’t spare too much thought over the absurdity of a death god being addicted to apples.

“What the hell?” Mello snapped, trying to pull Mogi’s hands off his eyes. The scrawny teenager, no matter how much spirit he had, was no match in strength for the bigger man.

“I can’t believe my son’s looking at those magazines.”

That made the blond calm down slightly. Matt just started laughing, though that was likely due to Aizawa having caught his goggles in his move to block his vision. Near barely reacted, but the low noise Matsuda made was probably a constant stream of apologies, so his youngest heir wasn’t likely to hold a grudge for the unexpected touch.

Ah, he should have seen that coming. The Chief thought that content inappropriate for his nearly adult son. Naturally, he would think it unacceptable for the younger boys to see as well. He smiled at seeing them be treated like children, wishing they were allowed to take pictures. He almost paused the video just to extend the moment.

“Did you have to look at porn?” Mello snarled once he was released.

“I needed something to hide.” Light also looked amused by his father’s actions, but not enough for a real smile.

“But porn is just suspicious.” Matt fixed his goggles, ”You literally could have any girl you want, but you have zero sex drive.”

“That’s because he isn’t attracted to any of those girls.” Near twirled a strand of his hair, ”Or any girl for that matter.”

Light closed his eyes. ”Again, I don’t find my sexuality relevant to this.”

What a shame that was.

Though he did have to wonder what made both Mello and Near decide Light was gay. Just because he didn’t reciprocate the interest of any of the women around him didn’t automatically make him interested in men. He suspected Light was simply asexual…

Was that the social problem Light was trying to disguise?

He supposed part of his expectations as the only son was for him to get married to some nice woman and carry on the Yagami family name. Even if he wasn’t attracted to them that way, Light would make some lucky woman very happy.

While he was certain the Chief and his wife weren’t close-minded, surprise could easily be mistaken for disappointment.
Discussion died down as Sayu read the headline he made appear on screen. Kira’s thoughts mirrored Mello’s earlier comments. While it hadn’t succeeded in getting the same response from the murderer, it succeeded in getting a response. It was his dismissive comments that showed how bright his mind was, thus increasing the likelihood he was Kira.

Finally, it was time to see how he killed those criminals without access to the media. He could ponder the repercussions of societal expectations on Light’s expression of his sexuality later.

“Sixty-four cameras?” Light hissed, meaning he forgot that piece of information. He ignored him. He had to be used to his extreme measures by now.

“**This is the closest you get!**” Kira mentally announced as he opened the bag of chips.

L leaned closer as the intense music picked up, signalling the start of important events. Kira laughed in his head as he stared into the bag at a little light. He shifted. So that was how he had done it. He’d put a mini TV in the bag of chips with a pen and a piece of the Death Note taped to the side. A good plan, since he knew exactly how to angle the bag so none of the cameras would pick up on its glare.

From this perspective, it was an intense scene. He found Kira’s focus admirable, especially considering he had a Shinigami going through withdrawals floating around his room.

“**I’ll take a potato chip and eat it!**”

This time Matt and Mello started laughing, ”Overdramatic much?”

L silently agreed, though it was a turning point for his past self. Kira changed victimology, which led him to suspect those he was observing even more. If he were a lesser detective, the potato chip trick would have convinced him of the teen's innocence. It certainly convinced the rest of the task force.

But Kira was up against him, and he was no lesser detective.

Chapter End Notes

Okay. This has been bothering me for a few hours now, even though I've still got a while until I reach it, so I'm just going to ask.

Episode 26 is basically review, but I'm torn between sticking to the anime's rooftop scene or switching that for the graveyard scene from the Relight movies. Not sure if I'd also switch who the narrator is with it or not. Both have their good qualities and are fascinating in their own respects, but it would be repetitive to include both.

Any preferences? I literally can't make this decision and would happily write either.
Matsuda knew he shouldn’t be excited, but they were getting close to Light and Ryuzaki meeting! He always wondered what was going through their heads, and considering both were trying to analyse the other, there was bound to be a lot of their thoughts on display. He thought he was beginning to understand them better, even if they still were on a different level.

He watched Kira buy Ryuk apples and then feed them to him.

“You know, I might actually write your name in my death note and kill you.”

“Is that likely?” Matsuda asked, worried.

Ryuzaki paused it, ”Ryuk’s primary motivation is being entertained…”

“As soon as I bore him, it’s likely I’ll die,” Light theorized, ”Since I’m not in possession of the Death Note currently, he’s not bound to my person…”

“But if he is the one that will kill you he might have to stay anyways.” Near shifted in front of him, ”He could decide at any time that he doesn’t want to worry about it and kill you.”

“There must be a way to stop him,” The Chief worried.

“I don’t see how.” Light laced his fingers together over his knee, ”I wouldn’t worry about it too much.”

“How can you say that?” Aizawa asked.

“I have no intentions of avoiding punishment for my crimes.” The teenager looked at them, ”We can’t ignore them forever. Whether I’m executed by the courts or Ryuk kills me…I don’t see a way I get out of this alive.”

Matsuda clenched his fists. They were ignoring his crimes, but they were only able to because he didn’t remember them. He wasn’t good at holding on to his anger in the first place. Potentially Kira or not, as long as he was helping in the investigation they were willing to accept that risk from the beginning. He hadn’t tried to hurt them in here.

A part of him still wanted to believe in Light, so he indulged it.

That same part didn't want to see him die.

“I do wish you wouldn’t talk like that.” Ryuzaki bit his thumb.

“And here I thought you’d be happy I’m trying to be honest.” Light rolled his eyes, ”Even if you pull some strings and I’m not executed, we don’t have a way to kill a Shinigami, therefore there’s no sure way for me to survive this.”

“Are you that eager to die?” Mello demanded.

“Realistically speaking.”
“Bullshit.” The angry teen glared, "Kira’s manipulating Ryuk like it’s nothing. If you’d put some effort into it, you could fucking live.”

“We can’t even communicate with him now,” Light replied, ”And he could be watching me manipulate him right now. He’s not that stupid.”

“We’ll manage,” Ryuzaki said.

“And we’re pretty sure you have a piece of the Death Note in your watch,” Matt added, ”We should know soon if Ryuk’s in the room.”

“My watch?” Light frowned, ”There’s a small compartment that’ll open if you tug on the pin four times in quick succession.”

“It does?” Aizawa asked.

They all looked at the blond holding the watch. He scowled at his friend for mentioning it to Light, but proceeded to do as instructed. As the college student said, a small compartment opened up after the fourth time. He couldn’t see since Matt leaned closer, but soon Mello was holding up a small slip of paper. He stood up to look around the room, “I don’t see anything.”

“It’s possible that it isn’t a piece of the Death Note,” Near suggested, holding a hand out for it.

“We aren’t testing it,” The Chief said as it was passed down the line. The older man held it tightly, ”I trust that Ryuk isn’t in the room.”

Ryuzaki came over to also touch it, dragging a reluctant Light behind him. Matsuda held his breath when the great detective turned to the teenager, holding the paper out.

“I’d rather not.” Light stared at it, and for the first time he thought he could say the college student was afraid.

“Very well.” He passed it back to the Chief, ”I trust you with this.” He turned to his heirs, ”If Ryuk does make an appearance, do your best to hide your faces.” The three kids nodded, and he looked to Light, ”I will make an agreement with Ryuk for your life if the opportunity presents itself.”

That was another reason he was so eager to watch the two of them interact on screen. They were uncannily in sync with each other, despite being enemies. He knew their obsession with each other back then was due to them trying to find out about the other and bring them down, but if Light was actually innocent…

He realized pretty quickly after these started that when Light said he didn’t share Misa’s feelings, he meant he felt nothing for her. He thought he was just interested, while she was whole heartedly devoted. He thought if Light wasn't so caught up in the investigation, their relationship would be better. Now, he knew the teen didn’t care he was dating a model.

Light was always been popular with the ladies. He made it a habit to ask if he had a girlfriend nearly every time he saw him.

The answer was always no, but he kept his hopes up it would one day be yes.

But Near’s comment had him thinking. Maybe it wasn’t that Light hadn’t found the right girl, maybe it was that Light hadn’t found the right boy.

He also seriously needed a distraction from the dark subject matter. If that meant coming up with a
valid reason that Ryuzaki and Light should be together, then he would gladly devote time to not thinking about how Light was Kira.

“Just don’t do anything stupid.” The college student led the way back to their seats.

He wouldn’t dare tease Ryuzaki about Light, but could he get away with teasing Light?

“Like you are attempting to do?” The detective challenged.

The teen paused, turning to face him completely, ”Accepting that my death is likely is stupid?”

“Yes.”

Matsuda saw the punch coming half a second before it sent Ryuzaki sprawling, and then Light stumbling after him. For geniuses, they always seemed to forget that fighting while connected wasn’t a good idea. Not that fighting in general was a better one.

“Not again.” Aizawa sighed as he and Mogi both got up.

“This has happened before?” Matt inquired as the two tried to punch and kick each other.

“Yeah.” Matsuda scratched the back of his head. Ryuzaki was the only one who could make Light lose his composure.

That had to mean something, right?

It was strange to see L fighting someone for many reasons.

One, Matt hardly saw L in person period. Two, the only people L saw in person were people he trusted and therefore unlikely to fight him. And three, no one ever had the balls to straight up punch L in the face.

Not until Light Yagami, apparently.

B probably would have tried after A’s death, but yeah, leaving the one place L was bound to return to eventually meant B lacked the opportunity to.

L was trained to fight. Self-defence courses were mandatory at Wammy’s for all students because jerks tend to get violent when faced with people smarter than them. Also, having a lot of child prodigies together led to none of them learning what was socially acceptable for ‘normal’ people to say in ‘normal’ conversation. One time they went on a field trip to the mall.

He ended up watching Mello’s back in three fights against basically ever secondary school student they ran into.

Roger didn’t let the two of them go off alone after that.

The fight didn’t last long due to the intervention by the task force, and he was a little disappointed. Without a word they all returned to their seats and they continued the video. It started with L and the Chief discussing if the deaths from the potato chip scene were enough to prove Light’s innocence. Of course, Kira got home and the focus switched back to him.

He wondered how much longer they had until they reached the present. If they were in January in this episode, then there was some time before the second Kira appeared. Considering the whole
thing started in late November, they weren’t moving that fast. Hopefully they’d just skip to the
important parts like the appearance of the second Kira and whatever the hell led to Light and L
being handcuffed together.

Kira outlined how he was just going to not kill at home to avoid camera scrutiny. L eventually
came to the conclusion that camera surveillance alone was not going to reveal anything. He then
went on in his head about the psyche of his enemy. The God complex was truly childish. At least
he admitted he couldn’t depend on Kira making mistakes before deciding what he should do.

**Ideally, I would get to know him well enough that he’d admit to me that he was Kira, and
show me how he kills.**

Matt snorted. They were close, but he hadn’t expected self-inflicted amnesia. Who would?

**Would that even be possible?**

Maybe if Kira were anyone other than Light Yagami. He would share a killer notebook with
Mello.

Ryuk informed the murderer the cameras were removed, but Kira was still suspicious of wire taps.
It gave him a false reassurance he was no longer a suspect. His mother and sister wished him well
on his test but he didn’t seem stressed at all. He arrived ten minutes before it started and took his
sweet time picking up the pencil to start the exam.

Kira looked up as an examiner passed by. The man called out another student on how he sat, and
the killer half turned to see who he was talking to.

It was, of course, L. They stared at each other intensely for a few seconds, before the scene
switched, going back to the Shinigami realm.

“So they are watching,” Mello muttered.

“Just from their world.” Matt nodded, feeling slightly exposed. Those beings could kill him with no
repercussions. They had to kill humans to extend their lives. Rationally, he knew there were
billions of other humans they could pick from, but he was getting involved with something
interesting, which could significantly increase his chance of dying.

He wanted to live as long as he could with his unhealthy life choices.

Time skipped to the university entrance ceremony. If he remembered right, that was in April. He
was relieved, it meant there were small time skips. He felt kind of bad Kira was standing there with
only the death god for company while the other students were in groups, either other friends or
family. His father was busy with trying to catch him. Maybe they were unfortunate enough that his
sister’s entrance ceremony landed on the same day as his?

Still, he was giving the freshman address. Shouldn’t someone have been there from his family?

Oh, and he had to share the address with L.

Standing side by side on the stage, he’d have thought there were no two more different people.
Students gossiped about them, their voices drowning out the speech.

“**I think I like the one on the right.**”

Matt couldn’t help but laugh at that, “Looks like Light isn’t the only one with fangirls.”
“And it’s more than just Kyoko.” Light sighed, as on screen L whispered creepy information about him as they walked off the stage.

“Jealous?” Mello asked.

“No.” The college student shrugged, “Ryuzaki doesn’t come to university often, and I’m his only known friend, so they try to find out about him through me.”

The music stopped as Kira gave in to curiosity and asked what information the strange man had.

“I want to tell you I’m L.”

Immediately, both men were painted in their colors. Red for Kira. Blue for L.

Linda’s rants on artistic symbolism came to his mind, unbidden.

Red was the color of extremes. What were Kira’s ideals if not extremes? Red was associated with passion, love, lust, seduction, violence, anger, everything that made Kira dangerous. It was the color of blood, the color of fire, the color of power. It was also tied heavily into danger itself. Red was used in advertisements to catch the eye, but more often than not red caught the eye to warn people of danger.

Sadly, not all dangerous people spontaneously turned red to scare others off.

Blue was almost red's symbolic opposite. Blue meant creativity, intelligence, wisdom, confidence, tranquillity. Dark blue especially suggested wealth and superiority, but he could be mixing it up with royal blue. L was the calm to Kira’s rage, the water that would put out his flames. Blue, if he remembered right, was also the color of loyalty, stability.

It was more commonly associated with depression in modern culture…but if that implication was going to apply to anyone, it was going to be the girl in the opening they still hadn’t been introduced to officially. He assumed she was Light’s girlfriend, the second Kira, but he didn’t know anything else about her.

What did it say about their relationship if he didn’t want her in the room to watch something that involved her? Though the older teenager already admitted he didn’t have feelings for her.

He guessed they had no choice but to bring her in when she appeared, but he wasn’t looking forward to it.

“Why do you think they added the colors?” Matsuda asked, interrupting Kira’s internal panic.

“It’s a reflection of our inner selves,” Light answered as L’s suspicious thoughts could be heard.

“A reflection?” Aizawa repeated with a little confusion.

“Mirrors don’t lie,” The college student said simply.

“But they don’t show you the full truth,” L added.

“But you’re just too perfect.”

“Pretty Boy’s starting to piss me off,” Mello muttered so only he could hear.

Matt blinked. His friend’s outburst earlier surprised him, but he thought that was just the
hardworking part of him being angered at the idea of someone he saw (but refused to admit to be) similar to giving up. He leaned forward so that Near couldn’t read the blond’s lips, “What happened?”

“His eyes remind me of A’s.” One of his hands came up to grab the crucifix on his rosary.

Matt didn’t know what to say, so he said nothing.

He hadn’t been close to A or B, mainly due to a lack of trying on his part. The only reason he was picked to live at Wammy’s was because he hacked the wrong people, not a test like most of the other orphans did. He didn’t care much for tests, so his rank was never high enough to warrant spending time with the potential heirs.

By the time Mello caught his attention and he decided to climb higher in the ranks so they’d have more classes together, it was too late to get to know A and B. They were both gone soon after he ranked fourth.

He switched his attention back to the screen, letting Kira’s explanation of why L’s pre-emptive move worked wash over him.

Light wasn’t in the best place, and he didn’t seem to be bothered by dying. That didn’t mean he would try to end his life. No one in the room was actively resenting him except Mello, but he had a feeling Light was told to ignore his anger, so hopefully he’d get better.

Then again, he was still red. The color of extremes.

Suicide was pretty extreme.

***********************************************

Mogi watched Kira exchange pleasantries with L. It was impressive how his expression never gave way to his thoughts. Even when he was angry, the most he’d reacted was a trembling in his lower legs, which L wasn’t paying attention to because he’d been staring at his face. If the teen had a different life, he could have been one incredible actor.

He was relieved the Chief and his son came to an agreement. He was worried what the continued stress would do to his health. It had been months since his initial heart attack, but it was stress induced and this video was very stress inducing.

He shifted in his seat when Kira started yelling. His anger was enough to make the Shinigami afraid. He noted the Death Note couldn’t be used to kill other people than just those named. Small mercies. The teenager continued his rant, before laughing in a way that would haunt him in his nightmares. The mask fell back into place as he regained control over himself.

This really was a game to them, wasn’t it?

He wondered when pretending to be friends resulted in them becoming friends. If they were friends. It was an unspoken rule between him and Aizawa that they didn’t try to understand what was going on between the two geniuses, so long as they could manage to cooperate that was all he needed to know.

“If it’s my friendship you want, I’ll gladly accept it. In time, I’ll earn your trust.”

He’d failed there. They both had. Friendship hadn’t made Kira admit to how he killed, nor did Ryuzaki share his name.
“Once you’ve told me what I want to know, there’ll be no point keeping you alive.”

He knew they agreed to treat Kira and Light like two separate persons for the duration of the video, but he didn’t think he could look at Light for a while after this speech.

“Then I’ll kill you, with my hands if I have to.”

A shiver ran down his back. For all their sakes, he hoped amnesia was the truth and permanent.

He didn’t think he’d survive being in a room with that monster, powers or no.

L paused the video as Watari walked in with a cart. The older gentleman smiled at them, ”I believe now would be a good time for lunch.”

“We just took a break before this episode.” The Chief pointed out.

“I asked him to,” L interjected, ”Now that Kira and I are acquainted, the second Kira should make an appearance soon. I thought now would be the best time to eat, and Amane should be ready to join us after.”

Right. The second Kira. Ukita…

He lost his appetite just thinking of his friend. He probably wouldn’t be able to eat after seeing his death again, nor with his killer in the room.

Misa Amane. She was the one who was obviously Kira, the one they had physical evidence against. She was unrepentant in her support for the mass murderer, even after losing her memories. At least Light regained his humanity when he forgot…

“Do we have to have Misa watch this?” Light asked as he was given a sandwich and a drink.

“Have to? No.” L took his fruit and cake, ”But I hope seeing how Kira intends to use her will make her waver in her support.”

“Somehow, I doubt that,” The college student muttered.

“Do you remember something?” The detective pressed immediately.

“No,” Light sounded unsure, ”Just a feeling.”

“Hm.” Ryuzaki hummed, scooping food into his mouth.

Mogi managed to look at the Chief’s son for a moment. He seemed genuinely perplexed at the feeling he shared. He hoped it wasn’t Kira resurfacing.

No, it was just a passing feeling, one that was likely to be proven true.

If his emotions from when he was Kira still existed, then he wouldn’t be trying to catch Kira. He wouldn’t join the police he declared as his enemy. He wouldn’t be able to not take action against a man he hated after so long.

They were safe from the first Kira.

Right now, they had to worry about the second.
Chapter End Notes

I know Misa's an important character, and what she represents is worth going into, but she's not one of my favorites. I'll try to keep my dislike from interfering with accuracy but be prepared to correct me.

I'm so happy with the response to this story! All of your support means so much to me! If you haven't liked it yet, please do so!

It hardly feels like a week since I began writing this...lol. As always, feel free to leave suggestions or corrections! No promise it will change anything, but I do take everything into consideration, at least.
Quillsh Wammy would never forget his first big sponsor.

He’d never been poor in his life, but he struggled with living independently after university. Being an inventor didn’t exactly make much money when he was starting from next to nothing. He possessed one good suit he wore for meetings with potential sponsors, he borrowed enough from his friends to pay for patent fees, but he lived month to month.

He could believe in himself enough to not give up, but he didn’t get anywhere until someone else shared that belief.

It was an indescribable feeling.

It was his main reason he opened orphanages with his fortune. It was why he sent tests to other orphanages so he could find especially gifted children. He wanted to give them all the support they needed to be great. He could change their world, and in return they went out and made others’ worlds better places. There was no greater joy for him than returning the favor of his first sponsor a hundred times over.

A little support could change a child’s life. A little belief could inspire them to be anything.

Another day he’d never forget was meeting L. The child was left at an orphanage in Canada when he was six. The caretakers described him as quiet, antisocial, but brilliant. They gave him the Wammy test when he was seven, and he scored higher than any before him. He conducted the interview in person.

Nothing prepared him for the pale child crouched on the stairs when he walked in. He almost found himself speechless at the dark grey eyes staring at him from underneath unruly dark hair. They were nearly devoid of all emotion, not even a flicker of interest or curiosity at why he wanted to speak to him. He knew immediately he would be a challenge.

He’d also known immediately it was a challenge he was more than willing to take on.

There was something satisfying in a difficult client accepting his pitch.

He considered all the children in his orphanages his children, but L was the first one to feel like his son.

When the tiny child grabbed his hand as the plane took off, uncertain of his future but willing to place his life in his care…he vowed he would never give that boy a reason to think his trust was misplaced. He saw to it personally that he achieved what he was capable of.

He released many great minds into the worlds. Doctors, lawyers, engineers, chemists, artists, a whole variety of careers, even some politicians.

L was the first to want to become a detective. Not just any detective either. He didn’t want to be bound to any one agency and he wanted to be able to take on any case he so desired. His idea was like nothing the world had ever seen before.
Wammy made sure it happened. Once a few hard cases were solved by the mysterious L, they found they needed someone on the ground to act as a liaison to the police forces. It only took an hour for him to decide he wasn’t needed at his company anymore. He made Roger the head of the Wammy Institute, bought himself a heavy coat and fedora, then went before the ICPO as Watari.

He didn’t care if most of the world saw him as a butler for the World’s Greatest Detective. It was safer that way, and he’d never get tired of taking care of the genius. At his age, he never expected to be leading a double life as a criminal investigator.

L was almost twenty-five and still such a child despite his accomplishments.

Misa flounced in, "Light!" She ran up to said teen and hugged him.

"Misa," The boy who would be Kira replied with no enthusiasm, "Did Watari explain the situation?"

No he did not.

"Huh?" The girl tilted her head, "What situation? Did something happen?"

Watari was unsure how he felt about Light Yagami. It was unlike L to get attached, though there were other cases where he ended up reforming the criminals and having them work under him. He presumed it was how he intended to end this case, but Light was different from Wedy or Aiber. He wasn’t a thief or a conman, he was a mass murderer the likes of which the world had never seen before.

It would be a waste of ability for Light to die or spend his life in prison, but the point of no return passed when Kira killed the FBI agents.

Even if that part of him was dormant now, there was no guarantee it wouldn’t awaken. Kira may not have his notebook, but he expressed a willingness to kill using other means. He knew his son took risks, but this was one he would not permit. If there was no permanent solution to Kira, no way to ensure those memories stayed gone, then the risk was too high to let Light be free.

"What?" The model gasped, "You’re Kira?"

“Well—" L started.

“Yes,” Light interrupted.

“That’s wonderful!” Misa squealed, "I always knew you were amazing, Light!"

There was a flash of anger, and Light tensed, before putting space between him and his girlfriend. He looked like he was about to berate her, before turning to the detective, "I would like to speak to my father in private now."

"Of course.” L produced the key and let him go.

“What?” Misa demanded, "You’re letting him go? Why couldn’t you do that on our dates?"

“I trust Chief Yagami to watch Light,” L said as the two walked to another room.

“I bet you’re just gonna watch on your camera, huh? Pervert!”

Watari amused himself with the reactions from Near, Mello, and Matt. Mello's eyes narrowed in
obvious annoyance. Matt was grinning at the annoyed blonde. Near was staring at her, even his normally blank expression giving away some confusion. Matt didn’t last long before he started laughing, drawing the model’s attention.

“Who are they?” She demanded.

“They are my younger brothers,” L answered easily.

“They don’t look like you,” She stated the obvious.

“They’re growing up in the same orphanage I was raised in,” The detective drawled.

“Orphanage?” Misa’s irritation faded, and she walked closer to the children, ”I’m sorry to hear that. I lost my parents last year. You three must be so strong.” She bent down to extend a hand, ”I’m Misa Amane, but you can just call me Misa, or MisaMisa if you want. I know it must be tough having such a perverted older brother, but I’m certain we can be friends!”

Mello and Near stared at her like she was an alien. In a sense, she was. There were a few air headed geniuses at the house, but no one like Misa. It might do them some good to see what a likeable person was like, even if said likeable person was the second Kira.

“I’m Matt.” He hesitantly shook her hand, ”Nice to meet you.”

“Mello.” The blond pointedly crossed his arms.

“Near.” The white haired child made no move towards her, ”Why do you call L a pervert?”

“Because he is!” Misa pouted, ”Why else would he keep himself chained to my Light?”

“Because he's Kira?” Mello growled, ”Doesn't that bother you?”

“Huh? I think it’s great that Light’s Kira,” Another bewildered look on Near and Mello’s expression, while Matt’s eyes widened, ”But I hope I’d remember something as important as being the second Kira.”

L sighed. Even after Light explained she didn’t seem to understand. Watari found himself smiling. The world was full of genuinely stupid people. It was time they learned to deal with them.

“You support Kira?” Near wondered.

Misa knelt in front of them, ”My parents…they were killed right in front of me when someone broke into our house.” She smiled sadly, ”With L as your brother you know how it is sometimes when cases drag on…”

“Kira killed your parent’s murderer,” The youngest accurately deduced.

The confusion seemed to clear from Mello’s face, but not the anger. Watari should have known he would sympathize with her story. There was no good way for someone to end up in his care. Near’s parents died from disease. Matt didn’t even remember his they were gone so early in his life. Mello was found in a closet after both his parents were shot.

“Yes,” She affirmed.

Normal people only cared about how events affected them. To a lot of normal people, Kira was the savior they had been waiting for. They didn’t worry themselves about what was just or unjust, they
simply followed the law and avoided trouble. Normal people were bystanders, not feeling any responsibility for what was going on around them unless they were made to take responsibility.

The kids his house raised were far from normal, but exposure to it would be good.

Souichiro watched his son rub at his wrist, as if adjusting to the lack of weight on it. He could tell he was angry at what Misa said to him, but the anger was quickly being replaced by something different. It was similar to the expression he wore when Ryuzaki offered him the piece of the Death Note. Fear. No, terror.

He stepped closer to draw him out of his thoughts, "What’s wrong?"

"Dad…" He trailed off, "I want to break up with Misa."

He doubted that was the main reason he requested a private meeting, but if that was where they were starting that was fine with him, "Alright. No one is forcing you to remain in a relationship with her."

It would make watching the video slightly awkward, but no more awkward than when she was constantly pestering him for affection when he obviously didn’t care for her. He never thought her the right fit for his son anyways. Ryuzaki would probably prefer his son maintain the illusion of a relationship so they could control her, but Light already said he wouldn’t manipulate her emotions.

"That’s the problem." Light ran a hand through his hair, "I know I don’t like her, but I have a feeling something bad will happen if I end things."

"Another feeling?" He worried, "Like with your watch?"

"Yes." The college student sighed, "I knew about the compartment, but I didn’t want it to be opened. I guess we know why now." He met his gaze, his eyes still afraid, "Kira obviously didn’t want me to find the piece of the Death Note and I don’t think he wants me to break up with Misa either." His voice shook a little, "Now that I’ve been thinking about it, there are a lot of things I’ve been feeling that don’t make sense."

"Son," He put a hand on his shoulder, grounding him, "That doesn’t mean Kira’s memories will return."

"You don’t understand." Light stiffened, "I’ve had a theory for the past week that I’ve been compiling data to support. I think this Kira might be using his abilities to kill for financial gain. I don’t know where the thought came from, it was just a feeling." He squeezed, trying to get him to calm down, "I know I’m right, but I can’t explain why I know I’m right, and that just proves I can’t be trusted--"

"Light," He interrupted, once again cursing the killer in his mind, "Let’s take this one step at a time. If Kira doesn’t want you to break up with Misa, then break up with her." Slowly, his son nodded, "We have to stop this Kira, and we will try our best to make sure you do not become Kira in the process."

He couldn’t imagine not being able to trust his own thoughts and feelings, to suspect a part of himself was sabotaging the rest…it must be agony.

"Trust us," He continued, "Trust Ryuzaki. You won’t hurt anyone again."
There was a long pause, before his son gained control over himself again, "Okay."

It wasn’t, but that wasn’t the main reason they had gone to the side room.

“Good.” He removed his hand, ”Now, what else did you want to tell me?”

His son shifted, ”Promise me you won’t get upset.”

“It stresses me out more knowing you aren’t telling me something.” The Chief of police crossed his arms, ”I can’t promise it won’t upset me, but it won’t change that I love you.”

Light stared at him for a moment, ”We should sit down.”

He humored him, ”Do you think this is that shocking?”

His son didn’t answer, sitting on the edge of one of the chairs. He sat down in the other, waiting for him to speak. The college student took a moment to consider his words, before taking a deep breath, ”I’m gay.”

Souichiro blinked. That…that wasn’t as bad as him being Kira. He mentally slapped himself. No, it wasn’t bad at all. He didn’t believe anyone should be treated differently based on their sexuality, or any other trait they couldn’t control. He nodded, realizing his son was waiting for a response, ”I… I’m surprised, but that’s fine, Light.”

“I wasn’t sure. I thought I was asexual-“ He held up a hand.

“You don’t have to explain,” He said, smiling. It was a relief to realize his son wasn’t the womanizer he’d been reported to be. Some of it was probably Kira trying to cover tracks, but he wasn’t sure how much. Before that, Light always managed to avoid dating, ”You never lied to us. We just assumed.”

No one had to say they were straight. It was almost unfair his son had to come out to him. He hoped he was the type of man that wouldn’t have cared if his son brought a boy to meet their family instead of a girl. His smile widened, ”If you’re comfortable enough telling the others, it should make breaking up with Misa easier.”

Light nodded, still looking troubled.

He sighed, bracing himself, ”That isn’t all of it.”

His son shook his head. A few seconds passed before he took another deep breath, ”I’m attracted to Ryuzaki.”

What?

“What?!“

What?

No.

“Dad-“

He rose from his seat, ”No! Any other man I could accept, but Ryuzaki? L?” He started pacing, ”Did you forget he tortured you for fifty days?!“
“He was right.”

“That doesn’t mean you should forgive him! Even for a criminal that was a violation of basic human rights!” Was it Stockholm Syndrome? No, his son was too rational, or was he? He was in a very vulnerable mental state at the moment. Was Ryuzaki taking advantage of that?

Just the thought made him angrier, "Son, he knew the killings restarted within two weeks. He deliberately withheld that information to watch you break! He’s the reason you haven’t seen your family in months! He’s the reason I had to pretend to kill you!”

Light flinched, ”I know, but-“

“No!” He interrupted again, ”His behavior towards you is inexcusable, and you…you…” He couldn’t comprehend why he would be attracted to someone who caused him so much pain. He walked up to him, grabbing both his shoulders, ”Has he done anything to you? Has he tried to manipulate you into anything?”

They were chained together. He never asked how that translated to bathing. Not that it wouldn’t be anything Ryuzaki hadn’t already scene from his observation of his house. But seeing…that from a camera and watching from a few feet away were completely different! That wasn’t even mentioning sleeping arrangements!

“What? Dad! No,” His son denied, shaking his head, ”He hasn’t done anything to me.”

“Hn.” He frowned, but before he could continue berating his son on his stupidity he felt a burning sensation in his chest. He flinched, grabbing the area that hurt.

“Dad!” Light helped him sit down, ”Is it your heart?”

He couldn’t answer due to the burning pain. He groaned, and his son hesitated for only a second, before running to the door and shouting for help. He focused on breathing, hoping the pain would pass and that this wasn’t another heart attack. He wasn’t sure how much time passed before Watari was there with a medical kit. Everyone came piling in after him, forming a loose circle.

“What’d you say to almost kill your dad?” Mello inquired once it was determined it wasn’t a heart attack.

Light was slumped in his seat in relief, ”That I’m gay.”

Souichiro looked up to gage the reaction in the room. The only one who looked surprised was Misa, but he’d gotten good at ignoring her. He narrowed his eyes at his men, who all pointedly looked in different directions. He caught Matsuda’s gaze, who flinched, ”We thought you suspected, Chief…if we’d thought you’d take it this badly-“

He would be having a lovely conversation with his team after this.

“I also told him I slept with Director Takimura’s son at last year’s New Year’s celebration.” The college student added, and he tried not to look like that information was new to him. He did say any other man. He also respected his son’s privacy when it came to his current…attraction. He hadn’t noticed any change in the director’s behavior towards him, so it must have ended well.

Ryuzaki started coughing. Matt let out a low whistle, ”I take back what I said about you having zero sex drive.”
“Can we have some privacy?” Watari inquired, and everyone quickly filed out of the room except for his son, who moved his chair closer.

“Is he going to be alright?” Light asked.

“Yes.” The older man smiled, ”But hopefully there won’t be more surprises.” He was given a few pills to swallow and a cup of water.

He sighed, "It doesn’t seem to be a surprise.”

A chuckle, ”Well your name does suggest it.”

“My name?” Souichiro frowned.

Watari kept smiling, ”You do know Yagami reversed spells I’m a gay, don’t you?”

He choked on his water. Light groaned, ”Don’t tell Matsuda that.”

From the amusement on the gentleman’s face, he had a feeling the others would soon learn that joke. He laughed, knowing his son would have to bear the brunt of their terrible humor. The liaison joined him, before taking the empty glass and leaving the room.

“Director Takimura’s son is nice,” He commented.

Light shot him a look, ”Don’t start.”

Misa glared at Light. She didn’t care if she was supposed to be paying attention to what was going on in the stupid show. It was just a tennis match between Ryuzaki and her now ex-boyfriend. It was obvious Light was better. He was perfect, and she refused to believe he would just dump her like that. The sight of him in shorts, however, kept her attention on the video.

No, they weren’t broken up. They were just going through a rough patch. All relationships had those, it only meant they’d be stronger when they got back together.

If they could just spend more time together, she was certain he would come to love her like she loved him. It wasn’t like relationships were built on sex anyways.

She could love enough for the both of them if need be.

The scene briefly switched to Mr. Yagami talking to some balding old dude, and she rolled her eyes at her future father-in-law’s assessment of Ryuzaki. If he was so capable then why hadn’t he caught Kira yet?

He was a flawed man and Kira was a god. In what universe could he win?

She watched her love decide he was going to win as more students came to watch him. She wrinkled her nose in disgust at the one girl that somehow preferred Ryuzaki and then felt a little disappointed when the pictures focused more on their faces. Their thoughts were too complicated for her to understand, and the way they completed the others’ thoughts was just strange.

“You two really do think alike,” Matsu commented.

The model crossed her arms. If she just had more time with Light she was certain they’d start thinking the same too! She watched her boyfriend win the match, just like she knew he would,
before inviting the other boy out for a drink. She glowered at the man in real life. He’d been on more of a date than she had! That was unfair!

Did he have his eyes on her Light? Was that why he kept interfering in their relationship?

Was that it? Was he jealous of her?

Ryuzaki said he suspected the perfect teen of being Kira, which Light admitted was a good idea before they got to a coffee shop. A coffee shop she also loved! She glared as they sat in a booth diagonal from the one she took when she went there. And then they decided to play a game? She felt her anger rising. Did he really like Ryuzaki more than her?

Or did the pervert sabotage them?

She hoped she was the second Kira. Then she’d have the power to make sure he didn’t interfere with anything ever again.

That was the only thing that made sense in her mind. The pervert had gotten between them since the day she met him. He was the source of all problems in her and Light’s perfect relationship!

She listened to Light explain why Ryuzaki was there, and then narrowed her eyes at his thoughts. She could listen to her Light talk all day.

Her annoyance faded when her love found out his father had a heart attack. It had been scary when he’d yelled for them earlier. She found it hard to believe Light was gay too. Actually, she didn’t believe it. She thought she would have noticed something, she was his girlfriend after all.

The scene switched to the hospital. Her future mother-in-law left, leaving the pervert, her love, and her future father-in-law alone in the room. They confirmed that Ryuzaki was the detective L, and Light decided he had time before he killed those that opposed them. Her Light was so smart! It was a no brainer that Ryuzaki wanted him to help with the investigation.

She rolled her eyes. His declaration was sweet! Not cheesy!

“Any person who has come to possess this kind of power is cursed.”

More like blessed. He became a god. He had the power to make life better!

“No matter how you use it, no true happiness can be obtained like that, not by killing other people.”

What did he know? He clung to his old fashioned justice like the world didn’t change. No one believed in the cops anymore, they were putting their faith in Kira.

The two younger men were kicked out of the hospital. Her Light asked if there was anything he could do to prove he wasn’t Kira. His offer was met with rejection.

“I can’t do anything that would deprive you of basic human rights.”

Misa glared at him, ”What about what you did to me?”

“The situation evolved,” Ryuzaki replied in his toneless voice. Did he even feel emotion?

The pervert drove away in his car, leaving Light with his Shinigami in front of the hospital.
“I’m happier than I’ve ever been. All thanks to this power, I’m going to create a perfect world.”

That was exactly right! Kira was going to purge the world of evil and the world would be perfect! Good, honest people would be able to live in peace. She would do anything to see that future come true. She rolled her eyes at Ryuk’s warning of misfortune. Didn’t he understand that Light was anything but normal?

The scene switched to the Sakura TV station, where an ugly man complained about the content being offered to go on the show. Of course the police stopped talking to the media. They were cowed by Kira’s powers. The episode ended with the men there receiving the tapes from the Second Kira. Tapes she didn’t remember making.

Whatever, even if she didn’t have her memories she knew her Light had a plan to get them out of this.

And he was her Light.

They were soul mates after all!

He'd just forgotten. She'd find a way to remind him.

Chapter End Notes

*screams into the void*

Is it sad that it took me longer to write Misa's POV than the rest of this chapter even though it only makes up a quarter of it? I thought about making this a filler chapter but that was just an excuse to put off writing Misa's POV so I ended up including episode 8.

If anyone has a strong feeling about where L was born, let me know! It's just one word and it is not important to the rest of the story so I'm fine going back and changing it! It just can't be England and it should be something reasonable!
Aizawa tensed. He knew how this broadcast ended. He kept his gaze on the screen instead of the murderess. It was easy to separate Kira and Light, the teenager expressed genuine guilt and feared becoming Kira again. Misa was an idiot. She never wavered in her support for Kira. When it was proven she was the second Kira, she’d probably be happy.

The episode started with Ukita speaking, and he tried not to flinch.

At least they knew Misora was dead now. He made a note to inform her parents. She’d been missing for ten months now, the least they could do was give them closure. It wouldn’t be easy to hear she too fell to Kira, but it would be cruel to have them continue hoping for their daughter’s return.

The broadcast started, and he gripped his knees tightly. Those selfish idiots at Sakura TV! He knew they cared a lot about ratings, but to not even consider what they were doing to the public or that people were dying...he took in a deep breath. His past self expressed his doubts it was fake, and was very quickly proven wrong. They watched another man die for simply going against Kira.

If only his contacts weren’t such damned cowards! If they just answered, they could have stopped the broadcast. Ryuzaki could have made it seem like he took over, or something like that so that there wouldn’t be repercussions on the workers at Sakura TV. If he’d just chosen better people...

“I’ll stop this broadcast myself if that’s what it takes.”

Those were the last words he heard his friend say. He bravely left the safety of their hotel room to go to the Sakura TV station. And he did nothing to stop him. He should have stopped him, but he also believed that Kira needed a name and a face. They hadn’t known about the eye deal or how much more powerful the second Kira would be. Misa’s tape continued.

“C’mon.”

Ukita looked so determined as he drove. The tape kept spouting about the creation of an ideal world, and all they had to do was nothing. All they had to do was put their trust in one person to make all the decisions for them.

It was always a debate between freedom and security.

He didn’t care if Kira could stop all crime around the world. A world led by Kira would not be a free one. He was more than willing to die for that freedom, for his family’s freedom. He didn’t want his children growing up in fear.

The Chief’s wife turned off the television. The Chief turned it back on, forcing himself to watch even though he had just suffered a heart attack. He glanced at the boss in the room with him, who
just had another scare with his health. His expression was tight, prepared for what was coming.

“Damn! It’s locked!”

Aizawa forced himself to breath as his friend pounded on the doors to the station. Ukita shouted to the guards just inside, who did nothing. Weren’t they supposed to protect people?

“You...You idiots!”

His friend pulled his gun to shoot through the glass, before his heart stopped and he fell to the ground. So those were his last words. Angry words at ignorant people ruled by fear, who would follow commands without the thought of rebellion occurring to them. He followed orders, yes, but it was their duty, whether they were public or private, to protect people.

Not to worry about themselves.

He bowed his head as the scene went back to them. Part of him still wished he had gone down to the station personally, even if he wouldn’t have been able to do anything but die. Part of him wished it was him instead of Ukita that had rushed down there first.

Survivor’s guilt. His training told him it was natural, if irrational, that he would partially blame himself whenever a comrade was lost. It didn’t make this any easier.

“I’m sorry for your friend.” He looked up to see dark blue eyes watching him, ”He was a good man.”

“Wasn’t it you who said we’d have to risk our lives to catch Kira?”

He stared at Matt for a moment, before agreeing, ”He was.”

They were expected to risk their lives, but few expected to have to lose them.

He knew Ukita thought he was going to live through this.

Ryuzaki trembled at Ukita’s death, though he still wasn’t sure whether that was from guilt that he was wrong or fear for all their lives. He’d trembled too, but his was in rage that they couldn’t do anything. They couldn’t save Ukita, and they couldn’t stop Kira from killing.

Even now, there wasn’t a clear path to getting justice for Ukita.

He leaned forward to pat the kid’s shoulder, not wanting him to miss the next part. It wasn’t his job to worry about the adults in the room. He was certain there was more to the boys than just being Ryuzaki’s younger brothers, but until he was given more information he wasn’t going to share the burden of the Kira investigation with them. They were getting more than enough from the screen.

Sachiko went back to the hospital room to find her husband missing.

“Holy shit,” Mello muttered as they watched the police van crash through the front door.

He thought the kids might enjoy that. Matt sat up straighter when the Chief got out of the vehicle with his gun, threatening the head producer for the tapes. ”That was awesome, Chief!”

He chuckled at his admiration. The world moved on so quickly from tragedy. There was always more to do, other matters that needed their attention more than their grief. He didn’t see a way
anything could have stopped Ukita’s death, especially now that he was being reshown it. He died because they didn’t have enough information, but they hadn’t even suspected a second Kira until after this.

They knew now. Hopefully, that meant no one else on their team would die.

At least Kitamura accepted his call. His first contacts weren’t able to save his friend, but his second was able to save the Chief.

Watching the police force come together to oppose Kira was as amazing to watch a second time as it was the first time around. The way the Chief slowly walked into the light to find himself shielded by a wall of policemen and vans. He spoke briefly with Ide before driving off. An empty room was shown with a pair of binoculars, before the denouncement of Kira continued.

It was strange hearing them refer to the second Kira as a he when they all knew it was Misa. Mello’s expression darkened when he heard the demands for Ryuzaki’s face to be publically shown. It got worse when the ‘no’ tape was played and there was a direct threat against the detective’s life. So far, Matt seemed able to keep his friend’s temper in check, but he prepared himself for an eventual outburst.

The scene switched to Kira, who knew another Shinigami descended into their realm and shared another Death Note. It was almost nice to see that he too was upset about the innocent lives lost, even if it was more about his reputation than the deaths themselves. He made his dislike of the second Kira obvious, even if he admitted her plan to kill Ryuzaki had a chance of succeeding.

It ended with him saying he needed to join the task force.

“It’ll allow me to keep track of L and this fake Kira.”

And so it had.

It went back to what was left of the task force in the hotel room.

“What the hell?” Mello snapped, ”L is worth way more than your shitty director.”

“It wouldn’t have just been the director,” Near explained, ”The second Kira would have continued killing innocents until L was forced to show his face.”

“You don’t know that.” The blond glared, ”That’s what you would do if you were Kira in this situation. The second Kira’s an idiot.”

“Hey!” Misa crossed her arms, ”I’m not stupid!”

“It wouldn’t have taken long for him to find her.” Mello ignored her protest, ”He could have arrested her before that many lives were lost.”

“That is still innocent life.” Ryuzaki pointed out, ”And it would ruin trust between myself and the police agencies if I asked them to die in my place.”

“You promised me you were going to win!” The blond turned his angry glare on the world’s greatest detective, ”If you died then…”

He’d had his doubts that these were actually Ryuzaki’s little brothers, but that outburst cemented they did care about each other.
“Is Mello worried about me?” Ryuzaki asked with a small smile.

“No!” Mello denied immediately like the teenager he was, blushing a little so they all knew the answer was yes, ”You just haven’t made a decision yet and if you die now we’ll never know.”

“That hardly matters since I am not going to die here.” The detective quickly restarted the video so that his younger brother couldn’t continue his angry statements.

He wondered what that decision could possibly be, before giving up and rewatching as L accurately deduced there was a second Kira. He then requested that Light help them on the investigation despite his status as a suspect. Arrangements were made, and then the scene cut to outside.

It was another Shinigami, completely different from Ryuk. It informed them she specifically gave the model the notebook, before inquiring why she wasn’t using it for herself. He clenched his fists as she expressed her admiration of Kira.

“**That’s the only reason I sent all those videos to that TV station. I had to find some way to make Kira notice me.**”

He wanted to punch something. Ukita died because she wanted some attention?

She was a model! She had plenty of attention! She didn’t need to go seeking out a mass murderer, especially not with how obvious she was. She didn’t even seem to consider the possibility that cops would come after her.

Misa gasped at her last sentence, ”I would never hurt my Light.”

Oh boy, as much as he disliked her, he felt bad for the Chief’s son.

“I’m more curious as to why a Shinigami would give you a Death Note,” Ryuzaki murmured, bringing his thumb to his lips, ”Kira found his by chance.”

“Maybe it thought I could be trusted.” She crossed her arms.

None of them believed that, but he assumed they’d be learning the reason soon.

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Light knew they were getting close to the point where he would be giving up his memories of being Kira. He surrendered himself as part of a greater plan, but he wanted to see if that plan would be revealed. He’d been analysing his feelings, trying to put a cause behind each of them to see where the gaps were.

His suspicions about Kira killing for profit? He had no idea where the idea sprang from. The other detectives would brush it off as a gut feeling, a stroke of genius, but that’s not how he usually operated. He wanted his theories to fit the facts. He didn’t like searching for data to support a theory. This felt like he’d seen the information before, he just couldn’t remember when.

A part of him was still protesting his break up with Misa. Not because he liked her, but because he felt like something bad was going to happen. He felt like he was putting himself in danger by displeasing her. Was it because she was the second Kira? No, since he was Kira he shouldn’t have anything to fear from her…he discarded the thought.

On screen, he was being introduced to the task force, learning the fake names they rarely used. L
showed him the Kira tapes, and then there was a flashback to the conversation where they decided to test him. If he came to the conclusion there were two Kiras, the likelihood of him being Kira would decrease. If he said nothing and didn’t help the investigation, he raised it.

Perhaps his biggest concern about the gaps was why he wanted to be closer to Ryuzaki. His father had a point. If he was a normal person, he’d never be able to fully look past what was done to him, deserving or no. But he wasn’t normal. He understood, and he could honestly say he forgave him. It turned out he was right anyways, so he deserved what he got. He deserved worse.

If he had residual feelings from the dormant Kira in his mind…why didn’t he hate the detective he was chained to? The man got under his skin like no other, but he didn’t hate him. He actually liked him, he saw him as the first real friend he ever had as well. He was interesting in a way no one else was. He wasn’t completely fooled by his masks. He was beginning to see through them.

If he wasn’t going to die, he might imagine a future with him.

But was that what Kira wanted? Was what was hidden in the gaps a dark reason behind him wanting to get closer to Ryuzaki?

Light wasn’t going to find out. It was already a bad sign that Ryuzaki kept insisting he was going to live through this. The detective thought he could save him from himself.

Hadn’t he said himself in the last episode he was cursed? He used the Death Note, he was guaranteed a life of misery if he had a life at all. He didn’t want those he cared about to get dragged down with him.

It wasn’t like monsters like him knew how to love anyways.

This…attraction wouldn’t last forever.

Compared to his newest problems, his father’s acceptance of his sexuality meant little. He didn’t plan for anything to happen between him and Ryuzaki, but if he was going to be honest he was going to do his best to include everything. Maybe, after he was gone, his father would tell the detective.

Past him realized it was a test from the task force’s behavior and Ryuzaki’s question. He changed his answer accordingly, amazing the detectives and gaining more trust he didn’t deserve. They laid out the plan to save Ryuzaki by pretending to be Kira and releasing their own message. It was strange, seeing it when he didn’t remember those thoughts running through his mind.

He found it easier sometimes to just focus on the music instead of what he didn’t remember.

The composition of the music shifted a little from how it started, changing as they changed. The instruments themselves, however, stayed the same. The beat matched the pace of the story, getting faster when important events were happening. He was the guitars and Ryuzaki was the piano. His was a symbol of youth and rebellion, while his friend was something a little more classical, more steady.

Though one instrument would start alone, it wasn’t long until the other would join it, harmonizing as the melodies seemed to challenge each other.

Like they challenged each other.

“If we don’t omit the part that says ‘You are free to kill L,’ then I’m gonna end up dead.”
“Hahaha. Sorry, I guess I got carried away playing the part.”

Matt laughed.

Light glanced at them. He was glad Ryuzaki wasn’t as alone as he made himself out to be.

Misa fell for their trick, immediately going to record a response. He couldn’t bring himself to be annoyed. If it wasn’t for her idiocy, she wouldn’t have been caught. If she hadn’t been caught, he doubted they would have had to lose their memories. A liability huh?

When Ryuzaki freaked out on screen, his younger ‘brothers’ seemed amused. Near twirled a strand of his hair around his finger, ”You freaked out.”

“It was quite shocking at the time,” Ryuzaki muttered, a little sullenly.

“Listen to yourself. Of course Shinigami don’t exist.”

“How can you say it like that when you have one standing right next to you?” Matsuda wondered.

He was a very good liar. But that was fairly obvious at this point. The conversation continued, with him and Ryuzaki agreeing there were, in fact, two Kiras before the detective decided the best path forward was waiting. Misa was impatient and impulsive, a combination that would guarantee she acted if he didn’t.

The scene switched to Misa at a photo shoot.

"You’re a model?” Matt asked.

“Yep!” Misa nodded.

On screen, she started talking to Rem, her Shinigami. She asked how she came to have a second Death Note, leading to a discussion on how to kill a Shinigami. He felt Ryuzaki shift in interest, along with his father.

“The only way to kill a Shinigami is to make them fall in love with a human.”

Light blinked, ”That’s not happening.”

He was good, but not that good. He also didn’t have any interest in killing Ryuk.

“What a beautiful way to kill.”

Rem went into the story of Gelus, another Shinigami. Light leaned forward as she described his obsession with one human girl. The girl who was going to die. No, not just die. A girl that was going to be murdered. Gelus made the rash decision to save her life. He killed her would-be killer, and in doing so, killed himself. The only item he left behind was his notebook.

The Death Note Misa carried.

He wondered if Rem did care for Misa that much. But how could she? She told Misa the story after telling her not to tell anyone else, and within a minute of her finishing it the model was already talking about telling him. She even joked about killing Rem.

There was another scene of him at his favorite café. He didn’t notice, but Misa came in and sat behind him, ordering a sundae.
“I’m becoming a fucking atheist if this is how you two met,” Mello grumbled loudly.

Misa, however, was beaming at how it ended, "See, Light? We can think alike too!"

He rolled his eyes. Did she not understand they were done?

“It really is a beautiful way to kill,” Ryuzaki said. He couldn’t help a little scoff, "Does Light believe in love?"

“No.” Not for someone like him, but he wasn’t going to say that out loud, "Do you?"

He didn’t expect a response, but the detective turned to fully face him, "I suppose I do. Though I can see why you would not. Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind."

“And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind," Light finished the quote, narrowing his eyes at the allusion to his vanity. He huffed, "Lord, what fools these mortals be."

A glimmer of amusement, "You have read Shakespeare."

“Does that surprise you?” He crossed his arms.

“No.” He tilted his head, "However, I did not think you would read the comedies."

He hadn’t planned to, but Sayu’s class wanted to do A Midsummer's Night for their play. She needed help with the translation. He wasn’t sure what he thought of the message it sent. True love was love that was returned. Or that love came from some other worldly influence rather than the actual compatibility and interests of the people involved.

“Just because my life is a tragedy doesn’t mean I only enjoy tragedy.” He relaxed into his seat.

“But you do prefer them.” A small smirk.

As much as he wanted to lie just so the other wouldn’t be right, he decided to be as honest as he could for whatever amount of time he had left. He shrugged, "I suppose I do.” He threw his earlier statement back at him.

The smirk widened, "King Lear or Macbeth?"

He rolled his eyes. Pride and anger or ambition? Both were applicable, though he was certainly something wicked so he leaned towards the latter, "Hamlet?"

Inaction. Just as Hamlet missed the opportunity to strike down his uncle, Ryuzaki missed the chance to stop him earlier and who knew how many would die before he got around to it.

The detective chuckled, "Recently I’ve found myself pondering Julius Caesar.” He tilted his head, and Light felt he was going to dislike his next sentence, "It’s not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more."

He let the slight change to the quote slide, nodding slowly at the assurance that he would stop him if he tried to take too much power for himself, that he would take action when he felt action needed to be taken. He smiled slightly, "Et tu, Brute?"

Ryuzaki’s smile became more sincere, "We are far from the Ides of March, and you are no Caesar, Light."
“Nor do you have Brutus’ nobility.” He felt his own expression soften, before the opening song of the next episode grabbed their attention.

If his life was a tragedy…he preferred to die with some honor like Brutus had.

He could fall on his own sword as repentance for what he did.

Chapter End Notes

I love Shakespeare! Mainly because my teachers always let us read them out loud in class and, for lack of other volunteers, I always got a part. My personal favorite moment was being stopped by my teacher for making Horatio sound too in love with Hamlet.

Also for yelling too much as Mercutio and Macduff but I maintain that they are justifiably angry and therefore to deliver their lines in a calm manner would not work. And one time we got in trouble for breaking dress code to wear sandals to match our togas for Julius Caesar...

Were other people's schools like that or was it just me?

On another note, are people fine with the double chapters? I promise it won't be every one, but I can stop them entirely if people don't like them.
Near was puzzled by the introduction of Misa Amane. What made her stand out amongst humans?

It couldn’t be her fame, otherwise there would be more of a fuss about her continued absence from the spotlight, explained or no. It couldn’t be her beauty. She was pretty, yes, but certainly not the prettiest model he had ever seen. While she was kind to them once she learned they were orphans, she was, quite frankly, annoying to be around.

She was an idiot.

He couldn’t see anyone falling in love with her. Much less a god of death.

He never had much of an issue understanding others’ patterns of thought. He could accurately predict a wide range of people’s behaviors. Granted, he mostly applied his ability to criminals. Criminals motives were straightforward. Revenge, greed, lust, hate, thrill, admiration for another criminal, it all became obvious when one came face to face with them.

Miss Amane was a copycat, her motive was her admiration for Kira.

But that didn’t cover the inconsistencies in her behavior. It didn’t make sense for her to admire him so but act in a way she knew he disliked.

Granted, he never looked at a case where the suspect was such an imbecile. Those were typically easy to solve and thus below his notice. If Miss Amane was the first Kira, the case would have been solved easily. Her first kill would have been her parent’s murderer, and maybe, if she was smart enough, she would have stopped there and not been discovered.

Likely, given her sympathy, she would have killed others in similar situations to her own, people she sympathized with from reports in gossip magazines. It would have been lesser criminals the public loved to focus on. L would have quickly found out the first murder, and thus her identity, and had her arrested. She seemed too stupid to hide the Death Note properly…

She still could have forgotten it, but Kira would have been stopped if it was just her and having the killings stop would be evidence enough for her conviction.

Without her, however, Light as Kira would not have gotten as far as he did. It was only because of the appearance of a second Kira that he was able to join the task force. He assumed it was because of Miss Amane he ended up in this situation as well. Without her they would still be stuck in their stalemate. Kira unable to find out L’s true name and L unable to get enough evidence to detain Kira.

Though a stalemate was still a victory for Kira outside their battle of wits. He could still continue killing. He just couldn’t kill the person he wanted to most.

L would have figured out something…he just didn’t know what.

Nor could he be certain Kira wouldn’t have his own countermeasures.
Near shifted. It was getting harder to separate himself from the situation the longer they sat in the room. It was harder to look at the people here as he would pieces on a board game or a puzzle when he was acutely aware of all their reactions to what was happening. When he was constantly reminded of their sentience.

The task force was made of good, honest men. He could see why L got attached to them despite being accustomed to working alone.

He was also beginning to understand his fascination with Light Yagami. Just after the last episode he observed to two in their private conversation. He wondered if anyone would ever capture his interest like that.

It was unlikely. Even at Wammy’s house he was often alone.

“He can’t see my Shinigami unless he touches my death note.”

That meant there was a possibility the second Kira’s Shinigami was watching them. Rem, he could already tell, was protective of Miss Amane. The white haired child fiddled with a strand of his hair. It was a given there were gods of death watching this room. Would any of them get attached to its occupants? If that airhead could enamore a Shinigami…could one of them? How often did it happen?

It was pointless to dwell on such matters. It was beyond their control.

As the detectives pondered the meaning of the journal entry sent, he let his gaze wander back to the great detective and the mass murderer. Friends…he looked away. Facing the screen completely he could see Matt and Mello in his peripheral vision. He admitted he needed other people in his life, but he couldn’t say he had friends.

Between him and Mello, he thought he was the more like L.

But even L called himself a monster. They could yearn for friendship, but they didn’t know love.

Where were his friends and relations? He no longer had a father to look over him during his life. He lost the mother who blessed him with smiles and caresses. He barely remembered his life before Wammy’s house, to the point where he could not distinguish memory from imagination. He had yet to meet a being that resembled him in appearance or intellect.

If he was a monster, he thought himself akin to Frankenstein’s monster.

Perhaps the only way to end this loneliness was to find someone of his own kind. Someone who understood what it was like to be a monster, someone he could be himself with and have it be considered normal.

Only a monster could understand a monster.

Except he didn’t believe in a creator. He could not demand the world give him a companion. He could only hope there was one out there and circumstances brought them together.

A part of him was hesitant to hope. If there was anybody who should understand him, he was sitting on the opposite end of the couch.

Though it would be the monster’s luck, if Frankenstein made him a match, that she would have despised him as Mello despised him.
Matt noticed Near going off into his own head early on in the episode. He knew he was thinking about something pretty hard because he stopped twirling a strand of hair with his finger, but he hadn’t moved his hand down to his side. He didn’t want to interrupt him if he was coming up with something, but his gaze drifted from the screen and the task force was almost done making plans.

“You there, man?” He asked, leaning as close as he thought the younger boy would feel comfortable.

“Hm?” Near refocused, then nodded, ”Yes.”

“Okay.” He moved back. Mello sent him a look silently asking why he even bothered.

He rolled his eyes. Just because he created a rivalry with the white haired kid didn’t mean he had anything against him. The only reason he wasn’t closer to Near was because Mello would take it badly. The last thing the first rank needed was more unnecessary anger from the blond. He did his best to run interference and not get too involved in their arguments…

He wasn’t sure if the younger boy knew he considered him a friend. Maybe not his best friend, that was Mello, but if he didn’t like him at least a little he wouldn’t choose to play video games in the same room as him. He was just a tough guy to talk to.

He was distracted by Kira getting home.

“Ah, it’s because I was hanging out with my girlfriend.”

“Oooh.” He smirked at Light, ”L’s your secret girlfriend?”

The college student rolled his eyes, ”It was the easiest excuse.”

“I’m sure it was,” Mello commented.

They stopped at the warning look L gave them, but Watari chuckled so it wasn’t like they were in any real trouble. His friend was enjoying seeing more of L’s emotions. It made him feel better about being more emotional himself. Especially now it was out in the open that Light was gay. If L thought they hadn’t caught the faint look of excitement when that was announced, he severely underestimated their powers of observation.

He tried to hide his jealousy behind a cough, but he caught that too.

He wasn’t sure what to think about the second part of Light’s revelations. He didn’t think it was shocking enough to almost kill the Chief. It was still a shock to find out his teenage son slept with his boss’ boss, but the age of consent in Japan was fourteen so long as it didn’t involve an adult, but even then it was sixteen or seventeen.

Though, with the way he reacted to the porn, he might think any age too young for his son.

It was a good cover, if it was a cover.

Matt narrowed his eyes at the screen, ”How do you have that many friends?”

From what they’d seen, he was either at school or killing people with the Death Note. Kira didn’t leave much time for socialization.
“I’m a popular guy.” Light shrugged, “It’s not that hard to get people to like you.”

Tell that to the socially inept geniuses sitting on either side of him. Maybe, if Light didn’t kill himself and he wasn’t killed by anyone else, he could come back to Wammy’s and teach a course in basic social interactions. They could buy the book and title it How to Win Friends and Influence People.

That was a class he would enjoy.

“You did that on purpose,” Matsuda accused as Light asked if any of his friends would be his girlfriend.

Matt snorted when Kira thought it would be impossible for the second Kira to pick him out from the crowd and she did it in seconds. He hadn’t really thought about it much, but it was kind of ironic that his name was spelled with the character for Moon.

The moon’s light was just a reflection of the sun. It was weaker and things always looked different at night. The night had a way of distorting reality, making everything more menacing. Moonlight wasn’t enough to keep the darkness at bay. Light hadn’t been enough to stop Kira from emerging.

Not that he could say anything about names. His real one didn’t even sound like a name.

Matt was the first thing he came up with when he began hacking, and he’d stuck with it since.

He was just going to ignore how stalkerish Misa sounded in the next scene. It was obvious she was obsessed with him, with and without her memories. There wasn't any danger in it. She was pretty useless on her own.

If she was on her own. Her Shinigami could be in the room and none of them would be the wiser. Misa unwittingly got one to kill for her before, who was to say she couldn’t do so again?

No. The chances of one Shinigami dying for a human had to be astronomical. That two would die for the same human…

Wow, was he actually trying to apply statistics to the supernatural? He already spent too much time with the detectives.

Her actions spoke of even greater stupidity. In her impatience, she gave away that it was Aoyama she found him. She didn’t even lie to say they’d already met and increase fear in the police ranks. L was able to accurately deduce they hadn’t met yet, and sent another message warning the second Kira not to approach the first or they would die.

Honestly, he hadn’t thought about ever becoming Kira, but he knew he’d definitely do a better job than the model.

The police’s announcement ended with Misa deciding to introduce herself to Kira.

Cause that was definitely the smart thing to do.

Ugh, now he understood why the others were fine with leaving her out for so long.

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Mello thought this situation couldn’t get more unbelievable. Then Misa Amane came in. If L thought he was too emotional, he wondered what he thought about the idiot who only seemed to
feel, not think. He watched as the two met on his doorstep, and then he invited her inside. Kira passed her off as the girlfriend he mentioned earlier. He brought her up to his room and then sat down facing her.

He rolled his eyes. Of course she thought everything was alright because she hadn’t been caught yet. She didn’t even think about all the evidence she had given L.

“If you want, I could be your eyes. So…”

“Yeah? So what?”

“Would you please make me your girlfriend?”

Well at least that was one question answered. He wondered why I’m a gay ever dated that air head. He guessed it was only to control her, but he hadn’t expected it to be her idea.

He hoped that scene revealed his darker thoughts on the matter. Then maybe Misa could actually think and realize her and Light wouldn’t work out.

Mello resisted the urge to hit himself. He had better things to worry about in his life than her coming to her senses.

Kira went on about how it was impossible for them to date. Somehow, she had a counterargument for each of his points. She disguised herself before going to Aoyama. Her friend made the tapes so it wouldn’t trace back to her. It was more thought than he gave her credit for. Then Kira asked about the friend who made the tapes.

“If you want me to kill her, just say so and I’ll kill her!”

Fucking insane.

Then she did something even more fucking insane. She handed over her Death Note and said he could kill her if she became a burden.

He hated to agree with Kira, but he didn’t understand why she would do this either.

The second Kira sank to the ground as she relayed her sob story. Her parents were killed in a robbery while she was in the house with them. The trial dragged on, people started to think he was falsely accused. Then Kira killed him before proper justice could be carried out. That made Kira her everything.

He crossed his arms. His parents were also killed in front of him, but he didn’t hero worship the police officer who shot him. It inspired him to become a detective, and when he got into Wammy’s house that inspiration pushed him to reach for L’s position…ugh. Matt sometimes called his drive an obsession. His friend never meant anything bad by it, but...

If this was what obsession led to, he had to work on controlling his emotions.

Actually work on it and not just think about working on it.

Fuck, he didn’t want to end up like Misa or BB. He didn’t want his feelings to blind him. He didn’t want to end up the bad guy, to end up as someone’s weapon.

He hated seeing himself in the bad guys.
“Switch with me,” He told Matt.

His friend’s eyebrows shot up, ”I don’t…” Something on his face must have told his friend to take him seriously, because he stood up. He quickly took the middle spot as his friend sat down at his side. He noticed the officers tense a little, even Light was sending them a somewhat worried look.

Were his emotions that obvious? Did they think he would snap too?

He hated Near…

No, he got angry at Near because he was jealous. The ro-the kid did perfectly on every assessment but he literally never saw him give any effort. He spent all his free time on whatever puzzle caught his interest that day. He never had to spend hours in review. He never struggled to understand a theory or pick up a new language.

But none of that was his fault.

Near never returned an insult. He may argue with him, but he was just pointing out the other side of an argument or a point he thought he didn't consider. He didn’t do it to make him look bad or to make himself look better. He did it because that’s what should be done. Someone should always look for the flaws in a plan, the more something was debated the stronger it became.

If Matt said what Near said, he would take it as a suggestion, not an insult. Hell, if any of the detectives said what Near said, he wouldn't take it as badly.

L hadn’t chosen between them yet, but he knew at this rate it’d be Near.

And he…he didn’t have faith in his reaction to that. How far would he go to try and prove he deserved the position?

Too far.

“Yes, Mello?” Near asked, and there was suspicion in his eyes.

Even he didn’t think he could mature. He was expecting an insult or some other derogation. If he kept letting himself be blinded by his own perceived inferiority…if he kept pushing his fellow genius away every time he offered to work together…then he’d never deserve the title of L.

L was working with his only Kira suspect. He should be able to work with Near.

It wasn’t as fucking easy as Near and Light made it seem. He tried to clear his mind of all its normal negative thoughts about the white haired boy, but his instinctive response was to scowl at him. He forced his expression to soften, ”When we get home, want to work together on the next assignment?”

It didn’t come out as he wanted it to. He heard Matt hit his forehead behind him.

Fuck him. He was trying!

Near’s eyebrows raised, ”You want to work with me?”

“Yeah, what about it?” He growled.

“Nothing.” Was that a smile? ”That sounds nice.”
He couldn’t guarantee this would work. Maybe he’d still hate him.

But he was willing to actually find a fucking reason to hate him.

Chapter End Notes

High key recommend reading Frankenstein. Low key stole a passage and modified it for Near's thoughts.

Hope you enjoyed this!
L tried not to be excited.

It was inappropriate to raise his hopes simply because Light admitted to being gay, but he couldn’t deny being pleased at the new knowledge. Just because Light was attracted to men didn’t mean he would be attracted to him. It did, however, mean there was definitely nothing between him and Misa. He knew there was no emotional attachment, but Light was young, physical attraction could be a primary motivator.

Director Takimura’s son…he was a suspect when he looked into the NPA and their relatives. He was a year older than Light, nowhere near as impressive intellectually or physically. It was impossible to deduce if the teen had a type from one person, but he hoped he was more interesting than the Director’s son. If it were solely physical attraction…

There was no point in thinking about it.

If Light cared for him, that was of less importance than everything else going on at the moment.

“I’ll try my hardest to make you love me.”

That was concerning to hear. He didn’t know anything about love, but he knew what she expected was impossible.

“What?” Misa gasped, ”You’d really kill me?”

“We did warn you,” Aizawa said through clenched teeth.

“But I didn’t think he’d ever think that.” She pouted.

Light was watching the scene intensely, so he too turned his attention back to it. Kira revealed Ryuk to the second Kira. He smiled at the next interaction. Simply by calling him darling he didn’t pick up on the rest of the question.

“Do pet names distract you, Light?” He asked his friend.

“No one’s ever called me anything other than Light,” The college student replied, but didn’t look at him.

Hm…that was also concerning. Why was this episode bothering him so much? With the ones focused more on his kills he’d been upset, but this was a different. He wasn’t angry at actions he deemed his own, he wasn’t guilty about using Misa. No, there was something going on inside that head of his. From the concerned way the Chief was also looking at his son, he knew.

So they discussed more in that room than he was told.

Well, it wasn’t like Light was keeping secrets if he told his father.

“Except for Kira, I suppose,” He added as the scene switched briefly to his request for Mogi to follow Kira. He was amused at the discussion that went on behind his back. Only two people had
ever seen him sleep, and they were Watari and Light. Though the latter was only once, and that had been a strange morning. It was…pleasant to wake up to Light watching over him.

The scene went back to the Kiras and the failed plan. Of course the second Kira agreed to it immediately, and then agreed to not speak to the police. That was all on the condition they go on dates. He chuckled at Kira’s frustration with the model, before he started explaining his situation to the dumb girl.

“But to make sure that our meetings don’t stand out, I have to make sure that I’m seen with other girls, okay?”

That did not go over well with his girlfriend.

“If I see you with another girl, I’ll kill her.”

Light stiffened. Now he was really curious about what he hadn’t been told. He assumed it would be a private discussion and he didn’t want to miss any information. He paused the episode, ”Matsuda, if you need to use the bathroom, go now.”

The agent could have lasted longer, but he needed the small break.

Matsuda blushed, but did as he said.

“What’s on your mind, Light?” He asked as the others broke into conversation. He leaned closer, ”You can tell me anything.”

“I have a theory.” The teen looked at him, ”The Death Note took my memory, but not all of the feelings connected to them.”

“That would explain why Misa is still obsessed with you.” He considered it, ”Do you feel an urge to kill me?”

“I already told you no.” Light narrowed his eyes at him, ”But if Kira wants me to get close to you we can safely say that worked.”

“Indeed.” He brought his thumb up to his mouth. Did that mean Light felt an urge to get closer to him? Or was he managing to compartmentalize his emotions into Kira and Light? It wouldn’t be hard for someone with Light’s control to analyze the cause of his emotions and find the ones that didn’t have one.

He hadn’t thought he could experience something he could label as love until he got to know the real Light.

It was an…inexplicable emotion. He could give a number of reasons he admired and was attracted to the tragic teenager, but all of them put together wouldn’t justify the feeling.

Some things truly were beyond explanation.

He hoped if Light was feeling something like that he wasn’t mistaking it for Kira.

“What do your feelings say about Misa?” He inquired

He clenched his fists, “That breaking up with her was dangerous.”
“Are you scared?” Fear was not an emotion he associated with Light, but he too would be scared if he was in a situation he had no power over and his memory was suspect.

“Do you have any idea what it’s like to not trust your own mind?” No, he didn’t.

“I trust you.”

“You shouldn’t.”

“But I do.” He smiled, just to aggravate him. He didn’t resist his urge to reach out and touch him this time. He put his hand on his arm, “You are in control of your actions, Light, regardless of your feelings.” The teen tensed, but he didn’t move out of his touch, “That is one of your more aggravating qualities.”

“If you’re trying to be comforting, you aren’t that good at it.” Light rolled his eyes.

“How does Light prefer to be comforted?” He tilted his head, ”Do you want a hug?”

“Just…stop trying to save me. It’s pointless.” Was that a blush? It wasn’t like the college student to avert his gaze.

“It isn’t pointless.” He drew his hand back, ”You mean more to me than I care to consider.”

“Normal people don’t say things like that, Ryuzaki.” Light was definitely blushing this time.

“We aren’t normal people.”

The Chief was glaring at him now. Maybe he’d have to find an excuse to review the security tape of their conversation. Or perhaps he could tell his son was upset and assumed he was the current cause of it. Rather overprotective, but if his son was doubting his own mind so much it was only natural for him to want to protect him from unnecessary stress.

Matsuda sat down and he continued the episode.

Light wanted him to give up on saving him? That wasn’t happening.

Even if he had to save him from himself.

He knew it was pointless trying to use logic on the second Kira, but it was entertaining to watch Kira’s frustration. That was, until he tried threatening her.

“If you do anything that results in this girl’s death, the first thing I’ll do is write your name in my Death Note. I will kill you.”

L wondered throughout their confinement why Kira let the second continue despite being an obvious liability. Misa could have died in an accident and it wouldn’t have been suspicious. It was what made him suspect Light might actually have feelings for her. Now, he saw it was only because of the threat to his own life all of this happened.

Another Shinigami was willing to give their life for Misa’s.

No wonder Light felt in danger by breaking up with her. If Rem was willing to kill for her life, then she was probably willing to kill for her happiness as well. That put Light’s life in immediate danger.
“Thanks to you, Rem. Light really is going to be my knight in shining armor.”

Kira feared Rem, or, as was revealed when he was alone, thought her a bigger threat to him than himself. Light likely feared Rem as well, but he didn’t remember Rem, so he associated that fear with Misa. It was a good way to make sure he gained control over Misa when he regained his memories. It ensured Light wouldn’t go and break up with her. He sincerely hoped the Shinigami didn’t check on Misa and she never regained her powers.

After ensuring his family’s secrecy, the scene moved to Kira with another woman. It showed he was going to date other women as cover, though he did go a little far with the flattery. The scene after was Kira with the task force examining the last video sent. He remembered this conversation, the ease which Kira kept pace with his thoughts and didn’t interrupt with questions like the others.

“It will be a problem if you were Kira. Because…I feel you are the first friend that I’ve ever had.”

L pressed his thumb down on his lip. How convenient, showing all of Kira’s deceptions one after the other. Him deciding to play the role of boyfriend for Misa and Miss Takada, his lies to his family, and their friendship, back then merely a façade as they both searched for a way to stop the other.

“Were you lying?” Light asked him, as Matt snickered at the coincidence of Kira deciding he couldn’t be seen and Misa jumping on him.

“The person Kira was pretending to be I considered a friend,” The detective answered carefully, “Since he was pretending to be Light Yagami, I have considered us friends for a while.” A complicated answer, but it was a complicated situation.

“Could you ask Rem to kill L?”

The world’s greatest detective shifted in his seat. There wasn’t a rule preventing Rem from killing him. It wouldn’t even negatively impact her so long as he wasn’t a threat to Misa’s life. He was lucky he moved when he did or he’d have died the next time Kira visited the task headquarters.

“So that’s the plan,” Light muttered, “I’m going to have Rem kill you.”

“There must be a way to stop it,” L replied in kind.

Letting Misa go was the obvious solution. As long as he could find a way to control both Death Notes she would not be a threat to society anymore…but where he could have Light work to redeem himself, he would be unable to do the same with the model. Like he said, he was willing to risk his life to solve the case, but to knowingly die? No, and it wasn’t just himself anymore.

Everyone in the room now knew without a doubt Misa was the second Kira. Rem would have to kill them all to save her.

Even if, by some miracle, they worked out an agreement, he feared for what would become of Light with Rem still around Misa. She desperately wanted Light to love her. She already threatened to kill any other girl she saw around him. It would be easy for Rem to make that threat a reality until Light was either forced to give in or live a life of solitude.

No, it was likely the threats would grow past his partners. If Rem threatened his family…well, Light was an amazing actor.
He’d do what was necessary to survive, even if it wasn’t much of a life.

“I could kill her.” Light looked disgusted just saying that, ”Then Rem will kill me and both Kiras would be gone.”

“Not an option.” L shot that down immediately.

“Stop trying to save me,” The teenager stared at him, the usual fire that would have made it a glare absent, ”There’s no way I make it out of here alive. I can at least-”

“Stop it.” He hated having to be the optimistic one, ”Light, I will save you.”

“Why would you bother?”

They had this conversation many times, but this was the first time Light inquired why he wanted him to live. He told him he needed him for the case, that he cared about him, that they would share the same fate, but in response to others statements. He paused. There were many reasons why he felt Light’s life was worth saving, perhaps more than his own, but could he be honest?

If Light didn’t return his feelings, or worse, returned them but thought that his feelings were Kira trying to make him lower his guard, a confession on his part would make things worse between them. It would likely drive the Chief to demand the handcuffs be taken off, and that would give Light the opportunity to be alone.

Light couldn’t be left alone in the state he was. He would certainly lose him.

“Ryuzaki.” Matsuda grabbed his attention, ”Can you pause it?”

Matsuda only decided to interrupt when it looked like no one else was going to. He knew the rest of the team was largely ignoring Misa’s presence, and he wanted to. She was the reason Ukita was dead. She did it to get Kira’s attention, and not for any idealistic cause. But that was the problem he wanted to address.

Ryuzaki paused it when he asked, and he sort of felt bad interrupting whatever talk the two of them had been having. They needed to have this conversation before they got any further.

“You do realize Light will never love you, right?” The young NPA detective asked the model.

There were so many things wrong with their relationship. Light only agreed to it so he could use her. Then he realized he would have to continue doing it or die. Misa was willing to do anything to please the person she thought she loved, even murder a friend. Above all that, she said a few times that she would make Light love her.

“You can’t force someone to fall in love,” He continued.

This obsession of hers… it was unhealthy. He’d dealt with enough domestic abuse cases to see where they were heading.

Besides, if they could convince Misa to help them, maybe she could stop Rem from killing them all.

“Duh, Matsu,” She rolled her eyes, ”Light won’t love me if we don’t spend any time together. If
you guys would just stop getting in our way, we’d be happy by now.”

That was dangerous. He felt the rest of their team tense. If Rem heard her say she’d be happier with all of them gone they’d be killed. She was still dangerous even without her memories.

“YOU’d be happy,” Aizawa snapped, ”Light wouldn’t be.”

“I wouldn’t make him unhappy!” She pouted.

“You wouldn’t mean to make him miserable, but you would.” And Light would hide it. He wondered, if the Death Note was never dropped, if his young friend ever would have come out. He felt sad they never would have noticed. The college student was ambitious, and as accepting as he liked to think the world was, his sexuality would have been an extra obstacle in his career path.

“I love him!” Misa protested, ”I love him enough for both of us!”

“That’s not how love works!” The Chief argued, ”A successful relationship takes effort on both sides.”

“I don’t want to live in a world without Light!” There were tears in her eyes.

He pitied her. She lost her parents. She almost saw their killer walk free. She found a reason to live in Kira, was willing to put everything she had to support him. She truly thought there was nothing else. She convinced herself worship was true love. She thought she would be happy in a relationship where she was just a tool, where she had no real power once Light found a way to get rid of Rem.

He had no doubts the college student had a plan to get rid of her. Kira definitely had to have one. Once that happened…all he saw was misfortune.

“You’re going to have to,” Matsuda said, ”Trust me, you’ll be better off.”

Misa shook her head, ”You’re just afraid of what Light and I can do together!”

“You think you’re working together?” Mello snapped, ”Have we been watching two different things? Cause all I see is some idiot being a liability.” Matt put a hand on his shoulder but he flinched away from the contact, ”Kira would have continued just fine without you. Actually, he’d be better off without you! All you’ve done is increase suspicion around him and almost give away your Death Notes. I’m sure as we keep going it’ll be revealed that all of this is your fault!”

“Wake the fuck up and face reality.” The blond growled, ”What you want isn’t what others need. What you think you’re entitled to isn’t automatically yours. Just because your heart’s in the right place doesn’t make you right.” He glared at her, ”You’ve become no better than the stalker that tried to kill you a few months ago.”

“I would never!” She rose from her seat.

Mello did as well, ”Wouldn’t you? What did your stalker say again? I love you more than anyone else in the world? I wanna protect you forever? If I can’t have you, how can I go on?” He scoffed, ”Tell me how you’re being different right now.”

“It just is!” Misa screamed, ”What do you know about love anyways?! Your parents are dead!”

That seemed to subdue the boy for a moment, before he snarled. Matt quickly tugged him back
down onto the couch and Near latched onto his other arm to prevent him from fighting the model. The white haired child managed a truly fearsome glare, while the other worried more over Mello, who slipped into another language while he ranted at her.

Matsuda could agree with Kira on this one thing. He was never tempted to hit a woman before now.

His earlier pity was gone, “Love shouldn’t be forced,” He said, loud enough to be heard over Mello’s anger, ”Relationships are worth fighting for, but you can’t be the only one fighting…” He glanced at Light, ”And if he really doesn’t want to be in a relationship with you, then if you really love him you should respect that.”

“Love should be reciprocal,” The Chief added, ”If it isn’t felt by both sides…then it isn’t real.”

“And I don’t love you,” Light finally spoke, ”Misa…I could never love you.”

She started crying harder, ”What am I supposed to do?!”

“Keep living,” Matsuda answered, ”You have your whole life in front of you,” Seeing as they couldn’t touch her without any of them dying, he wasn’t sure how they were going to get justice passed on her, ”You’re still young and famous, you still have a career in modelling and you have that movie coming up.” He was her manager, he knew she had a future, ”You had a life before Light. It won’t be that hard to have one after.”

She just kept crying.

He could only hope what they said got through to her. Without her, they really had no way of stopping Rem.

It felt terrible manipulating her…but was it really manipulation if it ended up helping her?

He was conflicted, but the Chief patted him on the back, ”Good decision, Matsuda.”

Honestly, he wasn’t sure what love was, but he had faith he would recognize it when the time came.

Chapter End Notes

What is love? Baby don't hurt me, don't hurt me, no more.

Thank you Zhanna!

I swear I would have finished this chapter an hour sooner if that song didn't come up every time I tried to think of how a character would respond to the what is love? question.

Also would have been done faster if I hadn't decided to spend my free day watching One-Punch Man. If you like this fic and that anime you'd probably like Call Me Home by Aeryn.
Misa glowered at the little blond punk on the couch.

He had no idea what she felt! How dare he say she was like her stalker! As long as people were close to each other they eventually loved each other. Her parents weren't in love when her mom got pregnant, but they decided to get married. They stuck around long enough to fall in love. All it took was commitment. Even people forced together would love each other!

Right?

There was a reason arranged marriages still existed after all! And she’d read somewhere arranged marriages had the same success rate as other marriages!

They could be happy.

She was sure she was useful to Light too!

She crossed her arms. The punk didn’t know what he was talking about. What had surprised her was what Matsu said. It was Matsu! He always was nice to her. He never argued with her about anything. She was pretty sure he was a fan, and out of all the task force she liked him the best. If it had been anyone else…she wouldn’t even bother thinking about what they said.

So the model thought about it while she watched. Light made an agreement with Rem to kill Ryuzaki when he said to. He then finally asked her for her cell phone number which ended with her giving him one of her cell phones. She protested about the distance he was putting between them, even pleaded for a date since it wasn’t that late at night yet.

She remembered this so differently than how it was shown.

Their first kiss. She remembered it being perfect.

From this point of view, it was just to get her to be quiet and agree.

But that’s all she wanted. She wanted to be there with him, to be able to call him hers, even if he didn’t love her yet.

He didn’t think about the kiss. He didn’t think about her. As soon as she was gone his thoughts turned to Ryuzaki. She felt herself sink further into her chair. She knew he didn’t love her, but he didn’t even think of her a little? She never met a guy before who wouldn’t be ecstatic to have her as a girlfriend.

“Haha, a friend? I just gave him what he wanted.”

She glanced at Ryuzaki. He didn’t seem concerned the man he was chained to was actively plotting his death on screen. She narrowed her eyes. Just because Light didn’t remember his plan didn’t mean it wasn’t going to happen. The jealous part of her wanted the plan to succeed. Capturing Kira wasn’t going to prove her innocence anymore.

Gelus…that was the name of the Shinigami who died for her.
That was love. She was willing to die for Light, it didn’t matter if he was aware or returned it. Love was the only thing strong enough to kill a god.

“If I die within the next few days, your son is Kira.”

Matt made a noise, ”That’s the only reason you’re alive?”

“What if he had killed you?” The punk demanded, ”Kira knows everyone on the task force.”

“Watari would still be able to operate,” Ryuzaki answered.

“What if Rem has the foresight to kill him too?” Near inquired.

That made the pervert pause, as if he hadn’t considered that a possibility. His…butler, or whatever the old man was, chuckled, ”I have things arranged so that if something happens to me, the Institute will be informed and the case will be passed on to Eraldo Coil or Deneuve.”

“There is no reason for Rem to think Watari is a threat,” Ryuzaki said, ”I should be her only target right now.”

The scene switched to Light with Kiyomi, their little date quickly interrupted by the appearance of Ryuzaki. He informed Light of his countermeasure before asking him if he wanted to go get cake at the cafeteria. Then she came running on screen, excited by the possibility of seeing her boyfriend.

“Misa, you idiot!”

Even when she was useful to him his first thought at the sight of her was that she was stupid, even though she was the only one who could tell him Ryuzaki’s real name. That was his second thought. But first thoughts were often the most honest ones.

“You don’t remember my name, do you?” Ryuzaki inquired.

“Of course not.” She shot him a look, but she couldn't manage her usual annoyance. She'd realized something.

Light was her heart, but she was only his eyes.

Not really necessary. He could live without her.

Ryuzaki started laughing in the show, before claiming to be a fan of hers. That drew more attention, and again she was swarmed by fans. She remembered protesting someone had grabbed her butt, and the weird man saying he would catch whoever it was. She narrowed her eyes, but her agent came and dragged her back to whatever she was supposed to be doing that day.

“You touched my butt!” She accused when it was revealed he had her phone, ”Pervert!”

As Ryuzaki returned her phone to Light, he informed him that she had been arrested. The scene did a weird thing where it showed Light falling from a skyscraper, while Ryuzaki watched from on top another. He stopped himself halfway to the ground, before declaring he wasn't defeated. This was just the beginning.

It went to her confinement. She shuddered, remembering the days of being chained in that straightjacket, deprived of her ability to see. It was torture, but she endured it, knowing that when
she got out of it she could be with Light and her life would continue. He’d help her forget with the joy his presence brought her.

“Whatever has to be done, ok? Just make her speak.”

“That is breaking so many laws,” Matt muttered when he saw what she’d been confined to.

“Anything less and they lose,” Near replied, “Losing means death.”

“Still…”

“I’ll admit it was extreme.” Ryuzaki bit his thumb, “But necessary.”

She started begging to die. At least the task force seemed to feel bad about pushing her so far. The perspective switched to show her actually begging Rem to kill her. Rem told her that if she did, Light would also die for failing to protect her.

“Why, Misa? Why do you want to die for him?”

Because that was what love was. Her father died trying to protect her mother from the burglar. Her mother died so that she could escape. Gelus died to save her. She shouldn’t be alive. Her lifespan… it wasn’t hers. It was borrowed time from the Shinigami who died for her.

If she died for Light, it would only show she loved him as much as they loved her.

“You were actually going to kill yourself?” Matt asked.

“I wasn’t going to betray Light,” She replied, glancing to the perfect man in the room.

“Insane.”

Rem went to Light to inform him that she erased her memories of the Death Note.

“The human being who you love is Light Yagami. I promise those feelings will remain.”

They left everything in Light’s hands. In his room, he didn’t even look concerned about her capture. Three days of knowing she was being interrogated hadn’t phased him at all. He… he really didn’t care about her at all, did he? Not even as a friend. Not as anything. She was only significant to him because she screwed up as the second Kira.

Even if they had better circumstances, it wouldn’t have worked.

“If you don’t save Misa, I will kill you.”

He was only here because his life was being threatened.

“I have a plan. This is good bye, Ryuk.”

The episode ended abruptly.

It was her fault they were in this situation. She was the one who left physical evidence. She was the one they could actually convict of being Kira. Light would have been so much better off without her. No wonder he didn’t love her. Everything that little punk said was right. She hadn’t been able to do anything for her love.
Could she let him go?

It would be like ripping her heart out.

She thought her life was over when the burglar broke into their house. She thought she was going to die when the stalker confronted her with a knife in the street. She should be dead, but she always managed to keep living.

Matsu was right. She could keep living through this.

And it wasn’t over yet. She might still be useful!

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Souichiro wasn’t relieved yet. From what he said, it sounded like Light was going to give up ownership of the Death Note with a plan to get it back eventually, but until he physically gave it up he wouldn’t let himself relax. He gripped the armrest of his chair, getting annoyed at the interruption of the two songs in what Kira was going to do. The scene of the next episode was in a forest.

Kira gave up one Death Note to Rem, who flew off with it.

He growled when it switched perspectives to Misa forgetting her memories and beginning the stalker talk. Before he could get too tense it went back. He still had the memories from both notebooks despite having given one up. There was a cold determination in his eyes, blaming Rem for the situation he was going to put himself through.

“\textit{I never thought that the Death Note I gave you would end up buried and abandoned.}”

“Buried and abandoned?” Aizawa repeated.

“Light,” Ryuzaki paused it, “Do you know where Kira would hide it?”

“I know which paths have less traffic…but if I had to hide something important I would go for an abandoned warehouse, not somewhere in the woods.” His son frowned, ”My guess would be as good as yours, Ryuzaki. I’ve never had something I needed to protect to this extreme.”

“It would take more than us to find it.” The great detective shifted, ”But I don’t like the idea of organizing a search party for something this powerful.”

“It would be risky to leave it out there.” The Chief brought a hand up to his chin, ”If it were ever to be found…”

“Rem could know where it is,” Matsuda offered, ”If he buried it in front of her…”

“I doubt it,” Near said, ”That would be another person who could interfere in Kira’s plan.”

“It’s still a possibility,” Mello argued, but with less anger than what he’d come to see as his normal.

“But Rem will probably kill us once she knows what we know.” Matt sighed.

No one argued against that probability.

The more they watched, the more aware he became of how elaborate the trap set around them was.
It was obviously intended for Ryuzaki, seeing as he was the one most capable of putting the pieces together. The more information someone had the higher the chance they’d be killed was. But now they all had dangerous information.

“If giving up the Death Note removes the memories.” Light sighed, “Then regaining it should bring them back. When we catch the third Kira, I’ll remember where the other notebook is.”

“If Kira is willing to cooperate.” Ryuzaki shook his head, ”And we’d lose you, Light.”

“It’s better than hoping for the best.” His son shrugged, ”I’m sure you could come up with some way of getting me to reveal where it is. If not, you have my permission to go to whatever lengths necessary to get it.”

“Light…” Souichiro didn’t know what to say. It felt like when he volunteered himself for confinement all over again, except this was worse. Kira could withstand being held in a cell. All he needed to do to win was say nothing. It would take another violation of human rights to get him to break.

“I started this mess.” The college student shrugged again, ”No matter how much I think I’m a god, I still have a human body, which has human limits.”

“We aren’t going to torture you,” Aizawa said, horrified.

“According to you guys, you’ll be torturing Kira.” Light levelled them an apathetic stare.

“But we’d know you’d be in there.” Matsuda sunk in on himself, ”’You’d still remember it after it’s over.”

And if he broke, he wasn’t sure he could be put back together again.

“It’s better than leaving the Death Note somewhere.” His son looked determined.

“Let’s see what else these videos show us.” Ryuzaki didn’t look at the teen he was cuffed to as he went to play the episode, ”Torturing you is out of the question, Light.”

It was a bad sign if their only hope to avoid torturing his son was that the being who created the video put the hiding spot in it.

The Chief watched Misa’s continued confinement with some regret. She wasn’t innocent, but she had an innocent mind set during this whole thing. And she had it worse than any of them. At least the complete shift in behavior made sense now.

Then Kira entered, setting himself up to be confined as well. He manipulated all of them with ease, except for Ryuzaki.

“Honestly, I don’t like the way that this is going at all, but what choice do I have? Let’s do it.”

He’d been so certain back then that his son couldn’t be Kira. He was so wrong. He glanced at his son, who closed his eyes as his past self expressed how much he did not want his son to be confined. He almost seemed touched by his faith.

“I’ll defeat this fear that Kira lurks within me.”

Even though it was Kira saying that, he knew that belief was not lost when the memories were. But
his fear wasn’t defeated, it was confirmed. He still believed his son could defeat the Kira lurking within him. It was one possibility that wasn’t said earlier. Light could regain his memories and still want to do the right thing. He could win against the insanity.

It was foolish to hope for that to happen when none of the geniuses in the room thought it possible.

Kira was confined, and he requested he be taken off the investigation.

“...if the task force concludes that my son is Kira, I don’t know what I would be capable of.”

Light jerked in his seat.

“I believe you kill your son and then yourself.”

“Don’t you dare.” His son’s eyes widened, ”It’s bad enough you won’t be able to tell Mom and Sayu about what happens to me. They’ll need you.”

“Light…” He had been putting off the thought of what he was going to do, just as he’d been avoiding thinking of what would happen to his son.

“I don’t want to cause any more death, Dad.” Light’s eyes were filled with emotion, ”If there’s one last thing you can do for me, it’s promise to be there for them.”

How could he face them with Light executed?

But…his son was right, ”I promise I won’t do anything rash.”

Light narrowed his eyes at him, before glancing to his left, ”Matsuda, I trust you to hold him to that.”

“O-of course.” Matsuda sat up straighter, ”But could we stop talking like you’re going to die?”

They fell silent as they watched their confinements. He had been the one taking it the hardest, but Kira knew all he had to do was wait. Matsuda was right. In all cases like these, it was those that loved the killer who suffered the most.

“When I leave here, it’s going to be with my son.”

Light flinched, but he didn’t have to say anything. His son wanted him to let him go if it came to that. He didn’t want to, especially not now. But he had a point. Sachiko and Sayu still needed him. It was his duty as Light’s father to see this through, but he also had responsibilities to his wife and daughter. He might not be able to live with himself, but he would live for them.

He would live because it was Light's last request as his son.

“Are you feeling alright?”

He noticed he only asked Kira how he was feeling. With himself, he'd only spoken when he needed to inform him of something or ask if he was alright. Otherwise, he didn’t want to be spoken to. With Misa, he only asked questions about the case, not about her feelings beyond a barely more than polite query if she was okay.

He pushed those thoughts away. It would only lead to another heart attack.

“I know I must look pretty bad in here, but this useless pride, I suppose I’ll have to get rid of
Ryuk understood and left. He could see it in his eyes. The shift from Kira to Light. They took on a softer edge, regained their former innocence before filling with panic. He started to get upset at being held captive. He began contradicting himself. Even Aizawa and Matsuda noticed the extreme shift in behavior. Then the killings restarted and they withheld that information from their suspects.

“I’m not Kira!”

And he believed those words then.

From that moment on, they were essentially torturing innocents for information they didn’t have. They were trying to get an impossible confession.

“I don’t understand what’s going on here.”

The episode ended, and Ryuzaki paused it, ”Light…Misa, I would like to apologize for your excessive confinement.”

“Finally.” Misa huffed.

Light just smiled, ”You weren’t wrong.”

“No, but it was unnecessary once the killings restarted.” The detective focused on his son.

“It’s fine.” His son crossed his arms, ”I’m not holding a grudge, and that’s the least of our concerns right now.”

“Yes.” Ryuzaki nodded, ”The video skipped over your planning process.”

“It might show who the third Kira is before we catch up to the present,” Near said.

“But that doesn’t help us if my plan depends on us catching the third Kira.” Light brought a hand up to push at his hair, ”Rem’s connected to the third Kira. The plan is still to have her kill Ryuzaki, but there has to be more.”

“There does?” Soichiro asked.

“Yes.” Ryuzaki rubbed his feet against each other, ”But we should focus on how to survive Rem.” He turned to look at Misa.

”Huh?” She frowned, ”You want me to ask her not to kill you?”

“That would be ideal,” The detective said.

”I guess.” The model tilted her head, ”But that won’t work if she thinks I’ll be convicted of being Kira.”

”We’ll come up with something,” The Chief stated with confidence, ”You’ll just have to stop her from killing us immediately.”

He forced himself to breath. He knew now beyond a doubt that it was his son in the room with him. All this progress they made was real, and not part of some underhanded plot. He could trust
the Light sitting across the room.

With Light and Ryuzaki working together, he had some hope for the future even if the videos didn’t help.

Chapter End Notes

Alright, do you guys think Rem knows where Light buried his Death Note? I know they show them all in the woods, but I don't think there's ever an actual scene showing him burying it and Ryuk's the only one to comment that it's buried. If I'm missing something, please let me know!

Or if you don't really care, I'll probably continue as if she doesn't know. You can probably see where that leads.

Really looking forward to the opening switch coming up soon.

Thank you all for your continued support! We're getting close to moving into the future!
Matt kinda wished they could go back a few hours to when he didn’t care. He wasn’t sure when he got emotionally invested in the well-being of the task force, but he was now. They were good guys. So was Light Yagami. He was pissed at Misa for what she said to Mello but she was just an idiot so he knew he’d eventually forget it. Everyone else though…

Maybe it was when Ukita died. Living in an orphanage made him very aware of what loss felt like, but it had always been different for him. He didn’t remember his parents at all. Hell, part of the reason he became a hacker was because he tried to find out more information about them. His loss was more like an ache, a phantom limb, than a scar. There was nothing for him to really miss.

He kept his arm tight around Mello’s shoulders. Near never let go of his arm. He wasn’t sure how much the youngest of them understood from the rant in Russian, but it wouldn’t surprise him if he knew enough. It was rare for Mello to slip into his first language, but at least he hadn’t revealed too many personal details. He was trying to get along with Near, but that didn’t mean they were friends yet.

He’d say they were level four friends. Civil in their interactions with each other and caring a little for the other’s feelings. Possibly willing to defend each other, but he didn’t want to test that.

To unlock Mello’s tragic backstory Near had to get to at least level 15.

Considering they started in the negatives, he might get there soon.

Bad things happened to everyone, good people and sinners alike.

The scene started with Rem talking to whoever the third Kira was. Her last statement suggested it was a businessman, but surely if the deaths were profiting one business L would have caught onto it by now. Then it went to L, who was watching the monitors for the then prisoners.

Bad things happened to everyone, but the least everyone could do was try not to intentionally cause them.

Torture is defined as deliberate, systematic, or wanton infliction of physical or mental suffering to force a person to yield information, to make a confession, or for any other reason. It is outlawed under international law, and he was pretty sure Japan outlawed it as well. He’d read about various techniques in his classes. He’d never been told outright not to use them, but he thought it was understood that he shouldn’t.

No one had to be told torture was wrong. There were even studies that showed torture was ineffective.

Maybe he hadn’t been told not to use them because, if life got really fucked up, he’d have to one day become L.

He knew L did things that were illegal, but there was a big difference between ignoring a person’s rights for some illegal observation and fucking torturing them.

Torture came from the Latin word tortus. That meant twisted.
This was twisted.

Light’s hands were cuffed behind his back so he couldn’t lie down properly. He sat on the ground, and while he claimed to be alright he could only imagine the tormented thoughts running through his mind. At this point, he thought he was innocent, he thought he was framed. L insisted on lying to him, painting it out like he was going to be found guilty of being Kira, that he was going to be executed.

He agreed with Aizawa. This was just cruel.

It was even worse for Misa. At least Light could sort of move around his cell. She was in a straightjacket and chained to her place. The only time she had freedom of movement was when she was allowed to go to the bathroom. She was also blind and didn’t know the people holding her captive. He slowly brought his arm back from around Mello’s shoulders to rub at his wrists.

The only reason he hadn’t been arrested the first time they traced a hack job back to him was because of his age. He’d been too young to be legally held responsible for his actions, but he’d feared being led away in handcuffs. It wasn’t like his caretakers back then would have minded one less child at the house. In the end, it was that incident that got him a place at Wammy’s.

Roger actually let him be arrested once, and that wasn’t a night he was going to forget.

“Do the right thing, and let them go.”

His respect for Aizawa increased more. There was something he liked about the man more than his amazing hair. He demanded L release the two from their torture after fifty days, throwing his own reasoning back in his face. If Kira could have killed under those conditions, then Kira didn’t have anything to fear from the police watching him.

He had barely been able to stand one night in holding. He didn’t think he could have lasted fifty days of nothing but interrogation.

He glanced at Mello and Near. Neither of them seemed bothered by what they were watching. Had they known when they were being taught methods of interrogation and it went into torture they could be expected to use the knowledge some day? Would they be willing to do what Light asked of them in the last episode?

Matt shook himself. Maybe it was because he was starting to like Light that seeing him like that got to him. Maybe if it was someone he knew was guilty, and remembered being so, he could rationalize this behavior. Though L knew Light was guilty, he just didn’t know about the memory loss. If it weren’t for the amnesia would he be okay with this?

He liked hacking. He could find out a person’s secrets without having to meet the person face to face. He didn’t cause anyone real harm, though he supposed he could if he wanted to.

He couldn’t do this.

He didn’t want to see Near or Mello do this.

If there was one thing worse than watching bad things happen to good people, it was watching good people do bad things. It was like the first episode all over again, a slippery slope of justifications.

They were supposed to be the good guys. They were supposed to be better than this.
Ugh, he wished he could go back to just not caring.

“*I need to talk to you as Light’s father.*”

L’s music picked up over the two of them talking, a plan obviously being formed.

“*This isn’t going to be good,*” He murmured to himself.

And he was right.

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Seeing the fake execution a second time was different. L supposed it was because he wasn’t expecting the Chief to be killed at any second and he knew now the two were innocent. He watched as Light and Misa got in the car with Yagami, the way the son relaxed upon his presumed release, only to be lied to and told he was going to his execution.

“This is so fucked up,” Matt said.

“It was the only way Ryuzaki would release them,” Aizawa told him.

“Doesn’t make it less wrong.” The computer genius frowned.

There were other ways, he supposed. He could have taken advantage of the fact Misa believed she was being held captive by a stalker and tested her. He could have played the role himself, claiming he knew he was right and the killings would stop if he executed Light himself. Though that meant he would have had to reveal his name…it didn’t have to be Yagami, it could have been Aizawa.

This was still cruel. He wondered what he would do, if Watari ever pointed a gun at him and told him he had gone too far, that it was his duty as the man who made him who he was to stop him.

He didn’t like thinking about that.

He had regrets in many investigations, but this was starting to feel like one of his greatest.

“*The L I know would rely on hard evidence. He has to have the truth!*”

“You still had faith in me.” He hadn’t noticed that before. It was like the test with the first video the second Kira sent. It hadn’t been until he asked a question that Kira was able to tell it was a test. The other’s behavior raised his suspicions, but ultimately it was him. When had the teenager started to be able to predict him?

“I have faith in justice,” Light replied.

The Chief pulled the car to a stop beneath a bridge.

“I’m going to kill you here and then kill myself.”

Light tensed again as his own protests came from the screen. L hesitantly put a hand on his arm. It was cruel the first time around, but Light was able to put it behind him because he thought it was an elaborate act. Now he knew his father had been honest…he wished he had more insight into this Light Yagami’s thoughts.

Though he also wished the present Light still had that desperation to live.
“Please stop, Dad! I’m not Kira!”

No, that wasn’t a desperation to live. That was a fear of death, of being killed by his own father and thinking that Kira would still be out there in the world. He feared his father would die soon after for nothing. That was him believing his death wouldn’t have an impact, that it wouldn’t solve anything.

“From one murderer to another, I’ll see you in hell.”

Both Misa and Light were yelling on screen when the shot rang out. There was that terrified look on his face again as he tried to move away from the bullet.

A bullet that didn’t come.

“A blank still could have killed him.” Matt jumped to his feet, walking off the nervous energy, ”At close proximity, blanks have been known to cause severe damage and fatalities.”

“It didn’t, Matt.” Mello rose to help his friend, ”He’s fine.”

“Fine?” The third rank pointed at them, ”None of this is fine, Mells.”

“Matt,” Light spoke, causing him to pause in his motions, ”Everything always looks worse when you look back on it. Ryuzaki didn’t have nearly as much information as you do. He had to make do with what he did know.” That didn’t reassure the younger teen, and the college student continued, ”There will never be another case like this. No one will expect you, Mello, or Near to go to these extremes.”

L sat up straighter and sent a look at Watari, whose eyebrows only went up. They had been sure to avoid saying they were his heirs. Though, it was possible Light figured it out and didn’t bring it up due to it not being of importance to him.

“You can’t promise that.” But Matt seemed to calm down slightly anyways.

“But you can promise yourselves,” Light said softly, ”Don’t make the same allowances as us. If you think what he did was wrong, don’t do it. If you see someone else making the wrong decision, stop them.”

He blinked, focusing on what was said instead of the knowledge it implied. He knew his heirs strove to be like him, but he wasn’t exactly the best person. Matt probably cared least for his title, which is likely why he was the one with such an issue with his methods. Yet Near and Mello were also looking as though they were listening to Light’s words as well.

“There’s always a way to be better,” He added. He had a feeling they’d be better, because they had each other. He didn't have others on his level around him, challenging him.

With Light around, he was sure he would be better.

The three nodded, and Matt eventually took his place on the couch again. Aizawa switched with Mogi so that he could lean forward and keep talking to the teen. That would be good. Aizawa had always been the one most at odds with his decisions. If there was someone who could give healthy, unbiased criticism on him, it was that agent.

“They really do admire you,” Light told him.
“I don’t see why.” There were definitely better people who could be role models for them.

That got a small smile, ”I do.”

He was suddenly very aware that he had not withdrawn his hand. He did so slowly, deciding to change the topic, ”Matt has a point. A blank carried some risk.”

“Just remember that the next time you set one off near a suspect’s face.” Light shrugged, ”I already told you I’m not mad about it…if that’s what you’re asking.”

“Once again, you’ve seen through me,” He muttered, ”How are you feeling watching this?”

“It’s…” The college student trailed off, ”Hard, knowing now that it wasn’t all just an act. That if you’d been able to prove I was Kira…that would have actually happened.” He laced his fingers together, grabbing his knee, ”I know he promised not to when it happens this time, but if something happens to him…will you make sure Mom and Sayu are taken care of?”

“You and your father will be able to do that yourselves.” L refused to give him that assurance. The Yagamis were going to live, ”Your insistence about your death is beginning to annoy me, Light.”

“I have to face the consequences of my actions, Ryuzaki.” Light raised his eyebrows in a silent challenge.

“Does Light think death is the only option?” The detective shifted, ”Does he not believe in redemption?”

He saw the answer in his eyes before he could say it.

No. He did not believe in redemption. L should have known.

How does one convince someone they can be redeemed when they’ve given up on themselves?

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Mogi was glad he was typically the one at the police station if this was what he missed at the task force headquarters. He had known what the plan was to release Light and Misa, but actually seeing it made him tense in his seat.

He never agreed completely with Ryuzaki’s ideas, but he wasn’t a genius. He couldn’t have thought of another way, so he went along with it because he wanted to see Kira brought down. He hoped Light was right and there was never another case like this. If there was they had someone there to remind them what was right in addition to what was necessary.

Now that Aizawa calmed Matt down and the episode was past the tense part, he found himself a little amused.

Mainly at the darkening looks of annoyance on Aizawa and the Chief’s face as Misa continued to complain about the situation. A chuckle escaped him when Ryuzaki was forced to ask Light to intervene. It was soon echoed by Mello when Misa essentially confirmed she was the second Kira.

“But you’ve made it so painfully obvious that I don’t really want to believe it.”

That made Matt snort.
Aizawa snapped first, kicking her out of the room. Ryuzaki then asked Light if he would manipulate her for the investigation, which revealed his regained morals. It was quite obvious he was a different person from the one who volunteered to be imprisoned. In a way it could be seen as Kira controlling Light. The Death Note could definitely be seen as an influential agent.

Then the headquarters they were currently at was explained, and he realized they would quickly be coming to the present since nothing major had happened since.

“If you are serious about that, you should try to get close to Misa and find out about the second Kira.”

“I can’t. That goes against my principles.”

“Right. You said that. What a shame.”

Light and Ryuzaki sure were something, though Mogi would be smiling from just the relief that Light had principles. As long as he maintained them, he thought the two would make an excellent team. Aizawa covered his laugh as feeling motivated, and he leaned closer to him when Matsuda protested his name being left out.

“You didn’t say my name either.” He smirked.

“You weren’t there.” Aizawa huffed.

The scene shifted to a conference room, full of men he didn’t recognize. He got serious again when the first man finished speaking by asking who was going to die.

“The Yotsuba group?” Matsuda repeated.

“Light was right,” The Chief muttered, but motioned for silence.

The businessmen continued to talk.

“No matter how you look at it, one of the people in this room has to be Kira.”

All eight were shown, and Ryuzaki paused it. Light got up, stretching the chain so he could reach the notepad and pen on his desk.

“It’s just as you said,” The Chief said as his son took down the names, “The third Kira is killing for profit.”

“Wait, Light already figured it out?” Aizawa inquired.

“It was just a hunch.” The college student sighed, ”But it could be a leftover feeling from my missing memories.”

“Kira really wants you to get the Death Note again.” Matsuda winced as soon as he said that.

“I had it narrowed down to the Yotsuba group, but I didn’t know about this little meeting.” Light ignored the statement, ”Even if the video doesn’t show us which one is Kira specifically, it should be easy from here to figure it out.”

Mogi nodded. It didn’t solve all their problems. He honestly didn’t have a single plan to get them through all of this alive.
“Human beings are truly disgusting creatures.”

Not with a monster who wouldn’t think twice about killing them all.

Chapter End Notes

And we'll be moving into the future in the next chapter!

Currently screaming because somehow my March Madness bracket is losing to my best friend whose knowledge of sports is so poor he once asked me when halftime was at a baseball game. But it's only Day 2 so I'm keeping calm. As long as my school doesn't lose I'll be fine. Mostly. If I lose to him though...oh well, my dad had Arizona going to the final four so he's screwed.

Pretty sure no one else cares for college basketball so I'm gonna stop there.

I can't tell you where Matt and Aizawa connecting came from, it just did. And next chapter will show him leaving the task force!

This wasn't my favorite chapter I've written but I hope you all liked it! Leave a kudos if you did!
Mello couldn’t stop a smile from spreading on his face as they watched Aizawa try to enter the building. He was still angry at what that bitch said to him, but seeing his friend angry forced him to calm down. It had been a weird role reversal, with Matt losing it and him having to try and calm him down. He wasn’t any good at it apparently, because Light ended up having to be the one to talk him down.

There was always a way to be better? L was the best, Mello worked his ass off just to be good enough to replace him, but to surpass him?

That would be a real challenge.

He didn’t want to listen to the college student, but he found himself nodding anyways. He was a little uncomfortable with the lengths L went to try and get a confession. At a certain point, any decent lawyer could claim their client was coerced into making a false confession. With the confession thrown out and no other evidence to make his claim stick, their imprisonment only continued because of his personal feelings.

It was the very thing he feared himself doing.

This case was starting to make him think L wasn’t infallible.

Matt’s laughter when Aizawa ended up having to walk into the room in his boxers earned him a playful swat on the back of the head from said detective. He continued snickering until the man on the screen admitted to family troubles, ”You have a family?”

“Yeah, a wife and two kids.” Aizawa sighed wistfully, ”Yumi, my oldest, is going to be starting preschool soon.”

“Must be tough,” Matt said sympathetically, ”But hey, the Kira case’ll be over soon and then you can go back to being an awesome father.”

A small smile, ”Thanks, brat.”

Mello wasn’t sure what was going on there. He respected Aizawa, but he didn’t try to get closer like his friend was doing. Did he finally find someone he admired? He’d always looked up to L. The only people Matt had admired were other hackers, and if they were good enough to gain his admiration they were good enough to avoid getting caught. They weren’t people so much as names connected to deeds.

Even their teachers at Wammy’s house knew they were smarter than them, so they weren’t treated like children.

The task force treated them like they were kids, but managed to do so without belittling their intelligence. They probably learned from years of working with Light. If his friend found someone he respected and wanted to get closer to, then Aizawa wasn’t the worst man in the room to do that with.

He found it amusing L actually ended up at the date like he said he would. He could have sworn
Near was smiling when it was shown Light wasn’t even paying attention to L and Misa’s discussion. He had his eyes closed and his arms crossed behind his head, only moving when L went to grab the piece of cake. He couldn’t believe it had taken him this long to break up with her.

When Light did speak, it was directly to L, and then about what was wrong with him. Not about the case, not about his presence on the date, but about how he was. All while completely ignoring his girlfriend. He wondered how many other people would have been able to pick up on L’s emotional state. He knew he probably could have noticed he was depressed, so would Near and Watari, but they’d known L for years.

He still didn’t like Light, but now that he wasn’t Kira in the show he was starting to see why the two got along so well. His rule following was annoying, but only in the way that it balanced L’s tendency to bend them.

L continued to elaborate on his pessimistic outlook on the case. It would be troublesome if Kira’s power could be transferred to anyone at any time, but at least now they knew it was limited to who had access to a Death Note. That wasn’t nearly as overwhelming, so long as only Ryuk and Rem had spare notebooks they could use to screw over the human world.

“Ryuzaki.”

“Hm?”

Light punched L. It was like the fight they had earlier, with both of them forgetting they were connected so they both were sent stumbling to the floor. He snickered as the furniture tipped over due to their brawling. Maybe he did have a point. Until they’d been brought here to watch the video he’d always seen L as someone untouchable.

Now he was physically chained to someone, reduced to fighting with his fists and feet instead of his mind.

He was wrong before, about Light and L being nearly equal.

They were equal.

Which meant he could reach that level too. L wasn’t one of a kind.

“It is as if you won’t be satisfied unless I am Kira.”

He wasn’t wrong, but obviously that answer didn’t satisfy L now. It wasn’t enough for Light to be Kira. No, he made it more difficult for himself by deciding to save Light.

“I think I wanted you to be Kira.”

The fight continued until Matsuda interrupted. Both geniuses immediately stopped, and didn’t seem annoyed with each other afterwards.

Light challenged L, but not in a way where either of them were expecting to win. Even though they fought, they were still on the same side, working towards the same goal, pushing each other to be more than what they were at the moment. They weren’t trying to sabotage each other, even though both of them were prideful enough they should want to claim victory for themselves.

Was that what it would look like if he and Near worked together? Not complete agreement, but no antagonism. One wasn’t superior to the other, one wasn’t being used by the other. Light wasn’t
just a tool to L. He was a partner.

If it was, then maybe giving him a chance wasn’t a bad decision.

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Light tried to ignore the way Ryuzaki was watching him.

So what if he didn’t believe in redemption? Some things couldn’t, and shouldn’t, be forgiven. He understood being able to overlook his crimes if he were a thief, but mass murder put him past redemption. Even if he spent the rest of his natural life making it up to humanity, thousands had died, dozens were still dying because of a plan he orchestrated.

Nothing could make up for that. At least with him dead he couldn’t cause any more harm.

Honestly, he deserved worse than death.

No amount of regret could wash away the stain on his soul, redeem it in the theological sense. He was a cursed man, doomed to a life of misery until a god of death decided to kill him. All he would bring to the world was more misfortune. All he would do was drag others down.

Redemption, in the literal sense of the word, meant to buy back. He couldn’t buy back the soul he sold in his failed attempt at creating his ideal world.

Not even if Ryuzaki thought what he said to his little ‘brothers’ indicated he could be helpful. It didn’t matter that a few people saw something worth saving in him.

He just said the same things he used to say to Sayu, or at least tried to communicate the same message. He could tell the boys, whatever they actually were to Ryuzaki, admired the detective. Most younger siblings wanted to be like their older siblings when they got older. The World’s Greatest Detective was a pretty high bar to set for oneself, even for geniuses like them.

It might be unattainable.

Just like Sayu would never be Japan’s top honor student like he was.

She’d gotten so mad when she was younger. She blamed him for the shoes she felt she needed to fill. All his old teachers expected more from her than what she had to offer. They all got excited at having Light Yagami’s little sister in their class. She hated the disappointment when she didn’t live up to his reputation, even if her work was above average compared to a regular person.

She didn’t think she could be him. He told her many times that she didn’t have to be.

All she had to do was live a life she was content with.

If Matt, Mello, and Near intended to be like Ryuzaki one day, he felt it necessary to say they didn’t have to copy his every action. He noticed the way Mello only seemed to be eating chocolate. He and Near refused to sit like normal people. He wasn’t sure if those were their own quirks or habits they picked up from being around the older man, but both indicated he was right in his assessment.

He’d grown up thinking he had to fulfil every expectation set before him, that he had to be perfect. He always thought those expectations unfair for his little sister, but he thought himself capable of handling it. Now he began to see they were unfair for him too. With these boys…they might have what it takes to surpass himself and Ryuzaki, but they shouldn’t feel pressured to be them.
The two of them made bad choices. Their juniors shouldn't make the same ones.

“This hasn’t happened,” Ryuzaki said as, on screen, he showed him the data he was compiling.

“It hasn’t,” He agreed, listening to his explanation. It was the same one he was planning to give tomorrow if this video hadn't popped up and forced him to voice his suspicions early. As quickly as he wanted Kira caught, he wasn’t going to sacrifice validity for speed. He wasn’t going to present Ryuzaki a theory he didn’t have complete confidence behind.

He jotted down notes on what was said at the Yotsuba meeting.

“Quite frankly, if someone was able to trace the deaths of these people back to us, they’d have to be a god.”

He nearly ripped the paper with how hard he pushed his pen into it. Of course they would say that, since he was the one who traced the deaths back to them. But he wasn’t a god, no, he just had a persona within him that believed himself a god. He wondered, if he wasn’t Kira, if they would have eventually caught on. Businessmen tended to border on criminal in their activities, that was just how business worked.

Ryuzaki paused it when his father and Mogi arrived, ”It appears we have passed into future events.”

“So I was right,” Matt said smugly, causing Mello to roll his eyes.

“Should we trust it?” Aizawa asked.

“It hasn’t been wrong about past events,” Light answered, ”And the explanation I gave regarding Yotsuba was one I planned to give tomorrow.”

“Undoubtedly more information will come up that we should be able to corroborate.” Ryuzaki swivelled slightly in his seat, “I have to wonder what purpose showing us our future has though.”

“Maybe they want us to change it?” His father crossed his arms.

“We’ve already been given more than enough information to change the future,” Near said as he sat up a little, ”Unless it intends to reveal Kira’s entire plan.”

“Whoever sent this must want to stop Kira,” Mello agreed, ”I guess they want to make sure we don’t fuck it up.”

Matsuda’s eyebrows scrunched together, ”Does that mean Kira would have won if we hadn’t gotten this?”

Light froze, suddenly feeling nauseous. If this wasn’t just to help with their current investigation, but to warn them what should happen if they failed…that meant he succeeded. If he succeeded, then it meant he would be shown killing Ryuzaki, probably the entire task force as well. It meant that if his memories were to return, he didn’t hold Kira back.

A sick part of him wondered if it would show Kira’s ideal world becoming a reality.

What would a Kira victory look like?

He almost hit himself. It was thinking like that which would lead to Kira taking control. He forced
his body to relax. Not that it would matter. Whatever future this showed wouldn’t come to pass if he was no longer a factor.

“I guess we’ll see.” Matt hesitantly broke the tense silence, ”But hey, do you think that means we’ll show up? I want to know what my music will sound like.”

“What makes you so certain you’ll have music?” Mello rolled his eyes, ”Only L and Light have it so far.”

So they weren’t going to take it seriously yet. He forced himself to breath normally.

He had a plan.

Watari watched in growing disapproval as the scene developed in the near future. No one was happy the police caved to Kira’s demand, but it wasn’t exactly a surprise. What he wasn’t happy about was L using this as a chance to test the task force again. He knew the young man had the best of intentions in trying to push them away, but he’d also gotten attached to the group.

It was the first time he ever had to work with a group without it being through a computer screen. The camaraderie of being there in person was addicting, and he knew once this case was over the loneliness would strike L harder than it ever had before.

It was easy to live in solitude when one didn’t know what the alternative felt like.

“**Ryuzaki, as long as I’m alive, you won’t be working alone.”**

He wondered if the younger Yagami meant that for just the Kira case. That was how L took it.

“You want them to quit, don’t you?” He heard Light whisper harshly to L, who didn’t answer.

The Chief stayed on without hesitation, as expected. So did Mogi. Matsuda enthusiastically agreed to quit the police force. Aizawa…he was as conflicted as he thought he’d be. He loved his family and already spent a lot of time away from his young children…but he also loved his job. He wanted justice for his friend. He wanted to stand for justice and not retreat in cowardice.

He was glad when his future self intervened, revealing the trust fund. That made the members of the task force relax a little, though it did seem to irritate Light further.

”That was stupid.” Matt scowled.

Aizawa scoffed, ”I should have known it was a test.”

He seemed angry, but they were mature enough to not hold future events against those here presently. He wondered how long that would hold out. This wasn’t a major event in the grand scheme of things, but if someone were to die…

“I’ve always hated Ryuzaki. I hate him and his way of doing things.”

Words spoken in the heat of anger were never words spoken from the heart.

“That’s too bad, because I like you, Aizawa.”

“You're too good at pushing people away,” Light told the great detective in a tired voice.
“Who says I’m pushing people away?” L challenged.

“The odds that we die go up without the police’s support.” The college student rolled his eyes, "You wanted him to leave because he has a family.”

On screen, Light was the only one to turn away from Aizawa’s departure and look at L. Though there was no outward sign of regret, the future Light seemed to realize that the detective leaving had affected his friend. He watched the present teenager lean closer to whisper what sounded like reassurance. Of what? He didn’t know.

He hoped he was assuring him that he wasn’t alone or hated.

Watari smiled at that. It wasn’t every day someone besides himself could tell how his son was feeling. It was even less frequent that L had to be comforted.

He observed the two becoming closer since they’d been chained together. Any other two people would hate each other after being in forced close proximity for so long, but beyond their infrequent fights there was no animosity between the two. If this future showed a way to permanently keep Light Yagami with them, he might give the college student his blessing.

His son’s happiness came before his need to see justice served.

The case continued moving forward, with Light leading the progress. His father noted the deaths were centered on the weekends. Mogi managed to bring together information on all of Yotsuba’s employees and carry it in one giant stack. Matsuda was told to bring coffee, and he hoped the dismissive attitude the others in the task force had for the eager young man didn’t lead to anything bad.

Ah, so they brought in Aiber and Wedy to help. The reformed criminals L likely hoped Light would follow in the footsteps of.

“Do you have many professionals of the underworld working for you?” Light inquired.

“Do you have a problem with them?” His son replied.

“No,” The college student blinked, "I was just curious.”

“Hm.” L tilted his head, ”If I believe a criminal has reformed, then I don’t think their talents should go to waste in prison. I give them the option of redeeming themselves by helping me.”

At the word redeeming, Light tensed.

“That offer would, naturally, be extended to you once this case is over,” The great detective continued, watching the younger man intensely.

“What would the ICPO think of that?” The teenager turned away.

“If you never kill again the ICPO won’t know any better.” L frowned.

“But I would.”

Watari had to strain his ears to catch the last sentence, but he hoped his son was able to ease the burden on the younger Yagami’s shoulders soon. If he was shaken by the loss of Aizawa from the task force, he didn’t want to imagine the toll losing Light from his life would have. He wanted the
teenager to live, for his son if not for his own growing like of him.

The scene then switched to Aizawa sitting on a park bench. His wife and children soon passed by, with his young daughter running up to grab his hands. He informed them he would have more time to spend with them, before breaking down into tears.

It was a difficult choice, between family and work.

But they always seemed to pick family.

Chapter End Notes

We've now officially moved into their future! And in the episode after the next the OP changes!

Should the Matsuda episode have a part be from Matsuda's POV?

Also, my best friend picked UVA to win March Madness and they lost already so hopefully that increases my chances of beating him! Sorry, not sorry, I get hyped about whatever everyone else is hyped about. Excitement is contagious.

Happy St. Patrick's Day!!
Matsuda flinched at the way the episode started. It was like a highlight reel of him being scolded, ending with his determination to be helpful. He noticed the rest of the task force and Light send a look at him, and resisted the urge to nervously laugh. He didn’t really have the right to be embarrassed, not after everything that happened so far. If Light and Ryuzaki could take this all in stride...he could.

“Do you really see us like that?” The Chief asked as his mind pictured them looking down on him with a dark aura behind them.

“Only sometimes, Chief,” He answered, wincing because it was kind of pathetic. Surely he had to be more helpful to the case than Misa? And Aizawa wasn’t even there any more, what was future him thinking?

Well, probably that Aizawa should be there instead of him.

Aizawa chuckled, "Did my hair get bigger?"

Matt snickered, "And is L licking a doughnut?"

He was glad they could laugh at his foolishness. He just wanted to melt into a puddle and disappear. What was he even doing here?

“Oh, is this the movie I’m going to be working on?” Misa asked as Hideki Ryuuga came on screen. The drama of the scene was cut short by the model’s refusal to kiss the other actor, and the ensuing fight with the director. He was standing to the side holding a cup of coffee, looking bored. He then noticed the Yotsuba building was close by.

“Do you think you could get a copy of that script, Matsuda?” Light asked him, making him sit up a little straighter, "It’ll help if we can confirm anything we can for accuracy."

“I’ll see what I can do.” He smiled, vowing he would get his hands on that script.

He worried he was about to get caught doing something stupid.

Like thinking again about how useless he was compared to the rest of the task force. Yep, he flinched slightly at the Chief yelling at him twice. And there he went, dropping the coffee as he ran off to do something stupid in an effort to be useful.

“Please don’t attempt to infiltrate Yotsuba alone,” Aizawa muttered.

“I can’t control what future me does,” He protested.

“Do you feel the same way as future you?” Mogi asked.

He sank further in his chair at the attention directed at him, "Sort of…you’re all such amazing people and I’m just…"

“I would have told you to go home if I thought you couldn’t handle this, Matsuda.” The Chief
smiled, ”Besides, we’re all pretty useless compared to Ryuzaki and Light.”

“Right.” He nodded, trying to take his words to heart.

The scene cut to the rest of the task force, specifically Light staring at Ryuzaki, trying to see himself through the detective’s eyes. He felt bad hearing his thoughts. There were times when he too agreed with Kira. It wasn’t so abnormal to think the world would be better off without criminals. It was his job as an officer of the law to see it enforced, but he could see why others would let the murders go.

Ryuzaki noticed the staring, and asked him what was wrong. He then (jokingly? He could never tell with Ryuzaki) asked if it was because he was eating cake.

“Mello never shares his chocolate,” Matt grumbled when Ryuzaki offered the cake to the college student.

“Because you can get your own,” The blond snapped back.

“Not when you hoard it all,” The kid in stripes muttered.

“I thought friends share things they like,” Near commented thoughtfully.

“To an extent,” The older two said together.

On screen, Watari informed them Eraldo Coil was hired to investigate L by someone from Yotsuba. Aizawa frowned, ”That’s not good.”

“Just watch.” Watari smiled.

So he did, and Ryuzaki revealed all three of the world’s greatest detectives were him. Just when he thought he couldn’t be more in awe of the man. What was it like to be so good at something he had to fake his own competition? He’d probably never work with someone like Ryuzaki ever again.

“Did you pocket the strawberry?” Matsuda chuckled.

Mogi shrugged.

“**I’m impressed as always, Ryuzaki.**”

Current Light took the remote to pause it, ”What’s your real backup plan for if you die then?”

Right. Watari had said that if Ryuzaki died then the case would be handed over to the second or third ranked detective in the world. But if all of them were Ryuzaki then that meant he lied. Someone as smart as him had to have a plan though…

“It will likely be shown later so there’s no point in lying.” Ryuzaki pointed to his little brothers, ”If I die, they will inherit the mantle of L. You could call them my heirs.”

What? The kids?

“For the record, I don’t want it.” Matt held his hands up, ”But I’m currently third in the rankings.”

“Second.” Mello scowled, crossing his arms.

“I am first,” Near said without a hint of pride, just a statement of fact, ”L hasn’t named one of us as
“But you’re so young,” Matsuda blurted out. He hoped they didn’t take it as an insult.

“Not any younger than Light was when he helped with his first case, nor, I imagine, any younger than Ryuzaki was when he started,” The Chief said, ”As long as they aren’t forced into it…” He glanced at Watari.

The older man shook his head, ”All the children at the orphanage have a choice to pursue whatever they want. They have chosen to become L one day,”

“How are you third if you don’t want it?” Aizawa asked.

“I want to be in the same classes as Mello.” Matt shrugged, ”And he’ll need my technology skills when he gets there so I might as well know what I’m getting into.”

“That explains the weird names then, huh?” Matsuda had wondered if Near was the white haired one’s actual name.

“I have complete faith in them,” Ryuzaki said, getting the remote back, and the boys straightened at the praise, ”If I’m not enough to stop Kira, they will be.”

“That’s a lot of pressure.” Aizawa leaned onto the back of the couch, ”You sure you can handle it?”

“We can,” Near assured him, but Mello just muttered something to Matt.

The friendliest of the three of them fidgeted slightly, ”I’ll tell you more about it later.”

Ryuzaki continued the video. It went back to him in the Yotsuba building. His thoughts were overlaid by the color yellow as he debated what he should do.

”See?” Matt nudged his sullen friend, ”Matsuda’s got a color now.”

”That doesn’t mean anything about us.” Mello scowled.

”Isn’t yellow the color of cowardice?” He asked, because of course that would be his color. He couldn’t have something bold like Ryuzaki and Light did.

”It’s the color of positivity and loyalty,” Light corrected, ”And I wouldn’t say what you’re doing is cowardly. The fact that you’re staying is brave.”

”More like idiotic,” Ryuzaki said, earning an elbow from the college student.

”It’s also the third primary color along with red and blue,” The Chief’s son continued, ”Without it, the spectrum would be incomplete. Maybe it’s supposed to mean you have something Ryuzaki and I lack.”

Or Light was just trying to make him feel better, but he’d been pretty honest so far…whatever, lie or not it worked. He smiled. Positivity and loyalty? Yeah, he was definitely both of those! Light returned his smile, before going back to taking notes on the future. He thought about what the younger genius said.

Was there something about him that both Ryuzaki and Light didn’t have? He was a pretty normal guy, but maybe that was the point. They couldn’t all be geniuses. Some people had to do the
regular stuff, someone had to go out and lay the groundwork.

It would be relatively easy to set up surveillance in all the meeting rooms on the nineteenth floor to see if they did meet on Fridays, and in the future the two former criminals they were working with made plans to infiltrate Yotsuba.

“We cannot let anyone from Yotsuba figure out that we are investigating them.”

Whoops. Future him was already at the meeting room door, trying to listen in on what was happening. He managed to hear Kira and kill before the door opened and he stumbled into the room with Kira.

“Don’t take matters into your own hands.”

He was such an idiot! He winced as Watari informed Ryuzaki he had sent an emergency signal from inside Yotsuba headquarters. At least he was smart enough to lie and continue with his false identity as Misa’s manager, but he wasn’t the best liar and that was sort of obvious in his performance. Was this how he was going to die? Because he ran off and did something stupid?

“I’m sorry,” He blurted out, ”Please don’t do anything risky to save me!”

“Do you think we won’t rescue you?” The Chief inquired.

He flinched, ”No! It’s just…I’m not as important as the rest of you to this investigation.”

“Not important?” Great, he made his boss angry now, ”Matsuda, everyone’s life is important. Just because you’ve made one mistake doesn’t mean it should cost you your life.“

“I’ve put the entire investigation at risk,” He said mournfully.

“You took a risk, and the information you’ve gathered is crucial to the investigation.” The Chief put a hand on his shoulder, ”Besides, as long as you learn from this you won’t make the same mistake again.”

“Right.” He nodded.

He definitely wouldn’t be following in the footsteps of future him.

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“Oh, there is no way out of this. I’m gonna be killed for sure!”

Aizawa tensed in his seat. Matsuda made a rookie mistake, but he was the one with the least experience out of them. He was supposed to make mistakes like this. By the time he got to his age he would have learned from them. It’s just that he messed up in the biggest investigation of their lives. This mistake could easily cost him his life if he hadn’t been acting as Misa’s manager.

There was still hope since he had that false identity.

He didn’t want to see another friend die. Especially not after he left the investigation.

“Would Ryuzaki come and save me?”

“If he didn’t, I would anyways,” The Chief growled.
That was another reason he hoped the younger detective wasn’t too hard on himself. From day one the Chief had taken him under his wing, letting the newbie shadow him on most of his cases. It was rare for the young man to not have direct supervision. That was probably how he managed to still have such a cheery attitude.

It annoyed him from time to time, but he wouldn’t be Matsuda if he were to act differently.

“As would I,” Mogi agreed.

He didn’t say anything. He was no longer part of the task force in this future, and even if they were to call him he wouldn’t be able to get involved. He wouldn't be letting this happen in the future they were going to create.

Matsuda’s thoughts were interrupted by his phone ringing. Near tilted his head, ”Is your ring tone the same as the ending song?”

It was.

Not that any of that mattered. Future Matsuda’s life was in danger. He answered the phone. Aizawa was slightly relieved it was Ryuzaki. Matsuda was smart enough to figure out the double meaning behind the questions, letting the task force know he wasn’t with Misa and he was in danger. He forced himself to breath. As long as he could stall, he’d be kept alive.

Light failed to contact Misa.

“What are you planning to do, Ryuzaki?”

“Well...we have to consider that if Matsuda dies, the suspicions about the Yotsuba Group will be confirmed.”

That was unacceptable and one of the reasons he could understand why he quit in the previous episode. He was still ashamed of his choice, but he also knew he wouldn’t give up that easily. He’d find a way to help the investigation from within the NPA. He just didn’t know how yet. He hoped to never be put in that situation this time around.

He slowly unclenched his fists. They dismissed the possibility of him being a police officer because of the withdrawal of their support from the Kira case. Light continued making notes on their statements. He wondered if he would be able to pick out which one was Kira before it was revealed. He barely contained a growl when one of them said they didn’t have a choice but to kill Matsuda.

It cut away to Misa calling Light back, who was just telling him about the younger detective running off when Matsuda called her. The model made it so both parties could hear each other. She agreed to head over to Yotsuba headquarters, and L tugged on Light’s sleeve to get his attention.

“She’ll listen to you and do anything you say, won’t she?”

Right. Light’s morals. He didn’t want to use her feelings for him to manipulate her. Aizawa shot a look at the college student, who met his gaze, ”I’d do it for Matsuda.”

He better.

He relaxed slightly, not sure if they could depend on Misa’s ability to save Matsuda’s life. The
model went in front of the group and introduced herself. They seemed to like her enough, and didn’t decline the invitation to a special reception. More models met with the businessmen, and they had to agree to stay to remain close to Matsuda.

It gave his friend the opportunity to go to the bathroom and call them.

“You will have to die before they can kill you.”

What the hell was that supposed to mean? How could they fake Matsuda’s death on that short of notice?

They didn’t get to see the rest of the plan, just that Matsuda thought it was crazy. When he emerged from the bathroom, he was obviously acting more drunk than he was. Misa appeared to be in on the plan, because she cheered him on as he went onto the balcony. He stood on the ledge, arm spread wide as he attempted to balance.

“I do this all the time.”

He went to do a hand stand on the ledge.

“I didn’t know you could do that,” Aizawa muttered, sincerely hoping his friend did not do that all the time.

Then Matsuda fell over. He went down a few floors before hitting a mattress and rolling safely onto another balcony. The Chief tossed another package so everyone above heard a thud, and Wedy was already waiting on the street to cause a panic. Aiber took the place of the corpse and Misa assured the Yotsuba people she could handle this, getting them to leave immediately.

“Fuck.” Mello summed up, and he almost scolded him for his language.

L and Light were revealed to be the paramedics picking up the body. Matsuda was shown sitting on the mattress in the empty apartment with the Chief comforting him.

If Matsuda missed the mattress he would have died from the fall. If one of the Yotsuba men were quicker and prevented him from falling, he would have been killed by Kira. If the third Kira had the same power as the second Kira, he wouldn’t have even made it out of the Yotsuba building. He wiped a hand down his face.

He was too relieved to say anything.

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Souichiro kept a tight grip on Matsuda’s shoulder until he was safe. He needed the physical reminder the young detective was fine. This was in a future that wouldn’t come to be. He still intended to scold him for his rashness when he had the chance to, but for the moment, he was simply relieved they made it through.

They were even able to gain from it.

Aiber contacted the Yotsuba group as Eraldo Coil to discuss his terms. The rest of that phone call was skipped as it went straight to the next meeting of the eight Yotsuba employees. They decided to pay Coil to find L, but not before one of the eight protested the decision. He wondered what would happen to the one man who claimed he wanted out.

It wasn’t easy to leave a gang.
Wedy stood on top of a building as she reported she had broken into their meeting room and set up surveillance. They saw the next meeting through the camera set up.

“**So one of these people…is Kira.**”

Except there was a problem with the group they were seeing now.

“**Why are there only seven?**”

The one that had protested was missing.

The episode ended.

He turned to face Matsuda, "Don’t ever do anything that reckless."

“I’m sorry, Chief.” He bowed his head.

He sighed, "I’m not mad at you, Matsuda.” That made him look up, "I’m mad that you felt you had to do something like that to prove yourself.” He was much easier to read than his son, for that he was glad, ”You already have a spot on the task force. You are already a detective worthy of being on this case.”

The young man flushed at the praise, "Er…thank you, Chief."

“Light had a point earlier. You do have something they both lack.”That made the young man sit up a little straighter, "You can still look at things like a human, not an investigator."

He deflated, "That’s not really a good thing."

“But sometimes it’s necessary.”

It was a reminder everyone needed from time to time. Like when Matsuda stood in front of the original task force and said the crime rate was dropping. Sometimes, they forgot to look at the impact something was having on the whole of society and focused too much on the crime being committed. Looking at events like a normal human wasn’t always good for an investigator.

But it was better than analysing everything like a machine.

His son and Ryuzaki were on a different level when it came to information they could process, but both were sorely out of touch with their emotions. They pushed away what made them human as they strove towards what they felt was justice. His son was doing better now that he’d lost the effects of Kira on his morals, but he worried he’d still lose pieces of himself throughout the investigation.

Matsuda was different in a good way. He was a good man even if he wasn’t the strongest investigator.

He patted him on the back, "I’m proud of you."

Chapter End Notes

With that, I am a little over halfway through the episodes! And almost a 100 kudos on
this too! I thought about putting the revelation that the heirs are the heirs off for a little longer, but next chapter is where L says Light could succeed him so I had to move it up.

OP changes next episode! The ultimate what the fuck moment! Who should have the first shot at attempting to understand it?

Edit: Y'all are amazing. Just hit 100! Thank you! Please keep them coming!
Near startled at the unfamiliar music. He’d gotten used to the one song, but the one that started over colored images of various Shinigami was not it. It was angry.

He wasn’t the only one startled. Mr. Matsuda jumped behind him, accidentally hitting Mr. Yagami and Mr. Mogi. Miss Amane made a noise of dislike and covered her ears. Light and L didn’t have a physical reaction, but both exchanged glances showing their confusion at the change. Even Watari was frowning.

A part of him wondered if this was also a real song. He still had to ask Mr. Matsuda to check his phone for the other song. But that could wait until the next break.

“What the fuck?” Mello muttered as the usual title of Death Note was shown with more color in the background and nearly incoherent yelling over it.

The opening had changed? Did that mean there was going to be a fundamental switch in the nature of the story soon? He got accustomed to the more aggressive music as the unsettling image of multiple laughing Kira heads filled the screen. The last opening focused largely on the battle between L and Light, the former supported by the task force, the latter with the power of a Shinigami and Misa on his side.

This one didn’t seem to follow that. It lacked the symbolism of the previous one.

Images flashed by with no coherency. L, from the point of view of one of his computers. Ryuk, fruitlessly chasing after an apple. Kira, standing in his usual red. Then a series of Mr. Yagami pointing a gun, followed by Matsuda, and then Watari with his rifle, who actually fired shots that went by Mr. Aizawa and Mr. Mogi, only to be stopped before they could hit Ryuk.

“Badass,” Matt commented, though he still looked confused.

What was this supposed to mean?

Near narrowed his eyes at the random images of Miss Amane. He still didn’t see her importance to the events. There was a series of other images before the tempo seemed to slow as the camera pointed up at Kira on top of a building. Kira started walking amongst the tall white buildings, passing by two people he didn’t know. More supporters? Other enemies?

“Its that me?” Mello wondered as Kira walked over him.

“What the fuck?” Matt asked this time.

It did look like Mello, if too expressionless and a little older. He didn’t spare it much thought as Kira came to face a white-haired figure, which was revealed to be him as his eyes glowed a bright yellow. Another montage of images started as the music picked up again. None of them were all that hopeful, and they came to rest on one of Kira from the view of a shattered lens before showing the Death Note in a puddle.

None of that made sense. Or rather, the point of it wasn’t to make sense.
If he used such language, he would also ask what the fuck was this supposed to mean.

It only made him worried about the future. For him and Mello to get involved…that meant L would die.

He didn’t say that out loud because Mello would deny it, and they were just beginning to be friends. He didn’t want it to be true, but it looked likely. There was no other reason for them to be shown.

“What the hell was that?” Mr. Aizawa asked as L paused it.

“Insanity,” The detective answered.

“Not that Kira has much sanity left to lose.” Light was frowning.

It was a disturbing display.

“Do you think we’ll have that for the rest of this?” Mr. Matsuda inquired.

“Probably,” Near decided.

If he and Mello got involved, there were no more heirs after them. Matt wasn’t shown, so there was a chance if they both lost the third rank would continue in another, different opening, but that was unlikely. He doubted Matt would succeed where the three of them failed, but there was always hope. If technology continued to advance the way it was, the computer genius could gain the advantage later…

No, this was a preview of Kira against the heirs, the second battle that would decide the war.

“Guess that means I’m not involved.” Matt sighed, whether it was from disappointment or relief he couldn’t tell. He would be relieved to not have a part in this insanity.

As satisfying as a victory over Kira would be…what would be the price of victory?

He had no qualms about paying it. Kira was a monster that needed to be defeated. But…

He didn’t understand his own hesitation. There shouldn’t be a but, not for him.

“You’re just not in the opening.” Mello nudged his best friend, ”If I’m there you’ll definitely make an appearance.”

“Of course.” The third rank smiled, ”You wouldn’t get anywhere without me.” He then leaned forward to look at him, ”But look at you Near, coming face to face with Kira.”

“I wouldn’t be that foolish.” The first ranked managed a small smirk, if only for the opportunity to join their discussion. Perhaps he was the only one looking too deeply into the new opening.

“Naturally.” Matt chuckled.

Or perhaps they were certain they would be able to prevent this future and that was where their nonchalance came from. He didn’t want to simply disregard what they were being shown. This is what would have happened. This is what they would have been.

What they still could be, even if they defeated Kira.

It was because someone attempted to avoid the future they were warned about that led to it
happening in all the tragedies. Every king thought they could remove an enemy early and only ensured the enemy would return one day with a vendetta. It could turn out that nothing they did would prevent this from happening. Or it could turn out that they made a worse future by attempting to avoid this one.

Until they knew why they were sent this, they should be cautious before making changes.

Near didn’t believe in fate, but he did believe in cause and effect. Once the first domino fell it was impossible to stop the formation from following suit.

The question was if Light picking up the Death Note was the first domino to fall, or if it had not yet come to pass.

Human behavior was sometimes as predictable as a domino chain’s fall, but even the laws of nature had exceptions. When one looked closely at matter, they would see that subatomic particles do not follow the laws of motion at all. The alpha particles shot at the gold foil didn’t pass through in a straight line as expected, they went in all directions. Essentially unpredictable.

If something were to change a person’s core, perhaps they too could defy the odds, break out of what most people would call fate.

This video was changing them, but would it be enough?

Light put the unsettling new beginning behind him as they returned to the Yotsuba meeting. It was a given that his memories of being Kira were going to return, and it was obvious his current morals would be gone. He closed his eyes briefly at the confirmation Hatori was killed, tightening his grip on his current notepad.

He created the third Kira. All these deaths would be on him if they didn’t stop him. All the deaths they were too late to stop were also on him.

Would the suffering he caused have no end?

Higuchi complained about the report. Ooi pointed out the useful information they purposefully gave them. It made them wary of Eraldo Coil, enough to pose the idea they should stop killing every weekend. Future Matsuda expressed his disbelief they would talk about such matters so easily. His father debated whether the video was enough for their arrest.

“This is not good.”

L’s thought made him open his eyes. Right, he had to take notes on their behavior. Anything would be helpful when it was finally revealed which one was Kira, or if they needed to manipulate another board member to get to Kira. So far, he was relatively certain that Namikawa and Midou weren’t the third Kira, but all of them were power hungry and greedy enough he couldn’t be sure.

“How can they do this so easily?”

He should be asking himself that. He knew what Ryuzaki would say, that it was the Death Note’s influence rather than his own shortcomings. He’d point at the Yotsuba group and say that it was evidence enough of the detrimental effects of such power. But he was supposed to be better than that. He should hold himself to higher standards than businessmen.
“Unfortunately, we can only be completely sure after those people they’ve named are dead.”

He turned in his seat to glare at the detective he was chained to, even as future him and his father yelled at Ryuzaki in unison, seeming to surprise him. He couldn’t carry on knowing those people were going to die. Future him wasn’t yet aware he was Kira and those deaths were his fault. His father was in agreement with him, and he almost rolled his eyes at Ryuzaki’s thoughts.

He did see what his point was. Future them weren’t aware Kira was in the Yotsuba group, nor could they presently be certain it was one of the eight, now seven. If they arrested them and it turned out only one was connected to Kira and not the murderer themselves…it would be a costly mistake. But if the alternative was to sit back and watch murder happen right in front of them…

He was just dragging everyone down with him, staining them with his sins.

Future him came up with an idea, as soon as he asked what the odds were of him calling someone and that person being Kira were, he knew what his plan was. He sat up straighter in his seat, hoping he could pull it off.

“I’m going to pose as L.”

He used to think about becoming L when he was younger. He thought he would be a good enough detective to be able to do what he did, solve impossible cases around the world. That was his foolish, and he eventually contented himself with becoming like his father, Chief of the NPA. He never set his sights abroad.

“The one least likely to be Kira but with the most influence is…”

“Namikawa.”

Matt and Aizawa laughed when Matsuda said Ooi. Granted, it wasn’t likely Kira would head the death panels himself so he could see where he was coming from.

“Will you two ever stop doing that?” Mello grumbled.

He ignored the second rank. Being Ryuzaki’s heirs made more sense than him being their older brother, but he still wasn’t sure what to think about them. He and Ryuzaki were similar, but they were also very flawed. The world might think they needed more minds like theirs, but they failed to see the danger they posed. Not that children could ever be dangerous, not if they could be pushed in the right direction.

They should be smart enough to learn from other’s mistakes. He would make sure they learned from his own.

He noted Higuchi wanted to kill off the executives of the rival company before Namikawa answered his phone and he paid attention to that. He revealed they were watching them, and then offered a deal. If he found a way to delay all the deaths of non-criminals, he would let them go. He left him no other option but to help him.

“Light talks too much.” Ryuzaki noticed.

“You don’t talk to enough people for anyone to notice the difference,” He shot back, remembering when he’d said the same thing earlier. Talking too much was a sign he didn’t want to be wrong.

Well, he definitely didn’t want to be wrong in the future.
Namikawa passed off the phone call as one from his men, then continued the conversation, expertly steering it so the rest of the group agreed to delay the deaths by a month. He let out a relieved sigh, glad his future manipulation worked. That meant it would likely work in the present time if need be, though hopefully Ryuzaki would speak as himself and not force him to.

“If I end up dying, it’s quite possible that you would be capable of succeeding me.”

Logically, Light knew it was a lie. The heirs sitting on the couch were proof of that.

But if there was one thing he could say about Mello, it was that he was emotional.

He noticed the blond sending a glare his way as he protested Ryuzaki saying he might die. He wished he could voice his own protests against the idea of the detective dying. The only reason he noticed the connection between Yotsuba and Kira was because he retained those damned feelings. The idea for the phone call he could have thought of a few moments after himself…

Oh. This was a test.

So he hadn’t been certain this entire time that he had forgotten? No, there were no certainties, only low or high probabilities.

“Tell me. If I should die, would you take over for me as L?”

“That’s crap!” Mello shouted, covering L’s next thought, ”You can’t just go and make him a successor out of nowhere!”

“Mello-“ Near tried.

“No! Aren’t you pissed?” The blond tried to get up, but was restrained by Matt, ”We’ve been working at this for years! This asshole can’t just waltz in and take what’s mine!”

Light knew saying anything while the younger teen was this emotional would only make things worse, so he turned to Ryuzaki, ”Say something.”

The world’s greatest detective raised his eyebrows, ”You’re right, Mello.” He spoke so they could all hear, ”I would never pick Light to be my successor. I would much rather have him as my partner.”

He was actually being honest about that. He averted his gaze, forcing himself not to imagine a future of solving cases with Ryuzaki, forcing back the part of him that would love that, that wanted to live. That would be like a reward for all of this.

“You don’t have partners.” Mello scowled, ”L works alone.”

“I never intended to work alone forever.” Ryuzaki was staring at him, but he refused to look back at him, ”It was just a matter of waiting for the right person.”

Did he even know how weird he was sounding?

“You disgust me.” The angry teen stopped struggling against his friend.

“It’s just a test, Mello,” Light said in a calm tone, ”You’ll see.”

Future him was done with Ryuzaki’s tests. He could see through them so they were pointless. He explained what the detective’s thoughts were behind the question. If he said yes, then it meant it
was an act and he had his memories. If he said no he passed his memories on to someone else, likely with the plan to get them back later. Either way, he wasn’t getting released.

It was almost suspicious how Ryuzaki kept saying he was right. He dismissed the thought when future him turned the other’s chair around, placing both hands on his shoulders. He demanded to know if his friend thought he could become Kira. The show made it obvious they were staring each other in the eyes.

“Do I seem like that kind of person to you?”

“Yes, you do. I’ve always thought so.”

He tried not to let that hurt. It did anyways. He wasn’t surprised when he punched Ryuzaki in the face, nor that it almost sparked another fight.

“I only say that because I too am that kind of person," Ryuzaki whispered so only he could hear, "When you gaze long into the abyss…”

The abyss also gazes into you. He tensed, thinking of the earlier part of that quote. He who fights monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster.

Did L think of himself as a monster? That was…he was wrong.

He didn’t want to get into another argument though, so he kept his mouth shut. His friend could act immorally sometimes, but that didn’t put him anywhere near his level. That didn’t make him half the monster he was. He watched as his father and his future self disagreed with the way the investigation was going, eventually causing them to split up.

Arrest all of them and possibly lose Kira, but save lives in the moment at the risk of future lives.

Or wait, find Kira, and put an end to it permanently, but at the cost of however many lives it took until they got there.

He sided with his father, but had no choice but to follow Ryuzaki.

Light did not like where this was going.

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Misa sat up when they went to her room. She hadn’t thought she’d be given the opportunity to help in the investigation! She was surprised they let her get as involved as she did in rescuing Matsu, but she bounced in her chair when Ryuzaki got closer to her. Light tried to tug on the chain to keep him from her personal space. Aw, he truly was a gentleman.

She agreed wholeheartedly with her future self’s answer. She did love Light from the bottom of her heart. She did worship Kira. But she wasn’t so sure about picking between Kira and Light now that she did know they were the same person.

She wanted Kira to succeed. She genuinely thought he was what the world needed.

Maybe Light wouldn’t love her, but she could still serve her god. Once Light regained his memories, maybe he’d become Kira again. She could have Rem take care of the task force and they could go back to punishing those who deserved to be punished. She didn’t care that everyone else in the room thought it was wrong. They were detectives or wannabe detectives.
They didn’t know what regular people wanted. They didn’t get that a lot of people supported Kira for a reason.

“I told you I was uncomfortable manipulating her.” Light crossed his arms, annoyed once again at the man he was chained to.

“That is why I’m doing it for you.” Ryuzaki didn’t look bothered at all.

On screen, Ryuzaki outlined a plan which revolved a lot around her. She could easily infiltrate Yotsuba since they were already planning to hire her. It was also true she had been detained as the second Kira. She had the perfect opportunity to be useful to Light! And if it was useful to future Light, it would be useful to Kira!

Light protested the plan because he was a gentleman and didn’t want to put her in danger. How sweet! But she wouldn’t mind doing this for Kira. She even withstood torture again. She huffed when future her got concerned about dying. She was more than willing to die for Kira’s ideal world.

“Besides, as long as we are handcuffed together, you and I share the same fate. If I die, so do you.”

That could be a problem. She needed to find a way to get them separated, so Kira could be free to pass judgment on the evil people of the world. Maybe the video would give her some inspiration on how to make that possible.

“I would never dream about living in a world without Light.”

“Yes, that would be dark.”

“You did not just go there.” Mello groaned.

“He probably thought it would lighten the atmosphere.” Matt nudged him.

“Stop.” The blond hit him back.

On screen, she changed attitude towards Ryuzaki, but from here she could tell that his understanding was fake. He was just trying to use her. She was pretty sure his statement about falling for her after she kissed his cheek was another manipulation.

“So now I’ve gained yet another friend.”

“And they both have forgotten how much they want to kill you.” Matt was elbowed again.

“You should pick better friends, L,” Near said, getting a laugh from the boy in the striped shirt and a look of surprise from the blond.

She declared them all friends, and ignored the laughter from the others as she forced them all to hold hands and move in a circle. She almost giggled at Ryuzaki’s unenthusiastic “Yay”. He got to the part Ryuzaki wanted to get to. He convinced her to go along with his plan, and that meant Light would have to as well.

“Now you are just playing dirty.”

He really was sweet. It was too bad they couldn’t get together romantically.
But Kira was above romance. She still meant it that she wanted to be useful to him.

It was just a matter of getting Kira back.

Chapter End Notes

Just because Misa isn't as obsessed with being with Light doesn't make her less of a Kira supporter.

Kinda sad because my March Madness bracket's almost completely busted. Three of the four teams I picked for the final four are already out...but who I picked to win is still in it so all hope is not lost!

On a slightly unrelated note, I love kit kats and didn't realize they would taste a little different here in England until I bought some to make myself feel better for my busted bracket.

Oh well. Hope you enjoyed this chapter! Like and review if you did!
Mogi relaxed in his seat. He didn’t approve of L’s plan, but he could admit he, Matsuda, and the Chief wouldn’t be able to come up with a better one themselves. Not with the lack of information they had in the future. He didn’t worry too much about Misa’s safety. Rem was attached to the third Kira. Whoever it was, they wouldn’t be able to harm the model.

Why would the third Kira want to harm the second Kira anyways? Especially when they would know the second Kira was more powerful than them and a potential ally.

Another Yotsuba meeting was shown, and he wondered if they were going to be shown the true identity of Kira anytime soon. Namikawa was already shown to be innocent, but that left six men that could potentially guilty. Ooi read the report sent by Aiber as Coil about Misa being the second Kira, the recommendation sparking them to ask the conman to get involved even more.

“So Higuchi is Kira,” The Chief muttered as said man was shown in his house with the Death Note.

The third Kira complained about having to kill criminals, before he turned his thoughts towards Misa. He easily deduced she was the second Kira and she had given up her memories of the Death Note in order to be released.

“I’m going to make Misa Amane my wife.”

At least it meant Higuchi wouldn’t kill her right away. There was nothing they could do to protect Misa from Kira, her face and name were too widely known.

“Ew.” The model screwed up her face, "Like I’d ever get with a disgusting man like that.”

Not because he was Kira.

Part of him wondered if she was still a Kira supporter after watching this, if she still wanted to be useful to the mass murderer. How she could, when it was obvious all Kira intended to do was use and dispose of her…

Though what made her that different from himself? He was willing to die for the justice he believed in. He would follow orders, even if those orders came with a high chance of death. He knew the people he worked with cared if he died, but in the end the result was the same. He would be dead and the cause would move forward. He was happy if he was able to help for just a moment.

There were times when other officers acted immorally, where they abused their positions, and he always doubt if they had done anything wrong. He wanted to believe the officers he worked with were all good people striving for something greater than themselves. He wanted to protect his fellow officers, because it was a very demanding job. Sometimes they would make mistakes.

His belief in what they stood for sometimes blinded him to their individual faults.

But he still saw their crimes for what they were. Misa couldn’t be that blind…could she?
He smiled slightly at the short scene of Ryuzaki trying to get Misa to act the correct way. In the show and in real life, once Light was by his side the great detective started acting in a more human way. He would mutter more sarcastic statements, say things that could be taken as jokes. The change wasn’t just with him. Light also shifted slightly in behavior.

His chuckles at the younger man’s threats of kicking her faded when it switched to him driving a car with Misa in it.

No. They weren’t going to ask him to act, were they?

Matsuda could wrongly think he was useless, but he was a natural for the role of her energetic manager. That was why he was chosen as her guard for when she left headquarters. It was barely acting for him to promote and encourage her. It probably wasn’t much of a reach for him with what he pulled off at the Yotsuba headquarters.

Mogi admitted he could act, but he didn’t like to. From this perspective, it was just going to look terrible.

“I’m not cut out for this, but it’s part of my job, so…”

This was not part of his job. He always avoided undercover work when he could.

Aizawa lost it at his false enthusiasm. He resisted the urge to hit him. If he hadn’t quit in the future then he was certain it would be him putting on this farce. Matsuda was failing to keep a straight face, and the Chief was smiling. He cringed, but they really didn’t have another option with Aiber already playing Coil, Matsuda playing dead, and the others not fitting the role.

He watched himself bow frequently while introducing himself to the two Yotsuba members.

Future him sat down on a bench.

“I don’t think I’m cut out for this.”

“You did great!” Matsuda quickly reassured him.

“Yeah,” Matt agreed, ”Didn’t think you had it in you.”

Aizawa was still laughing. The Chief nodded his head, ”It was certainly believable.”

“They won’t kill you,” Near added in his normal apathetic tone.

Right, because if the Yotsuba men thought he was an undercover cop he would be killed.

He shouldn’t care about something like this when it helped them in the investigation, but he hoped they caught Kira before he looked too stupid.

His eyebrow twitched when his friend continued snickering, even as the scene switched to Misa’s interview. He elbowed him, sending an apologetic look to the Chief, who chuckled.

Great, there went his reputation of being the serious one.

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L watched the interview. They now knew without a doubt Higuchi was Kira, but he was more curious about Misa’s acting. She had been able to endure what he put her through, and all of the interactions before and after were with Light. Those he was certain were genuine, but he wanted to
see if she had any tells, if there was a way to tell when she was lying besides already knowing the truth.

He trusted she would do anything for Light.

In the future moment, that was assisting with the investigation.

But he had, unknowingly, put her in the perfect position to run into Rem again.

He wondered if the Shinigami would act now that she knew what Higuchi was planning to do with the human she loved. He had hoped she would make an appearance during the Matsuda debacle, but there was no direct threat against her so it made sense that she stayed hidden. What would the corner of the page Rem tore off do? It would be similar to the one they had presently…

Misa’s acting was passable, but he was biased by knowing the truth. Higuchi cut off the question when he realized she wouldn’t be able to kill L. She also asked to go to the bathroom as a temporary reprieve. In the bathroom the Shinigami touched the piece of the Death Note to her. It gave her the ability to see Rem.

It didn’t give her the memories back. The scrap of paper alone wasn’t enough. That suggested for them to get their memories back they would have to be in possession of the Death Notes themselves.

The model, predictably, freaked out, but the Shinigami covered her mouth and started to explain the situation.

It went back to their headquarters, where Matsuda was worrying about Misa and Light was resting in his chair. So he had gone back and run victimology on the Kira deaths before and after his imprisonment. No, not the deaths but those the original Kira spared. It was a topic he himself had not looked into, not any more than the name check.

Though it hardly mattered who Kira spared after he killed innocents.

People who never intended to kill, those who expressed what he deemed as sincere regret, and those he deemed had excusable circumstances. It meant he wasn’t killing criminals completely indiscriminately, but as long as a decision was only made by one person, without anyone else having a say, it would be too easy for him to be wrong.

Even the current system was wrong at times.

He himself had never been wrong…but that didn’t mean he would always be right. Nor was he involved in every case around the world.

Even with the precautions Kira took, there were likely a few innocents in his body count that weren’t just FBI agents. The second Kira was worse, and the third, as Light pointed out, was easily proving there was a difference in victimology. Not that he held Light responsible for anything the other Kiras did outside his orders.

“What the hell am I thinking? I’m not Kira. Something’s gotta be wrong with me if I’m seriously comparing myself to that murderer.”

“I wouldn’t worry, Light,” He muttered, knowing that even if the teenager didn’t respond that he was listening, ”You’ve seen me compare myself to Kira as well.”

“The difference is I am actually Kira.” His friend didn’t look at him.
“Power corrupts,” L replied as the scene continued to show Rem explaining what was happening to Misa, "If I had that power-“

“You wouldn’t have done anything," Light interrupted, "You only do this because it interests you, not because of some higher ideals. You wouldn’t have had my ambition, you never would have found a reason to use it.” He did look at him this time, "You shouldn’t see yourself as a monster, Ryuzaki. The real monsters are the ones you help to catch.”

“What makes you think I wouldn’t find a reason to use it?” He tilted his head.

“It’s too easy.” The college student raised his eyebrows, "It would make cases boring. You’d be tempted, but you wouldn’t be able to do it.”

It would be too easy. All he had to do was arrange for them to be caught in the act and then commit suicide in prison. Or he could simply have them confess or kill themselves anyways.

If he was wrong, they’d die of a heart attack.

But he had never been wrong, and in the future the instances of him being wrong would only result in few heart attacks. Nothing that would ever arouse suspicion about him.

No, Light was right. It would be too easy. Using the Death Note in his line of work was too much like cheating. If he couldn’t find a way to catch the criminal he was chasing by his means, then he might as well admit defeat. Killing whoever the criminal was wouldn’t feel like a victory after that.

“You are right,” He said out loud, ”But something is bothering you, and it isn’t just how I view myself.” Light turned away, ”What is it?”

“It’s nothing.” The tension in his shoulders certainly meant it was something.

“No, it isn’t.” He called him out on it, "Give sorrow words, the grief that does not speak knits up o-er wrought heart and bids it break.”

“What’s done cannot be undone,” Light muttered, his hands clenching into fists.

Did he imagine blood on his hands? He didn’t hesitate this time to grab one, ”Your cause of sorrow must not be measured by their worth, for then it hath no end.”

“Perhaps mine should have no end,” He whispered honestly, "Blood will have blood.”

“It will not have your blood,” He vowed, squeezing to emphasize his point, ”Then I would be alone. Didn’t you tell me I would never be alone?”

“I meant that you’d have Watari and your heirs.” There was a faint hint of a blush at the reminder of his more successful attempt at comforting him. He felt he was starting to get better at it. Physical contact, an honest statement, though maybe this method only worked for Light.

“I’ve had them for some time.” He hoped those eye would turn back to meet his so he could see more of his reaction, ”But I still felt alone until you.”

He cared about his heirs, but he had his reasons to keep his distance. Mello already admired him too much. If he spoke to Near more often he feared it would stop him from attempting to interact with the others his age. Matt never wanted the title, never tried to get close to him. He didn’t want the third rank to set his sights on the position, so he backed off.
Watari was more or less his father, and a parent’s love was different. It was supportive, it kept him going when he wanted to stop. It was a steady, constant warmth. But even though a parent loved their child, it didn’t mean they could be there for everything.

With Light…it was more than companionship. It was a fire in his heart and he had to fight to keep the smoke from blinding him.

His blush deepened, but he met his gaze, ”Do you know what that sounds like?”

“That I care about you.” He tilted his head, ”What do you think it sounds like?”

Ah, he so enjoyed ruffling his feathers. His eyes narrowed, ”It almost sounds like a confession.”

Did it? He hadn’t had much experience with those. He smirked, ”And what if that is what I meant by it?”

He enjoyed seeing the emotions flash through his eyes, even if he hated what they meant. There was surprise first, then what he guessed was hope, followed by a flash of anger, and then resolution. Those were the four he was certain about. His blush didn’t abate, but he didn’t match his smirk or smile, ”I’d tell you you’re timing is terrible.” He turned away, ”And we’re missing too much of the episode.”

That they were, but he doubted it was anything they didn’t already know or couldn’t deduce. When he turned his attention back to the screen he saw Misa was returning to headquarters with Mogi.

There would be a better time for him to confess with sincerity.

Matt was once again enjoying this, even though he knew they would get to a point where it was L versus Kira again, probably soon. It wasn’t yet though, so he wasn’t going to bother worrying about it. They could change all this anyways. He chuckled at the Chief’s face in the background as Misa sat on his son’s lap, and how it shifted again when Misa said she was being asked out on dates by some of the Yotsuba group.

He liked Light with morals. He wasn’t afraid to stand up to L, but unlike Aizawa, he had the intelligence to come up with another plan. If L had taken off the handcuffs in the previous episode and allowed Light to work with his father, he knew they’d be seeing all seven of the Yotsuba people being placed under arrest, Takimura’s only being for show.

Even though he didn’t like Misa romantically, he was still concerned for her safety.

It really sucked that the Death Note happened to a good guy.

“If that’s what you want, Light, then that’s what I’ll do.”

Future L slightly reacted to the statement. He knew Misa was already failing to act like normal. That was good. It was hard to tell with her whether she just wanted what Light wanted or if she was now working in the best interest of Kira. Technically, at the moment, their interests were the same…oh well.

Misa having a plan didn’t sound good to him.

“There’s no need to be shy.”
“I’m not being shy!”

“No need to be so serious, either.”

He laughed again. When he pictured L in his mind, he pictured a computer with a letter. He didn’t think the person behind it would be this entertaining. He glanced to where the two were currently seated. At least they were now paying attention to something besides the other. He could see Light shared his future self’s annoyance at L’s antics.

He wanted to know what the two of them were talking about over there, but at the same time he didn’t want to know. If it was anything like the sort of confession earlier he didn’t think he could stand being present for that tension.

They were good for each other when they weren’t trying to kill each other. He knew it was weird for Mello to see someone as equal to L but he thought they were.

Aizawa snickered when Mogi was shown in his manager role again, and he joined him. There was something too funny about his forced enthusiasm. Though he stopped chuckling when he realized Misa was about to give him the slip. If there was one thing he could give her, it was her skill in disguise. She easily got by Mogi to meet up with Higuchi.

“Misa…” Light pinched the bridge of his nose, ”You shouldn’t investigate on your own.”

"But what if it works!” Misa pouted.

The college student just sighed.

To Mogi’s credit, he noticed right away the person who returned from the bathroom wasn’t Misa, but by then it was too late to stop her plan. She was already in the car with Higuchi, who had apparently been rather persistent in seeing her again, even before he knew she was the second Kira. Rem sure knew how to pick them.

“I’ll be fine since I can kill people.”

He resisted the urge to laugh at how casually she dropped that statement. It certainly confused Rem, who was ready to do whatever Misa suggested. Mello tensed next to him, and he resigned himself to taking this seriously before his friend snapped. Higuchi didn’t take her seriously either, but she insisted on presenting herself as the second Kira.

Misa and Higuchi’s conversation eventually led to him wanting to test her.

And her acceptance.

This was not going to be good.

“I’ll only kill bad people, okay?”

“That’s not okay.” Mello snapped as Higuchi pulled up a person for her to kill. A president of another company. Sure, a lot of business practices were immoral but technically what they were doing wasn’t criminal. Even if they did cross the line into illicit activities, he couldn’t think of a white collar crime that resulted in the person getting the death penalty.

Matt took a deep breath. Kira without his memories was Light Yagami, who wouldn’t make the same choice again, even aware of his past as Kira. The second Kira, without her memories but aware of the fact, was still essentially the second Kira. She hadn’t apologized once for her actions
as the second Kira, not even when Ukita died. He apologized for the detective’s death and he literally had no part in it.

She wasn’t suffering under the self-destructive guilt Light was.

Because she didn’t think she had anything to be guilty about.

Kira spared those who repented for their crimes. He was starting to see what was aggravating about those who didn’t.

“You still support Kira,” Mello growled.

Misa kept her arms crossed, ”When did I say I didn’t?”

“You haven’t learned anything from watching these?” Near asked, and he switched his attention to him. Mello looked pissed, but Near almost looked…concerned? He’d almost say scared…

“That’s because it’s focused on the investigation.” She rolled her eyes, ”If it showed regular people you’d see just how much support Kira has.”

Okay, maybe they did have something to be concerned about. All this information wouldn’t do them any good if Rem killed them all to protect Misa. The only way they could reach some agreement with the Shinigami was if Misa decided not to continue killing. If she wanted to become the second Kira again…they couldn’t in good conscience let her go just to save their lives.

They’d have forty seconds from when Rem wrote the name down before the Death Note would take effect. He assumed she would die as soon as the first person written did. He wasn’t sure how fast a Shinigami could write. Maybe she could get all their names down, and once they were all dead Misa could continue to do what she wanted. If Rem kept Light alive maybe he could avenge all of them…

But if he regained his memories of being Kira then they would win.

They watched as Higuchi told her he was Kira. She told him to prove it, which he couldn’t since he kept the Death Note at his house. She refused to go there, and arranged so that the criminals would stop being killed. She started recording what was being said on her phone, and the scene switched to her showing the confession to the task force.

Future L was suspicious, which future Light picked up on, once again looking away from what had the rest of the task force’s attention to look at him.

Ugh, he couldn’t even say anything about that. Not when he had to worry about all of their deaths. This wasn’t like her infatuation with Light. Her Kira worship existed before she even had her own Death Note.

What could they say? The average person really didn’t have anything to fear from Kira. It was only criminals and those trying to capture him that were in danger. At least, from the first two Kiras but he was disregarding the third for now. Kira was having an effect on crime, and less murders meant he was saving lives, technically.

Honestly, she could be right about Kira having a lot of support. Everyone back at Wammy’s was on L’s side. He didn’t know many people outside of there.

He grabbed Mello’s arm, ”If you make her defensive, we’ll never convince her.”
“I don’t think she can be reasoned with.” Mello hissed.

“We can’t reason with her.” Near leaned closer into their conversation, ”Light can.”

“You want to put our lives in his hands.” The blond did not like that idea.

“I don’t like it either,” The white-haired kid muttered, ”But you yelling at her won’t fix this.”

Mello crossed his arms, but didn’t say anything. Which is what they wanted. Matt nodded and looked at Near, ”Don’t be scared.”

An eyebrow raised, ”Who said I was scared?”

He grinned, ”That’s the spirit.”

Chapter End Notes

More Shakespeare, this time exclusively Macbeth. L’s lines are Malcolm and Ross’ while Light's are Lady Macbeth's and Banquo's.

Sorry for not posting yesterday! I got caught up in a conversation about accents with one of my friends. He's studying linguistics and was curious about the different accents Americans have. He has a textbook and an app but it helps to hear it in person and I'm okay at them.

Then we ended up talking about the Philippines, which was weird because everyone I know just calls Filipino (the language) Tagalog, but then he wanted to know more about dialectical differences...yeah, it escalated when our friends got involved.

There was a small fight about why Capri Sun is pronounced differently in Europe than it is in the States...and why UC Berkeley isn't pronounced like every other Berkeley...and then a very intense competition about who could name all the states/provinces/regions of their country, said countries being the US, England, India, Spain, and Italy...

Oh well. Do people want a really long chapter for episode 25 or should I break it into two?
Guidance and Frenzy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Souichiro brought the piece of the Death Note out of his pocket, getting up to let his son touch it. This wasn’t enough to bring back his memories. He hoped it would help his son to know he could hold a piece and not lose himself. He wouldn’t allow him to maintain possession, but a few moments would only help his mental state. Ryuzaki seemed to understand what he wanted, and paused the video during the ending.

“Could you not?” Mello grumbled.

He glanced at the screen. Ryuzaki had it paused on the picture of his son falling with his shirt open. He fought the urge to glare at the man, knowing that picture only lasted a few seconds. Ever since his son’s admission he paid closer attention to their interactions. The heirs in particular were good at letting him know when L was acting different, and then there were his obvious statements.

He was planning to take his son away with him, was he?

“Dad?” Light got his attention, standing.

He held out the slip of paper, ”You don’t need to fear this.”

Ryuzaki got up so he could see Light’s face as the teenager took the slip of paper from him. They both watched his eyes for any change as he clenched the piece of paper in his fist. His son stared back, the fear fading from his gaze the longer he held onto it. After a few more moments, he handed it back with a small smile, ”Thanks, Dad.”

“No memories?” The Chief inquired.

“Nothing,” He affirmed, nervously fiddling with the cuff of one of his sleeves, ”I guess I need the whole Death Note to remember anything.”

He let out a sigh of relief, ”It never hurts to be sure.”

“It doesn’t.” Light went back to his notes, ”And that confirms what Rem said in the future unless that really is just a piece of paper.”

“In the future…” He trailed off, uncertain how to phrase it, ”How do you think you’ll respond to getting your memories back.”

“I don’t know.” His son frowned, ”There will probably be an in the moment reaction, but after that I’ll go back to acting like I normally would.”

“You don’t think you can remain yourself?” He frowned.

“Future me is still in denial about being Kira.” Light shook his head, ”And I don’t know where to begin on preparing myself to regain those memories…”

“You just have to remember what makes you different,” The Chief advised softly, desperately hoping the video would reveal where the second notebook was hidden so they wouldn’t have to force his son regain those memories, even if it were temporary. He didn’t want to see his son lose
himself.

“I’ll try.” His son closed his eyes, ”But let’s keep going for now. We can arrest Higuchi after we see where this goes.” He turned back to the other detective, ”Did you have to pause it on that picture?”

“Is Light self-conscious?” Ryuzaki inquired.

“We’ve been chained together for months and you ask me that?” His son took his seat.

The great detective sat next to him, ”I think it’s a flattering drawing of you.”

The Chief shook his head as he walked back to his seat. He’d never seen Light bicker with anyone before, even Sayu at her most trying didn’t get him to show more than a little annoyance. He sat down, wondering about the two. Watching them work on screen almost tempted him to let his son join Ryuzaki in his work. They were both better together. They would be quite the force for good.

The opening passed as he thought. He didn’t need to see the depths of insanity Kira would end up in. He was going to save his son from that. It picked up right where the last episode left off, with Misa announcing Higuchi was Kira. Ryuzaki didn’t turn to look at her, his thoughts quickly turning to how the good news would make it difficult to determine how Kira was killing.

His son, meanwhile, confronted Misa on her foolishness. She half-lied about how she had gotten the confession, before trying to get him to forget about it by saying they could just catch Higuchi. The future Light voiced what Ryuzaki was thinking about the killing method, and the young man asked for room to think.

“Wedy gets a lower case ‘w’?” Matsuda inquired.

“Yep,” Matt answered as Ryuzaki talked to the former thief, ”We all have a letter. Mine’s a lower case ‘m’ so it doesn’t get mixed up with Mello’s capital ‘M’.”

“I use a capital ‘N’.” Near added, ”And I suppose Light will get a lowercase ‘l’.”

Higuchi’s house was nearly impenetrable, but Wedy managed to get inside. Instead of putting observational equipment in the house, Ryuzaki ordered for them to be put in the cars. All six of them. Wedy put up a little protest that sounded more like a complaint, and then was dismissed.

There was another conversation about whether Light remembered anything about being Kira, this time one that the future Light took seriously. His son listened to the detective’s premise, and when it came time for him to answer, he closed his eyes, pausing, before answering honestly.

It was reassuring how close they would have been to right even if they hadn’t been shown these videos. He knew the power was being passed on, but that it had to be by the will of the person with it. While there were supernatural beings involved, they weren’t gods in the traditional sense of the word. Kira was catchable so long as they could stop the notebook from being passed on.

“Thank you, Light. I can now say that I feel 99% better than before.”

He was feeling better about their future odds as well.

“I’m going to trick Higuchi using Sakura TV.”

Ryuzaki began outlining his plan, with Matsuda interjecting with questions. Light and Ryuzaki took turns answering the younger detective. It was quite amazing how in sync the two of them
were, not having to ask or correct the other. He shifted when he realized just who they would be putting on screen for the third Kira to target, his gaze shifting to the man on his left.

“But we’re never gonna find a person like that, are we?”

On screen, they all were looking at Matsuda.

“You are the only one who can do it.”

The young man tensed next to him, ”Not again,” He muttered, barely audible.

They were going to let Matsuda’s face slip to the third Kira during the broadcast, and make sure it was known his identity wouldn’t be revealed until the very end. If Higuchi panicked and made the eye deal before or when they revealed his face, Matsuda would die. Future Light was quick to assure future Matsuda that hadn’t happened otherwise he would be dead already…

Ryuzaki and Light had come up with a perfect plan within minutes of knowing the third Kira’s identity without having to consult each other at all. He wished he had a partner he could work with like that.

“In the meantime, Matsuda will have to decide if he wants to go through with this plan.”

There was fear in his eyes, hesitation at the thought of essentially sacrificing himself so they could capture Kira. He watched his resolve return as he took a few steps closer to Ryuzaki and Light.

“I don’t need two or three days to decide. I want to do this.”

Mogi patted him on the back. He smiled, ”You’re a good detective, Matsuda.”

Those on the Yotsuba group that weren’t Kira met up, and altogether they quickly figured out which of them was the killer. Mello snorted at Light’s mistake with Namikawa over the phone. Light rolled his eyes, ”Forgive me for being nervous about this.”

“You should have more faith in yourself,” Ryuzaki replied, ”Our plan will work.”

“It will work,” Light agreed, ”But I don’t want Matsuda to die.”

Their plan started. Namikawa called Higuchi and got him to watch the program. They timed the reveal of Matsuda’s face perfectly. The two businessmen continued to talk while the guilty one internally panicked.

“This is for the sake of justice.”

He wasn’t worried so much anymore. He was certain Ryuzaki took precautions to remove any picture of Matsuda that could be found, so unless he managed to find a recording of the face reveal he would be safe. Higuchi called Misa, who was sitting at headquarters. The music played for a few seconds before she rejected the call.

“Now I really want to hear that song,” Near muttered, and he realized it was the first ending song again.

A commercial of Misa started playing. Higuchi called another one of his associates. He figured out he wouldn’t be able to demand the broadcast be shut off without revealing he was Kira. The third Kira was beginning to get more agitated. Everything was going to plan. Higuchi called Mogi next, and despite the tense atmosphere Aizawa and Matt snickered at his manager voice.
It was an easy lie to say she had taken a vacation and was unreachable. It showed Mogi and Aiber ready inside Yoshida productions.

“This is going exactly as I planned. It’s almost scary.”

“You shouldn’t be scared by it. You should be happy.”

Happy his skills in manipulation were being put to good use.

Higuchi called the president of Yoshida productions next, who didn’t know the real name either, but promised him access to the personnel files, giving him two hours to find out the name there. He pulled a gun from his desk and put the death note in a briefcase, before going out in his car. Wedy followed him.

“Everything’s still going according to plan.”

“Yes.”

Higuchi was determined to kill Matsuda, but the episode ended with him laughing maniacally.

“We should have him by the end of the next episode,” Aizawa said.

Which meant the time they’d lose Light again was quickly coming.

He didn’t want to encourage his son to hold onto the guilt he was feeling, but the other major difference between Kira and Light was their feelings towards Ryuzaki. He hadn’t thought a relationship between the two would end well, but seeing what they could do together in the future…it made him rethink his stance.

Perhaps it would be Ryuzaki who saved him after all.

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Mello could admit it was a good plan.

Higuchi had a gun and the Death Note. He was out for the kill. He rolled his eyes at the Misa commercial, and then snorted at L trying to tear the peel of the banana with his teeth. Was this what he usually did behind the screen where no one could see him? Or was this just because there was something about Light Yagami that made him act different?

Whatever. It didn’t matter what he acted like so long as they caught Higuchi.

Matsuda was good at talking a lot, so he was easily stretching the reveal, which only make the third Kira panic more. He went through all the information they already knew, but by revealing he made Higuchi doubt he’d find anything at Yoshida. The doubt was enough for the murderer to turn to the Shinigami following him.

That confused the duo. Damn, he had to give Misa credit for not doing anything to give away she could see Rem. Lucky for them Rem was smart enough to put together their plan and convince Higuchi to go to Yoshida. Rem also talked him out of killing the president, Misa, and Mogi. Though it was likely he would have put the deaths of them off until he got rid of Matsuda so it was a null issue.

Honestly, they were lucky Higuchi wasn’t that smart.
If he were, he might have started targeting people from Sakura TV. If he were to take down someone like Demegawa, or some of the other higher-ups at the station then he would stop the broadcast. It would, in his mind, buy him more time to either get a recording of the show or find another picture of him. Not that it would be useful in the long run since the police already knew what he was.

“Who is he talking to?”

“If he is talking with someone right now, it could be…a Shinigami.”

Ha. Misa looked nervous at that. Rem then asked if he would give up the notebook, but Higuchi realized that wouldn’t save him. As soon as Yotsuba’s growth was pointed out there would be no escape. They’d all be fired, and with the stain of possibly being a murderer they would either end up in jail or never have another job again.

Higuchi arrived at Yoshida. L and Light watched as he found the drawer with the personnel files. He pulled one out and found another name, noting it in the Death Note before calmly walking out. Mogi and Aiber were in position, but they couldn’t arrest them since they couldn’t figure out the way he was killing. By the time he got back to the car, the attempt had already been made.

“Damn! He didn’t die!”

That only confused them more. Higuchi tried to call Misa again, but she once again rejected it. He decided to go find the security tapes of when Matsuda went to Yotsuba. On the way there, he made a deal. Light and L tried to figure out what Rem meant. While L was willing to think it a Shinigami, he had no idea yet what that meant.

Mello found himself bouncing his leg in anticipation. He knew this was technically going according to plan, but he was excited to see L in action. He stilled when Higuchi was pulled over by the traffic cop. Without either in the duo being able to see what he was doing, he wrote down the officer’s name and drove away. It was only a little while longer before the officer died.

“He didn’t like they anticipated others getting involved.

Future Light appeared to put the pieces together from the deal mentioned, but L was the one to speak first, warning them Higuchi had the powers of the second Kira. L then contacted the director of the NPA, instructing him to keep all other officers away from Higuchi. Meanwhile, Light instructed his father on the next step he should take.

He laughed when L chained Misa up.

She deserved to be in chains. But at the same time, she was the only one they couldn’t touch without getting killed by a Shinigami. He still wanted to yell at her for her stupid worship of Kira, but if Matt and Near told him it was a bad idea that meant it probably was. So he let his anger simmer instead of acting on it.

Wammy’s house had plenty of atheists, agnostics, and deists. He was in the minority that believed in God, and one of the few that believed in a religion. He’d been told plenty of times he was stupid to do so, and every time someone talked shit about God they got hit.

So he got it. If he attacked her god, she would react like him.

It wouldn’t change anything.

He did put more thought into his beliefs than she did. He heard all the arguments, and while there
wasn’t one clear one on why such a higher being would care about them, he was certain of the existence of something like a God. Whether it was the First Cause or unmoved mover or whatever. That didn’t matter as much as his belief in a soul, a sense of self that existed separate from the physical mechanisms of the body.

Not everything could be explained, and if he didn’t have faith in some things without evidence, he would never get anywhere. He couldn’t spend his life in his head when it should be spent out in the world. He had to do what felt right, because he couldn’t always ignore his feelings.

L could pilot a helicopter? Sweet. And Watari was in the back with a rifle? Even sweeter. He heard Roger say he was quite the marksmen, but there had never been a reason for the old man to show off his shooting skills. Wedy broke away from him to join the Chief and set up the ambush at Sakura TV.

Higuchi found all the tapes had been erased. He got even angrier, then decided to make his way to the station.

“He’ll be there in less than 15 minutes. Are you ready?”

“I don’t need my son asking if I’m ready. Of course I am.”

The Chief and Wedy got ready, hiding themselves behind the set. Mello rolled his eyes when the older man refused the gun. Really? He wouldn’t bend the rules even when they were coming face to face with an armed mass murderer that they still didn’t know how he killed? He was a better man than any of them. He hoped nothing bad happened to him because of it.

Higuchi arrived to find the building empty. The Chief and Wedy confronted him as Aiber and Mogi came from behind. All of them were wearing protective helmets. He groaned as the businessman lied, making up an excuse to reach into his bag. He pulled the gun and aimed it at Wedy. Of fucking course the Chief managed to interfere and get himself shot.

“Dad!” Light rose in his chair, alarmed.

The other NPA detectives seemed angered as well.

Aiber pursued with the gun, missing Higuchi in the hall. Light sat back down when the future Chief said he was alright. All four went in pursuit, two in each car.

“A car chase?” Matt perked up, ”Awesome.”

Future Light rejected L’s offer of a gun. He sighed, he would have been just like his father if it weren’t for the Death Note. Matt was almost vibrating with excitement as Higuchi skidded to a stop at the police blockade. He elbowed him, ”Calm down.”

“Aizawa’s back!” His friend replied, turning to said man, ”Very cool re-entrance!”

“We don’t know it’s me.” The detective smiled nonetheless.

“The only one who would do this is…”

“Yes, you must be right.”

Aizawa and that other guy who refused to work with the task force were shown sitting in the front seat of the center car. Matt let out a little cheer, that got him a hair ruffle from the other man.
Mello was impressed by Watari’s shooting. He shot out the tire of Higuchi’s car and then the gun out of his hands. He glanced to where the old man was sitting, looking pleased with himself.

“It’s over.”

“Yes, it’s over.”

Oh no. They were just beginning. This was the end of the third Kira, but that signalled the return of the first.

“I’m glad you’re back.” Matt was now completely turned around on the couch.

Aizawa brought a hand to his hair, ”I’m not all that important to the investigation, kid.”

Mello got on his knees to look behind the couch, ”You should take the gun next time, Chief.”

“If I am still the Chief of the NPA, I will,” Yagami told him, ”If I’m not, I won’t.”

“That’s just stupid.” He scowled.

“I can see Ryuzaki’s influence.” The man shook his head, ”But I swore when I took this position that I would uphold the law. If I can’t follow it what right do I have to enforce it on others?”

He sat back on his ankles, crossing his arms and narrowing his eyes at the man. He’d already told them the ends didn’t justify the means. He’d really made it that far in his career without bending some rules? He felt his scowl soften, ”So you’ve never killed anyone? Even in self-defence?”

“Mello.” Matt hit his arm.

He wanted to know the answer. Murder was illegal. When cops killed people there was a review process to make sure it was necessary. They often had to submit their weapon and take an absence from work. If it was found it wasn’t justifiable self-defence, they could also face charges. But it was technically a law, and he wanted to know how far the Chief would go.

“I have not.” Yagami’s expression hardened.

“Really?” He suspected as much, but he hadn’t thought that would be the answer.

The songs abruptly switched, signalling the start of the new episode, and the officer looked away. He turned back, contemplating the new information. Killing someone was never something he had to do, and he’d achieved a lot.

Could he reach the goal he wanted without resorting to any means?

Chapter End Notes

It's never really clear if the Chief's ever killed anyone, right? I mean, Mello asks, but there isn't an answer. I'd like to think he hasn't, and that the only time he considered doing so was for Light. Seriously, I don't even remember him firing his gun except for the blank. Let me know if I'm wrong!

Did I do a double chapter so I can get to episode 25 faster? Yes, yes I did. Seriously, at
this point I just want to write it and get it over with. Saturday's going to be fun.

But first, which lyrics should I use for Misa's song? The dubbed ones or the translated ones from the Japanese song? I'm not sure how much of a difference there is but people have preferences sometimes. And have you guys had enough random Shakespeare? Cause I'm really tempted to include some Romeo and Juliet up in this. Also, any preferred translations of the ending songs?

Let me know!
Light resisted the urge to slump in his seat. They’d cornered the third Kira. The Death Note would soon be in their possession. He would come into contact with it. He hoped there was an obvious reaction, something that Ryuzaki would be unable to overlook. He hoped he gave himself away immediately.

He didn't want to see himself kill more people.

Ryuzaki glanced at him as his father, Mogi, and Aizawa approached with a squad of other officers. He refused to look back. The time where they could enjoy watching themselves work together was gone. It was time to once again watch them battle. He forced his hands to release the death grip they had on his knees. For all that they could say they were going to change the future, he knew this was an inevitability.

No matter how detailed the picture was, it would be impossible to identify one spot of the forest from whatever they were shown. He doubted they would be shown the entire trip into the woods for it to be recovered. The episodes simply weren’t long enough for that. Which left the vague hope Rem would know, which he doubted because it was him controlling everything.

He’d have to regain his memories and tell them where it was.

Willingly, if he could maintain control. Unwillingly if not.

“If you are not going to talk, I’ll use whatever means necessary to get it out of you.”

Would his friend be able to carry it out? He wasn’t blind to what he assumed were Ryuzaki’s attempts at showing affection, or flirting if he wanted to stretch the term. He admitted to caring about him, but they needed to hurt him to hurt Kira. They also needed to take possession of both notebooks before they could cause the world more harm.

He noticed Matt tensing, and spoke, "Don’t worry. Higuchi wants a life of comfort and pleasure. It’s an idle threat.”

The third in line to succeed L nodded as Higuchi immediately gave up the Death Note. His father was the one to pick it up. It took him a few seconds to notice Rem. When he did he yelled and fell to the ground. Ryuzaki tried to tell him to calm down, though why he would remind him that he was unarmed...he still needed a lot of work in the comfort and reassuring departments.

Mogi was the next to pick up the notebook, and the next to yell at the sight of Rem.

Matt chuckled, ”Your reactions are kinda funny.”

He’d find it amusing too if Mogi weren’t bringing the Death Note to the helicopter. Rem confirmed what he suspected. All his memories would return if he held the notebook again.

“Light Yagami…This is how Kira kills…the second Kira…Notebooks in Aoyama...”

Ryuzaki was too caught up in his thoughts to notice his future self grabbing the notebook. He forced his eyes to stay open as the other genius accurately deduced there had to be a second
notebook. He was glad he realized it wasn’t over yet.

He flinched at the sound his future self was making. It sounded like he was in pain as he yelled. He couldn't help but imagine the agony his future self was going through. Flashes of images of his past memories went by his head as his eyes glowed. When he stopped yelling he took a few shuddering breaths, his shoulders shaking.

This was it.

The moment of truth.

Or, as it turned out, the moment to lie.

But what had he been expecting? He knew he wouldn’t be able to stop himself from becoming Kira once he remembered.

His future self said he wanted to compare the names written in the notebook to those of the victims, and Ryuzaki let him. He couldn’t tell if his friend was suspicious or not. Surely that amount of surprise was not what he expected from him?

“I’ve won! Exactly as planned.”

He shivered at the return of the red to his eyes, the evil smirk he almost forgot about in its absence. Ryuzaki paused the episode, even though no one was talking. He blinked, trying to keep control over himself, but his heart was racing and though he could control his breathing it was getting shallower. It wanted to come out faster, but he wouldn’t lose it.

“I don’t keep control,” He managed to say, his voice shaky.

“That doesn’t mean you can’t here,” Ryuzaki replied immediately.

“But it suggests I will.” The Light in the show was definitely in a better mental state then himself and he still lost. He wanted to die and Kira wanted to live. In a battle of wills, the murderer was much stronger.

“You won’t,” The detective said stubbornly, ”I’ll lead you back to yourself.”

If he wanted anything to do with him after they watched his death. No one said anything about it yet, but it was coming.

Though in a way, he himself died first in the future.

“How do you plan to do that?” He asked, humoring the detective.

“As your father said,” Ryuzaki smirked, ”By reminding you what makes you different.”

This crushing guilt? He embraced it, but Kira would make it disappear. Kira would burn out any love and attachment he felt for anyone. Kira didn’t feel. Kira didn’t doubt. What he was feeling now wouldn’t be an advantage over the monster lurking inside him. Against a being of pure righteousness and ambition…he would be swept away.

Kira thought himself a god. He thought of himself as a human.

“If there’s anything left to bring to the surface,” He muttered.

Kira burnt the humanity out of him.
“I have faith there is.” Ryuzaki turned away.

Faith. Confidence in what one hoped for and assurance of what one could not see.

Faith changed how one saw reality, it didn’t change reality itself. He was beyond hope at this point. The facts were he hadn’t maintained his current morality when he regained the Death Note. He likely wouldn’t maintain it in his present form either. The monster within would defeat the monster he was, and he’d become something worse than ever seen before.

“We should take a break soon,” He said, because that was the one thought that calmed him.

As much as the second Death Note needed to be recovered…it was starting to feel less important. He had faith in his own ability to hide things. It would be a long time before anyone accidentally recovered it, enough time for the four other geniuses in the room to familiarize themselves with the woods and figure out where it might be. It would take time, but they had time.

And if another Kira did surface, they knew how to find them.

He couldn’t control anything in his life anymore. He couldn’t even believe that he’d retain his sanity. He didn’t have Ryuzaki’s faith in a better future. Well, in a way, he did.

The world would be better off without him. Misa would be forced to give up her devotion to Kira if he was gone. She’d be easier to use to convince Rem not to kill everyone in the room. As long as he lived, she still hoped Kira would return.

Ryuzaki claimed he would be lonely without him, but he had lived his life without him for over twenty years. He was strong enough to go back to it. He didn't need him.

Matsuda would keep his father safe. He was already a better son than he ever was and he wasn't even related to them.

The one thing he could take control of was how he died, and he was apparently willing to sacrifice lives to make a better world. Why not sacrifice his own?

“We should,” His friend agreed, continuing the video.

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Aizawa was shaken by the return of Kira. Not because he returned, but because of how Light disappeared in a scream of agony. He was glad Ryuzaki gave them a moment to recover after watching that. He turned to look at the rest of their group. He couldn’t even be happy he rejoined the task force. Not with the Chief looking that pale after seeing the death of his son.

“We won’t let that happen,” Mogi vowed.

“I’m sure it’s just because he was surprised,” Matsuda babbled, ”He’s definitely more prepared in here. I bet he’ll be able to keep control!”

“If not, we can force him to give up his memories,” Aizawa added, ”If all else fails, we’re going to destroy the Death Note anyways and that will get rid of his memories too.”

“But we still need to find the other notebook.” The Chief’s jaw clenched.

“And we’ll find a way,” Aizawa promised, ”Don’t worry too much about this. We will find a way to make this work.”
The older detective slowly nodded, "We’ll save my son."

Light seemed to be taking the revelation of his death well, though he was in conversation with Ryuzaki so they were probably already coming up with a plan. He leaned forward to check on his favorite of the heirs, "Any thoughts, Matt?"

The brat opened his mouth, glanced at Mello, then shook his head. He really had to talk to the kid in private soon, but the last thing they needed was another Mello outburst so he was fine keeping quiet for now. He’d been trying hard to treat them the same since he realized what they were. For the most part, he thought he was succeeding.

The world didn’t need three more Ryuzakis. He wasn’t sure what type of training they were going through, but he hoped it didn’t turn them into clones of the infuriating detective. Near already looked like him, just with white hair. With Mello’s question at the end of the last episode, he noted his surprise the Chief hadn’t killed anyone. As if he expected to have to kill someone to solve a case.

Ryuzaki restarted the video, so he sat back. At least he was making headway with Matt, and the Chief seemed to be reaching something with Mello. He couldn’t tell with Near. He didn’t want to turn them against the world’s greatest detective, but he wanted them to see him as flawed. His methods weren’t the only way to get things done.

He watched the exchange of the notebooks with a frown, trying to figure out the significance of it.

"He switched which Shinigami is attached to the notebooks," Mello grumbled.

"Does that change anything?" Matsuda wondered.

"It keeps Rem away from Misa," Near said.

Why would he want that?

Rem flew away with the Death Note the third Kira was currently using. Since Kira still had the other one, it was safe to say the Shinigami who liked Misa didn’t know where it was hidden. That narrowed their options of finding it.

Kira continued to outline his plan, while the screen showed snapshots of each moment. His imprisonment, the criminals deaths’ stopping and restarting. Ryuzaki being forced to release them. Light deciding to join the investigation.

"That’s just the way I am."

Aizawa scowled. So Light was just being used. It was what he suspected but it made him too angry to find any comfort in being right.

The scene cut back to Rem saying what the one problem was in his plan.

"If you don’t have full ownership, your memories will only return for as long as you are in contact with the notebook."

That made their lives a little easier. If they could ensure he did not regain full ownership, stopping Kira was as easy as getting the Death Note away from him. He cringed at forcing Light to go through that pain every time he remembered. At some point there was sure to be a psychological toll, but it meant they wouldn’t lose him completely.
Maybe with practice, he would be able to stay in control with the memories.

On screen, they did lose him. He used the piece of Death Note in his watch to kill Higuchi, therefore transferring ownership to him. To fill the time between him writing the name to the death he asked a question that only seemed to raise Ryuzaki’s suspicions of the teen.

“This is gotta be the longest forty seconds of my life.”

Higuchi died in front of all of them. Kira faked a believable reaction until he had confirmation he was dead.

“He’s already dead. And you’re next, Ryuzaki.”

It cut back to all of them gathered again at headquarters. His future self was reading the rules of the Death Note. He raised his eyebrows when he announced there were more on the back cover. Two rules. One saying they would die if they destroyed it. An obvious lie that would prevent them from destroying it. Apparently, there was no punishment for a Shinigami if they wrote fake rules.

He almost chuckled at Matsuda’s face when the Chief asked if he would rather be left behind in the investigation. He knew in his heart that he didn’t want to be left behind, but he’d be annoyed too if that meant his death. The second fake rule said that if a person doesn’t write in the Death Note within thirteen days of the last use, then the person would die.

“Fake rules…” Mogi muttered.

“It does clear them.” He frowned at the relief in the Chief’s tone as he put a hand on Light’s shoulder. It was so obvious from their perspective, but he wondered what it was like in that room for future him. Would they ever pick up on the deception or would they continue believing in the younger Yagami until Ryuzaki or one of his heirs proved it to all of them beyond doubt?

Ryuzaki’s attempts at getting Rem to reveal the truth failed. Reluctantly, the great detective released Light from his confinement. They really didn’t have a choice but to believe the rules. To test either would risk death and or murder of someone else.

“In truth, you have already been defeated by the rules I created.”

He still didn’t see how this was a victory for Kira. He proved his innocence, but that only lasted as long as he refrained from killing. It was also unlikely he’d be able to get the Death Note back.

So the entire plan hadn’t been revealed, only the part that led to him regaining the Death Note.

He still hoped Ryuzaki would be able to stop Kira…but the feeling he was going to be defeated kept growing.

He stayed silent, because it would all be shown to them soon.

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Matsuda winced as he watched himself get dragged away from Kira and Misa. Man, he really did get attached to people too easily without knowing them at all. He leaned forward when Kira said he was going to tell her about a special place, but it skipped exactly where the Death Note was hidden. Instead, it went to Misa digging it up in the woods.

Her memories returning was nothing like Light’s. There was no pain. She barely gasped as she remembered. Was it because she wasn’t that different from her Kira persona?
His leg bounced as Misa read the letter left to her by Kira. It asked her to write down Ryuzaki’s real name if she could remember. If she did so he would love her forever. It was depressing how quickly he went back to manipulating her. From how happy it made her, she didn’t seem to mind being a pawn for Kira.

“I don’t remember his name anymore.”

He let out a huff of relief. That had to screw with Kira’s plan then! Ryuk finally returned and he let out another sigh of relief. He had been in the Shinigami realm this whole time? That meant, if Rem was attached to the third Kira, there was not a Shinigami currently watching them that would interfere.

He watched Misa hug Ryuk, making the god of death uncomfortable enough he turned intangible to get out of it. She just laughed and handed him an apple. In return he gave her an apple from his world. It was a way too comfortable scene. Before Misa took a bite of the decayed looking apple, she said she wanted to make the deal for the eyes again.

Was that why Light switched which Shinigami went with what notebook?

He cringed again at his own excitement over her return to headquarters. It would suck for them if they were innocent. Rem noticed Misa over the cameras, and seemed to get upset her life had been halved again. It switched to the two Kiras, Misa giving Kira the ability to see Ryuk.

“I don’t remember Hideki Ryuga’s real name. I tried but I totally forgot.”

“Oh, I see. Well, that’s too bad.”

Kira didn’t sound upset about it. Misa then informed him she made the eye deal again, and Ryuk’s thoughts pointed to this being a part of the bigger plan. Kira brought her into a hug, spewing lie after lie about how he wanted to create a new world with her. All the while he had that evil smirk on his face.

“If L tests the rules…” Near trailed off.

“L isn’t going to die.” Mello scowled, fiercely in denial.

Matsuda really wanted that to be true. All Ryuzaki had to do was test the death note without informing any of them or Rem, and he could prove the rules were false!

Proving them false would only bring Misa back under suspicion. If it looked like she would never be free then Light and L would die. He pressed his fingers to his temples. Why did this have to be such a complex situation?

“We weren’t shown the second notebooks exact location,” The Chief commented wearily.

That meant they’d either have to find it themselves or get the information from Kira.

He didn’t like either option.

“But we can stop the third Kira,” He pointed out optimistically, trying to lighten the mood in the room. None of this had happened yet so there was no need to be so affected by it, right? He managed a smile. “And I’m sure Light will find a way to control the first. He and Ryuzaki can do anything together.”

“I just wish there was something I could do,” The Chief grumbled.
“There’s always something you can do,” Matsuda promised, "Even if it’s small, you just have to look for it.”

He would know. But it didn’t matter if he was the star of the investigation. What mattered was the task force's success. It would be nice if he was appreciated a little more, but no one was completely useless.

It was just a matter of finding a purpose.

Chapter End Notes

Okay. Plan's been made. If I post faster it's because I'm excited!

If you are suddenly spammed with a lot of content, I apologize, but I'll probably post the first part of episode 25 later today because I have time and, like I've said before, I don't like to sit on the next chapter after I write it otherwise I'd never post it.

Please keep up the support! You guys are great!
Watari watched a fuzzy scene of children playing. It was followed by more children playing, and one crying alone. The sound of the gears of the clock tower overtook the cries as more scenes flashed of the orphanage and a church. The clock started ringing on a scene of snow falling, with himself standing there holding a young L’s hand in front of the gate.

It gave off an entirely too ominous feeling for his orphanage, and it didn’t bode well for the content of this episode.

Light managed to pause it, ”Is that you, Ryuzaki?”

“I don’t remember my early life that well,” The detective replied.

The inventor smiled, ”That is him,” He confirmed.

“And that’s the orphanage?” The college student turned to look at him.

“It is.” He nodded again, ”It is a much friendlier place than what you’ve been shown, I assure you, and the other images are from the church just down the road.”

“It’s Ryuzaki’s point of view,” Light noted, ”And a new environment can be overwhelming.”

He was probably correct. It took L longer than most children to adapt to the orphanage. He never truly integrated himself with the other children. He didn’t make enemies, but he wouldn’t have considered the other children his friends either. It took a lot of time for the house to become his home.

“Let’s just continue.” L stole the control back, ”My past is irrelevant.”

No, the focus wasn’t his past. It was the clock tower, more specifically, the bells that chimed.

The scene cut like an old film, fading to the future, where he was sitting behind his many screens. It was once again from L’s point of view as the young man stared at him. It then switched to a different perspective as he turned to see the young man, inquiring if something was wrong.

It was one of those few times where L was vulnerable, where he needed him. He could tell just by looking at him. It was rare for him to see him in person when he could just as easily communicate with him through the computer. A personal drop in meant a personal reason. He half wondered if he was scared of his impending death or if he wanted specific preparations made.

They didn’t get to hear what his concern was before the scene switched again, this time to L sitting on the couch as he asked Rem questions about the capabilities of the Death Note.

He noted Kira was still there, despite being free to leave.

“**I’m not in the mood for love or anything else right now.**”

Not that Kira would be able to love.

He noted the edge in Kira’s voice. Where there would have been a lilt of teasing in the younger
Yagami’s, now there was steel. What should have been a harmless sentence suddenly felt a lot more sinister. Was that because he knew he was Kira or would he be able to pick up on it in real life? The staring was different too, no more curiosity or openness.

It went to Misa getting dressed, Light’s instructions overlaying her actions. The promise of a new world as long as she continued to kill criminals for him. She finished getting dressed in her strange outfit as the chimes of another clock went off. Then she began to sing as she walked through the city.

It was a haunting melody with matching lyrics.

“Careful what you do, cause God is watching your every move.”

She truly did worship him. She felt safe with a murderer around. She thought Kira would help her if she ever got into trouble again. She put all her trust into a being who didn’t deserve it. Even her eyes seemed dull, as though she were only a doll, something inanimate the criminal could manipulate to his liking.

“But what happens when I know it all, then what should I do after that?”

He raised his eyebrows. Was that doubt? Or did she know there was only so much time before she wasn’t useful to Kira anymore and she didn’t know what she would do once she was cast to the side? As she sang the last line she looked out over the edge of the bridge she was standing on.

“That was creepy,” Matt commented, shifting slightly closer to Mello.

“Fucking creepy,” The blond agreed.

He wondered if it dawned on the second rank that L would likely be dying in this episode. From the way Matt looked prepared to intervene, he hadn’t. Near also shifted so he could prevent an outburst. He hoped the two of them could handle the third member of their little trio.

The task force reassembled once the deaths started up again. Chief Yagami, Aizawa, Matsuda, and Mogi all looked confused. Kira played the role admirably, but still not well enough to trick L, who immediately made the connection to Misa. His suspicion of Kira also increased as he considered the possibility of using a torn off piece of the Death Note to kill.

The connections Kira wanted him to make in front of Rem.

“Thirteen days. That’s the only problem.”

He was going to test the rule to prove that Misa and Light were the Kiras he knew them to be.

“The least we can do is execute the killer!”

“It’s not a very humane way to do things, but the higher-ups would probably want to take measures like that.”

Watari could see the brilliance of Kira's plan. It depended on L doing his job and investigating thoroughly once he had reason to believe the thirteen day rule was incorrect. As long as the detective played his role he was signing his own death warrant. The Shinigami came to the same realization, and started cursing Kira in her head. He really did have everything planned out in his favor.

“The only way for me to save Misa is to write Ryuzaki’s real name in my notebook.”
Which would kill her. Leaving Kira with no opposition that he knew about.

“You know if she were smart she’d kill Kira anyways,” Mello said.

“But that would make Misa unhappy.” Near shook his head.

“Because he’s going to make her oh so happy without the threat of death.” The blond rolled his eyes.

“Rem won’t kill Light,” Misa said stubbornly, “That isn’t an option.”

It was too bad they hadn’t convinced her to be that protective over all their lives.

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‘In a snowstorm it always seemed, for a time, as if there were no enemies. In a snowstorm the wind would blow a gale; but it blew in a white cleanness and the air was full of a driving whiteness and all things were changed and when the wind stopped there would be the stillness.’

The quote came to mind as L watched himself stand in the rain. He was half turned away from Kira, who asked him what he was doing up there. He signalled that he couldn’t hear the younger man, who shouted the question. When he still didn’t answer, the college student went out into the rain to speak to him.

Perhaps Kira wasn’t a hurricane, but a snowstorm. He had made him think there were no enemies close to him, only the distant Yotsuba group. He created a moment of stillness, the illusion it was over, the brief time in between Higuchi’s death and Misa reclaiming her position as the second Kira. A moment of calm, where the world stood still.

Natural disasters served as a reminder humans would never be completely in control of their own lives. Just as he was no longer in control of his own. He couldn’t abandon the investigation, not even to save himself. He didn’t think he was capable of giving up after getting that far, but he knew that if he continued he would certainly face an end in Rem’s Death Note.

‘There was a big storm and he might as well enjoy it. It was ruining everything, but you might as well enjoy it.’

Kira certainly ruined his life. Unknowingly, Light Yagami had as well.

But somehow, he couldn’t bring himself to hate him.

“It’s just…I hear the bell.”

How fitting. The book he’d been thinking of was For Whom The Bell Tolls.

Though Watari was mistaken. The church in his flashback was not the same as the one near Wammy’s, though it had always reminded him of it. It was the one from the funeral of his mother. He’d spent the entire time staring up at the ceiling because it was easier than looking at all the false sympathy around him. He could analyze the patterns there.

He never acted how people wanted him to. With his mother gone, he was expected to show external grief, but he’d never been attached to her. As he got older he figured out her resentment of him stemmed from his appearance. He looked too much like his father, and he died earlier in his life. After that she hadn’t been his mother so much as someone who made sure he didn’t die.
Still, that was the first time he was ever called a monster.

The monster who didn’t even cry for his own mother.

He wondered if the funeral Watari would throw him would be shown. The task force would have to have something separate, since they weren’t to know of the heirs in the future, which meant they wouldn’t be able to know about Wammy’s. He wondered what Kira’s false mourning would look like. If that monster could manage a few tears for his most hated enemy.

“I wonder if it’s a church…maybe a wedding, or perhaps a…”

“A funeral,” Light finished, moving closer to grab his hand, ”I’m so sorry, Ryuzaki.”

He managed a small smile, ”This isn’t your fault.”

“I can be sorry for your death even if it isn’t my fault,” He shot back.

On the screen, his future self said something self-deprecating. Kira made a noise of interest, but then seemed puzzled about why he was looking down somberly. While he was certain the Light with him would have tried to say something comforting or gotten angry at his depression, Kira went to dismiss his depression, turning it into a joke.

“There would be no end to my troubles if I actually took you seriously all the time.”

He was bad at communicating exactly what he meant, especially to normal people who followed the many silent rules of interaction he ignored.

“But…I could say the same about you.”

He was bad at communicating, but he didn’t put on airs. He didn’t try to portray himself as someone he wasn’t unless it was for a case, and even then it was typically a change of name and his personality largely stayed the same. He had people he could be himself around, even if they were few in number, but he would have nothing but trouble if he considered every mask of Light’s to be the real Light.

“From the moment you were born, has there ever been a point where you’ve actually told the truth?”

Light flinched at the question. Kira just stared at him as the sound of rain stopped. Kira gave a long explanation about how lying was sometimes necessary, the same argument he himself would use to justify his deceptions, Light moved closer to him, ”I have never been more honest than I have today.” He squeezed his hand.

In the future, the two of them went back inside. He wasn’t sure where the towels came from, but Kira sat on the top step drying his hair. He wandered over to him with a towel around his shoulders. The murderer was focused on his hair, and barely noticed him until he picked up one of his feet.

He felt a ghost of a smirk grow on his face. He was still able to unsettle him, even as Kira.

“I can give you a massage as well.”

“L…” Mello groaned, ”This is so awkward to watch.”

It was a dramatic moment. He glanced at his heirs. Near had a confused frown on his face, ”He’s
your suspect.”

That didn’t mean he couldn’t care about him. It just meant he shouldn’t.

“I think it’s cute.” Matt shrugged, ”In a weird way.”

L decided to ignore their comments. They were unused to him doing anything like this, so naturally it would make them uncomfortable. The task force seemed more or less accustomed to the unusual intensity involved in their interactions.

“You’re still soaked.”

He wondered if there was anything of Light left in this future Kira. He dried his hair enough so that it stopped dripping on him, before simply staring down at him as he continued washing his feet.

Foot washing meant a few things to different people, but his mind was drawn to the religious context. When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples he intended to show them they were his equals. The leader was no greater than the servants. He did it to purge their hearts of selfish ambition. The lowly act killed their pride. It taught them selfless love.

Jesus also washed the feet of Judas before the disciple betrayed him.

He was no Jesus, he held no divine power within him. He couldn’t wash away another’s sins, no matter how much he would like to.

But he hoped to be the savior to the boy he still was chained to.

“I’m sorry.”

He failed in the future. He listened to the sad sounds of the piano playing as it showed him continuing to dry the other’s feet. His instrument, playing all alone without the interruption of a guitar or drums. A piano solo.

“It’ll be lonely, won’t it?”

“It will be,” Light whispered, as his future self got confused by the question, ”And I think Kira will be as well.”

As much of a thrill as there was at winning a challenge, there was also a sense of loss once a competition was done. When their game was over…it would be boring.

“You never kill anyone you want to kill in a war,” He muttered.

“What’s that from?” Light inquired as a phone call interrupted their moment.

“Oh thank God,” Mello complained.

“For Whom The Bell Tolls,” He answered, getting a flash of recognition.

“Hemingway?” The college student tilted his head, ”I’ve only read A Farewell to Arms.”

He was surprised he read any, ”A romance?”

“It is a war novel.” He drew his hand back.

He chuckled, quickly deciding on a scene, ”And you’ll always love me won’t you?” He quoted the
scene that foreshadowed her death.

“Yes,” Light humored him.

“And the rain won’t make any difference?”

“No.”

“That’s good,” He held out his hand, ”Because I’m afraid of the rain.”

There wasn’t much time left for this episode. His death as it would have been, and still could be, was about to be shown. He saw it coming, but it was only natural to fear death. Even if they were only watching it.

“I can keep you safe,” Light drew closer to him, taking his hand again, ”I know I can.”

That brought a smile to his face, ”Nobody can help themselves.”

The warmth of Light reassured him the future they were watching would not come to pass. Neither would allow it to.

Matt thought the foot thing was a little weird, but if Mello was going to just take things at face value it didn’t leave him much time to prepare. So he had to miss teasing L over it. The entire thing was a convoluted combo apology and goodbye. It was an admission L knew he was going to die.

Of course, his friend was too far in denial to see how this episode was going to end.

L announced his plan to test the thirteen day rule. The rest of the task force protested such an extreme measure. He did too, but he didn’t voice it out loud since he knew where this was going.

The detective wouldn’t live to be able to test the rule.

“If we work this out, the entire case will be solved.”

The storm worsened. At the flash of thunder, the power temporarily went out. The screens darkened to an ominous whiteish red. It switched immediately to show Rem standing behind Watari. He was struggling through his heart attack to press the button behind the screen, but managed to delete all the data before he collapsed to the floor.

“Fuck,” He whispered as he noticed Light whispering to L. The great detective hadn’t been expecting Watari to die, and neither had he. Nothing the Shinigami had been thinking suggested she thought it necessary for the old man to die too.

He wasn’t close to Wammy personally, but the man opened his home up to any wayward geniuses. If it wasn’t for him, he’d probably be a criminal in Serbia. His age was the only thing that saved him back then. It wouldn’t save him now. He also wouldn’t have met Mello, or Near, or any of his other friends.

He was a good guy. He didn’t deserve to die like that.

Mello tensed, his entire body unmoving as he watched the scene. Near met his gaze on the other side and they both prepared for him to start screaming.

Future L was shaken by Watari’s death. It took him a moment to realize Rem was no longer in the
room with them. The other members of the task force panicked.

“Everyone! The Shiniga-“

They could hear his heart beat its last while the chorus behind it let out one last emphatic Kira.

Time slowed on screen as L’s spoon fell out of his hand. He started to fall to one side, his body glowing red from the screen. Red. Kira’s color. They all watched as Kira stared at him. He didn’t look triumphant yet, and then he lunged forward to catch the body, crashing to the floor at the same time.

Bells rang as L saw his life flash before his eyes. He wondered what it meant that he thought of Wammy’s in his final moments. The entire time the church bells kept ringing. For a moment, he thought Kira actually looked like he was regretting arranging his death, but once the images settled they showed him smirking. L’s eyes slowly closed, Kira's face the last thing he saw.

He died.

L actually died.

How could he just die?

It felt impossible, but there it was, being shown to them. It’s what would have happened, should have happened.

Rem killed L. That’s what they had in their future if Light didn’t talk to Misa.

He wanted to hate Light, but he couldn’t. Not after hearing his yelling when Kira took over. He also couldn’t hold future actions against him unless he thought the present Light capable of doing it. He got mad at the insinuation of torture cause he knew L would torture Higuchi if he didn’t give him what he wanted.

If the hand holding and almost declarations were any indication, present Light would not do anything to hurt L. He almost looked as devastated as the rest of them, but again, they basically all saw it coming.

If this were real though…he’d be in as much shock as Mello.

This could have happened.

Then Kira started screaming. He was almost amused by their attempts to protect themselves from the indefensible, but he kept glancing back to his best friend. Was he in shock?

Kira demanded the Shinigami come out, using that as an excuse to search for Rem’s remains. He found them and her Death Note, which he tucked into the waist band of his pants before calling for the others to come to the room.

“I swear I’ll avenge Ryuzaki’s death!”

Damn, he was a good liar.

He’d really be a challenging opponent. He was almost scared of what he was capable of, even as Light Yagami.

But he was also scared of what Mello could do and he didn’t let that get in the way of their
friendship, because it only mattered what he did do.

“We put our lives on the line when we chose to be here.”

Man, when he said that he sounded like L. Matsuda even said so. But the entire time he was talking his eyes were shielded by his bangs. It wasn’t until he was walking down the hall alone, and a flash of lightning revealed his eyes, that they could see they were red and his expression sinister.

“I am the God of the new world!”

Huh. That meant it was their time to shine, right?

The ending music snapped Mello out of whatever funk he’d gotten himself into, and he leapt to his feet, ”You fucking asshole!” He shouted, and Matt wasn’t sure who he was yelling at. He got prepared to tackle the other to the floor as he stepped closer, ”You promised me you were going to fucking win and this is what happened?”

He started towards the duo, and he leapt. He was the only person Mello wouldn’t injure in a fight, but even he got elbowed. All the time, he was still shouting, ”You fucking saw this coming, you dick!”

“Calm down.” He tried to reason with him, ”This hasn’t happened yet.”

“He fucking promised me!” He caught his arm, pinning it and then the other. At least when he was this emotional he was less coordinated.

“I know.” Fuck, that was the wrong thing to say, even though he did know. He knew how much L and the position of L meant to his best friend.

“What the fuck do you know?” His friend hissed, and he was stunned enough that he loosened his grip. He was forcefully thrown to the side, ”You don’t even care!”

Right, he couldn’t take anything irrational Mello said to heart, because ouch, he fucking cared. Otherwise he wouldn’t put up with half this shit, ”You need to calm down.”

“You’re being overemotional,” Near said, rising from his spot, ”Think about this rationally.”

Nope, not the right thing to say either.

“At least I actually feel something, you fucking robot!” Mello yelled.

Matt reacted without thinking. He threw himself forward and punched him across the face. Shit. He definitely wasn’t on top of his game right now, but he wasn’t scared anymore to say Near was his friend. He didn’t deserve his insults.

Still, he was better than this, normally. Maybe he was a little more shaken from the episode than he thought.

It made Mello freeze, then he returned the punch, ”Of course you’d side with the sheep.”

“Mello-“ L rose from his seat.

“I don’t fucking want to hear it!” He snapped, moving quickly to the door, ”Don’t follow me!”

He laid on the floor and groaned, staring at the ceiling. Near knelt next to him, ”Your nose is bleeding.”
“Is it?” He couldn’t give a damn if it was.

Aizawa knelt on his other side and helped him sit up, “Sure is.”

“I should go after him.” Matt tried to rise.

“You should worry about yourself,” Near muttered, ”Did you punch him for me?”

“He shouldn’t have called you a robot.” The computer genius took Aizawa’s offered hand, ”You’re my friend too, Near. He shouldn’t talk to you like that.”

“Thank you.” The white-haired kid muttered as he was led off to the side.

He noticed L unlocking the cuffs and going after Mello. Good, if he brought Light he’d only make it worse. Light grabbed Misa’s arm, and led her away, so hopefully he would solve that issue. He saw Near grab the left behind notebook to begin reviewing, moving to the computer Matsuda wasn’t on.

It looked like they were taking another break then.

Chapter End Notes

Three chapters in 24 hours? My Chilean flatmate is literally laughing at me because I've been yelling at my computer while doing this.

Also, I'm familiar with Hemingway's work, but it's been a long time since I've read his stuff. If I'm outright wrong about anything let me know. Otherwise the quotes are from For Whom The Bell Tolls and A Farewell to Arms, look them up if you want to understand more about the actual reference.

Sorry, just thought For Whom The Bell Tolls quotes would fit with the consistent bells tolling in the episode.

Like and review! All support is appreciated!
Mello glared out the window. L promised him he wouldn’t die. He made a fucking promise. And he knew. He fucking knew he was going to die. But instead of trying to live, he ran right to his death. He knew Light Yagami was Kira. All he needed to do was kill him. Once he was gone he could have talked with Rem about what to do with Misa.

But no, he did what he always criticised him for. He got emotional, he got attached, and then he fucked up and got himself and Watari killed.

He’d lost enough people in his life. His parents died. He left his home country behind for England of all places. He had no friends until he fell in with A and B. Both of them left him. Maybe he got too attached to L, but he thought he would be the one constant in his life, since Roger and Wammy were so old. He thought L would take him under his wing, that they could work cases together one day.

Then he just went and died? Fuck him!

Fuck Matt too! He was supposed to be on his side, even when he was trying to do something stupid. He wasn’t supposed to suddenly side with Near. Screw the fucking robot while he was at it! How could both of them watch L die and not feel anything? How was what he was feeling being overemotional?

“Ah, Mello?”

He didn’t turn around, ”Didn’t I say to leave me alone?”

“You did.” L crouched down next to him, ”But I have a feeling you don’t want to be alone.”

“Fuck off.” He crossed his arms, ”You broke your promise.”

“I haven’t yet.” The detective pointed out.

“But you would.” He scowled, ”For Kira. You’d pick him over me.”

“When did I make that decision?” He wondered.

“When you decided to die!” He turned to look at him.

“I could make that decision because I knew I had you to take over for me.” L smiled softly, and he fought to maintain his glare.

They didn’t exist to make it okay for him to die…he knew Kira had a trap but he went and set it off anyways. He apologized to his enemy for fucking losing! He wasn’t ready to take over the investigation. He wasn’t ready for L to be gone just like every other fucking person in his life.

“You can’t die until I prove I’m better than Near,” He demanded, because it was fucking childish to demand an apology, ”I’m going to inherit your title.”

The great detective tilted his head, ”After that outburst?”
“You died,” He hissed. What was wrong with being upset about that?

“I assure you I will try my best to stay alive in this future,” L said, “But you should have remembered that this hasn’t happened yet and likely will never happen.” It didn’t sound as harsh as his usual criticisms, “You should have listened to Near.” He glared again, but it didn’t faze the older man, “You two were getting along so well up until now.”

“So you think he’s better than me too?” Mello asked, cringing when the question lacked his usual anger. He really hadn’t expected Matt to pick Near over him, but it looked like he was just cursed to lose everyone he ever fucking cared about.

“I think you see a competition where one doesn’t exist.” His mentor shifted, ”Do you know why I started allowing children to train to be my heirs?"

The second rank frowned. Why? Wasn’t it natural that something the world needed shouldn’t be messed up by the death of one person? “You had a reason besides the obvious?”

“Yes.” L nodded, ”In part, it was to have a replacement should I die, but I’m young and until the Kira case I’ve never gotten this personally involved in an investigation. The chance of my death was significantly low.” He nodded, remembering his position wasn’t normally this dangerous. It was just this case, ”But I wanted to see if I could find someone who could surpass me.”

”Surpass you?” His eyebrows scrunched together in confusion, before clearing. ”You mean Near?”

The older man sighed, ”I really didn’t want to have to say this.”

”Say what?” He was just confused now.

”I never intended to choose between you and Near,” L said bluntly, ”I hoped that if you spent more time together in training you would eventually come to work together.”

Mello’s eyes widened, ”Why didn’t you just say that?”

”You would have worked with Near because that is what I wanted.” His grey eyes challenged him to deny that. He couldn’t. If L asked, he would have, ”Which wouldn’t work in the long run. You needed to choose to work with Near because you wanted to. If a partnership between you two was ever to flourish, it had to be founded on mutual trust and respect, not on my orders.”

”Then why make it a competition?” After all this time he would have just shared the title of L with Near? He wasn’t just going to be tossed aside as the boy who wasn’t good enough for the position? He wasn’t going to be left behind?

If it wasn’t a competition A would still be there. If A were still there B would still be there.

”I never wanted it to be a competition.” L sighed, ”Roger is the one that started the ranks, and I should have changed it…” He trailed off with a shake of his head, ”Has Near ever competed with you?”

No, which was what made it infuriating. He closed his eyes, bowing his head. He made a promise earlier to not lash out at him unless he had a reason. He still didn’t have a good reason to hate Near. He probably wouldn’t find one if he continued to search. The white-haired kid wasn’t perfect, but he wasn’t as flawed as he made him out to be in his mind, ”I fucked up with him, didn’t I?”

”Nothing that can’t be repaired.” L reached out to pat his head, ”Watari used to tell me words said in anger came not from the heart. Near understands you were upset.”
“And I really fucked up with Matt.” He had never hit his best friend seriously.

“He blames himself more than he blames you,” The detective noted.

“That idiot.” He found comfort in the observation. He hadn’t driven Matt away, not yet.

Though it wasn’t Matt’s job to control him. He should be in control of himself. He also deserved that punch in the face. If Matt saw Near as a friend worthy of defending…then he really had no reason to not try and be friends with him.

“One last thing.” He looked up at L. ”Your worth is not tied to whether or not you succeed me.” He tensed, ”The Wammy house will still support you if you choose another life. I would still take your calls if you did not want my position.”

He didn’t know what to say to that. He felt his eyes burning, and he hastily rubbed at them. He wouldn’t be irrelevant? Even if he never measured up to him? He wasn’t going to cry at being told that, but L knelt so he was closer to him. There was a moment of hesitation, before his arms wrapped around him, pulling him into a hug.

L’s hands were cold, but his chest was warm. He slowly returned the hug, ”Why?”

“Why the hug?” L chuckled, he could feel the vibration, ”Light told me he hugs his sister-“

“That’s not what I meant,” He snapped, but didn’t pull away, ”Why do I matter if I’m not your heir?”

“You matter because you are Mello.” He squeezed tighter, ”Dear Mello. No other reason is necessary.”

He tightened his grip, ”How come you’ve never said that before?”

“I was…afraid, I suppose,” L muttered, ”I didn’t want you to be like me so I kept my distance.”

“If you’d said that to A he’d still be here.” Mello didn’t mean to say it like an accusation, but the thought kept resurfacing.

The taller man’s body stiffened, ”My failure to the first generation I will carry with me for the rest of my life.” He pulled back from the hug, ”I hope I can reverse what damage I have done to the second.”

Mello managed a small smile, ”Being around Light’s made you soft.”

“Do you still consider that a bad thing?” L tilted his head again.

“…maybe.” Which was a lie. If he could feel this close to his mentor then it couldn’t be too bad. He crossed his arms again when he remembered what was missing, ”Where is your boyfriend anyways?”

“He thought it best if we talk alone.” The detective glanced back at the door leading back to the main room, ”He is in discussion with Misa about how she should handle Rem when we capture the third Kira.”

“You trust him to do that?” Mello narrowed his eyes.

“I trust that saving my life is more important to him than ending his own at the moment.” L didn’t look too sure about it, but he was probably right. Considering how stubborn and air-headed Misa
could be, their argument would probably be a lot longer.

He nodded, but didn’t move to rise.” Can we just…sit here? I’m not…” Ready to face the others after once again fucking up.

L nodded, settling next to his side. Another moment passed, before he wrapped an arm around his shoulders. He almost smiled. Intentional or not, he was choosing him right now over Light.

Even if a nagging part of him screamed it was the wrong choice.

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Aizawa let out a sigh of relief when the bleeding stopped quickly. Matt still looked a little out of it, but he just watched Ryuuzaki and Watari die. The two men likely meant more to the kid than they did to him. He was sad the two died, but they all knew going into this it was highly likely they would die. He accepted the wipe from Watari, tilting the boy's face up so he could clean off the blood.

“You shouldn’t feel responsible for Mello’s actions,” He said gently.

“I know.” The kid tried to draw in on himself, but he held firm, “It’s just…”

“Does it have to do with what you wanted to tell me?” He asked as blue eyes tried to break his gaze.

“Sort of…” Matt’s hands twitched as if he were wishing for something to fiddle with, ”Mello’s got issues, but he’s still my best friend and the one thing I never wanted him doubt that and now he thinks I like Near better than him-“

“Slow down there,” He interrupted, ”One punch in the face isn’t going to change reality.”

“You don’t get it.” The kid sighed.

“Then explain it to me.” He smiled, ”I may not be a genius, but I know how hard it is when someone you care about doesn’t understand how much they mean to you. You think my wife doesn’t have her doubts about me?”

Matt bit his lip, before seeming to decide to talk to him, ”You know earlier, when you asked if we could handle the pressure?” He nodded, and the boy glanced at Watari, who was standing with an ice pack, ”Is it okay if I tell him?”

The older gentleman for once looked his age, ”I doubt there will be many secrets after this video is over, my boy.”

The third rank hugged himself, ”Mello, Near, and I are actually the second generation to be trained to be L’s heir.” He remained kneeling in front of him, ”The first one had two older boys, A and B. I remember when I first got to the orphanage they were all set at the top of the institute. A was the first, and B was the second…and no one really could change that.”

“No one until Mello.” The kid looked at him sadly, ”Even though he was younger than them he took the first rank in a few months. That made the competition real…and A…A couldn’t handle the pressure….B was the one that found his body in their room…He hung himself.”

Aizawa heard a faint noise of horror being made by the Chief, but he suspected something like this had happened. Who’s idea was it to make kids compete to be L anyways? He wasn’t afraid to give
L or Watari a piece of his mind after this, but first, he needed the full story. He placed a hand on the orphan’s shoulder, silently encouraging him to continue.

“B lost it. I never told Mello…but before B left I found him searching for Mello…I really think he would have killed him if I hadn’t gotten Roger…” He took in a shaky breath, ”He left right after talking to Roger…and we didn’t know what happened to him until he resurfaced a year or so later…” He squeezed, trying to keep him grounded, ”He was killing people in Los Angeles. He murdered three people…mutilated their corpses afterwards…”

His voice got quieter, ”L caught him and put him in prison. Kira killed him a few months ago.”

What did that do to a kid? Even if they were geniuses, that didn’t mean they shouldn’t be protected from shit like this.

“That shouldn’t have happened,” He said, because someone needed to say something.

“But it did, and it messed Mello up.” Messed Matt up too, but he was focused on his friend. They weren’t pressed for time, ”He was friends with A. I think…he and B saw it coming. I mean, Mello doesn’t blame himself, but Near came along and bumped him into second, and I want to make sure he doesn’t feel like A did but now he thinks I’m putting Near in front of him too-“

“Ryuzaki will tell him you aren’t.” He assured the kid, ”You aren’t the one who’s supposed to be taking care of him.”

“Still…” Matt’s eyes darkened, ”Wouldn’t you feel better if you told your wife yourself?”

Aizawa managed a smile, ”I would feel better, but sometimes the person who really convinces my wife I love her is her mother.”

That made him almost smile, ”Are you calling L our mother?”

He snorted, ”Ryuzaki’s the furthest thing from a mother I’ve ever seen.”

Matt shrugged, ”I wouldn’t know. I don’t remember my parents…the institute’s the closest thing I’ve got to family.”

Yet it failed two of its own. He ruffled the kid’s hair, ”I’ll buy an international plan as soon as this is done so we can stay in touch. You ever need parental advice, I’m willing to listen, and maybe if there’s time once everything’s settled you can come meet my family.”

The orphanage was Matt’s home. He could act as a reminder of what was actually normal, or an escape if he needed it. The kid blinked, surprised, before throwing himself at him, ”Thank you, Aizawa.”

“No problem, brat.” He returned the hug, ”Feeling better?”

“Yes.” He reluctantly let go, ”But I’d still like to check on Mello…?”

“Go ahead.” He smiled, ”But if you hear yelling don’t interrupt.”

“Got it.” The young teen nodded, then hurried away.

That left the task force, Near, and Watari. Near was on the computer with Light’s notebook in his lap. Matsuda was on the phone with the director of the film Misa was going to be working on, trying to get them to fax over the script. He turned to the older man, ”Why have a second
The man sat down with a sigh, "We never expected Adam to…"

"You didn’t expect it?" Aizawa held back his anger. Watari just watched a future version of himself die. He watched the man he worked for, and often took care of, die. It would be cruel to unleash all his anger on him, but he wouldn’t just ignore this, "You take away their names and push them to be someone they’re not. You’re telling me a bunch of geniuses didn’t see why that’s a terrible idea?"

"Aizawa-" The Chief started.

"He’s right," Watari interrupted, "We failed Adam and Beyond. I’m not sure we’re doing much better with Matt, Mello, and Near. I fear what we will be shown of their futures without Ryuzaki."

He forgot about that. They were Ryuzaki’s heirs. Now that he was dead they would be taking over the investigation. He wondered if it meant they would be meeting Near in the next episode. His anger faded, replaced by worry. They were still so young…and if that was how Mello reacted to seeing Ryuzaki’s death he dreaded seeing how he would react to his actual death.

"How are you doing, Watari?" The Chief inquired, "We did see your death…"

"I’m past the age where I fear death." The gentleman smiled tiredly, "I accepted the possibility when I became his proxy."

"I didn’t expect Rem to kill you," Mogi admitted, "It came out of nowhere."

"Which only shows how dangerous she is." Watari sighed again, "If Light can’t convince her…"

They fell into a tense silence. If Light couldn’t convince Misa to give up on Kira…he didn’t want to think about what would happen.

Near partially listened to the conversation behind him. He’d known Mello had an inferiority complex which caused him to lash out like he did. He hadn’t noticed the abandonment issues. He expected people to leave him because he wasn’t good enough to make them stay in the past, and he was only second best in the present.

It made a disturbing amount of sense.

It also explained why Matt seemed to view them as better friends than he did. He was happy at the admission they were friends. He just wished it hadn’t made Mello as upset as it did.

He turned his attention back to the screen. It was easy to find the song that went behind the first ending, nor was it that hard to find the second ending song either. He brought up the lyrics for both, curious about the choices.

Everything in the show seemed to have a meaning, and while the openings were obvious due to their pictures, the endings were less so.

"I had a dream no one else had, I threw away everything I didn’t need."

That was the first line of the song used in the first opening, and it fit Kira pretty well. A lot of the lyrics did. The first song, however, still spoke of a rift between reality and his ideals, with Kira still
bound by sacrifice.

“The Lies, Fear, Vanity, Grief, I won’t be weak enough to be caught by such negativity.”

In a way, this could also apply to L. His dream to become the greatest detective in the world, a detective that could solve any case and pick whatever case he wanted to work on. It was something the world had never seen before, something no one else likely ever imagined. He too threw away what he didn’t need, and wasn’t affected by negativity.

“I’m a trickster who doesn’t know loneliness.”

It was hard to know loneliness if one first didn’t understand companionship. If Matt and Mello were to come out of this resenting him, after he’d gotten his hopes up about them becoming friends…solitude would hurt a lot more. Both L and Kira depended on their tricks to win, only taking direct action out of desperation.

“And ask myself ‘Won’t I be lost?’”

Light Yagami lost himself to Kira. L lost to Kira as well. They’d lost sight of the sky, of their high ideals, and got caught up in the buildings that made up the real world. Yet, somehow, they still weren’t lured into thinking like the general masses. They yearned for someone in the future to grab their hand and lead them to the future, but only in their mind could they achieve their ideals.

Near shifted in the seat again as the lyrics spoke of achieving what no one else had, a crystal of oneself. Crystals were hardly the most valuable of materials, but he’d typically found that they symbolized clarity. L and Kira did have definite roles, they knew who they were and made the most of their lives, for better or worst.

They didn’t wither away like many normal people did.

“It’s just my faith. The absolute truth.”

Overall a song about following ones beliefs and trying to change reality to fit ones ideals. Not necessarily a dark message unless ones ideals were dark. But if the song was to apply to both L and Kira, then it followed the second ending song applied to both Kira and himself, Matt, and Mello.

That worried him.

The second song described Kira’s world in reality. One page could cause eternal depression. His strategy was fleeting in their eyes. Without any pleading, or any appeal by the world, his evil would become the law, and lead to prison. If he remembered right, those lyrics came Kira was on the elevator in the end scene. Hopefully he would be led to prison.

A note with deadly poison...a direct reference to the Death Note. The drool at the incessant lies a reference to Kira’s followers. Judgment passed on generalized crimes…again, obvious. But then it asks who will break the deadlock? Which suggested multiple parties were competing.

Mello and himself would not be working together in the future. That was…disheartening.

A world where Kira’s crimes are forgiven? A world where Kira has the ultimate say over others? His deaths redeem the game of law? He moved on from that part, trying to understand the chorus. It was asking for morals while encouraging the eraser rain. Erase, delete, he presumed more reference to the killings. Was the call for morals a reference to their upcoming battle?

A mention of a battle of wits, so he assumed he was right.
There were more lyrics about Kira’s world, or life being robbed away, of killing the criminals immediately.

“Why does the god of death chuckle over the consequence?”

Ryuk was going to find the ending amusing. Whether that was in Kira’s defeat or his success remained in question.

“My name is Kira, even you’re Kira”

That part was not included in the ending, but it was what he found most unsettling. Would one of them fall and become a Kira? Would one of them use the Death Note? He scrolled through the rest of the dark lyrics until he came to the last line.

“It’s an unstoppable fate, a chain race.”

A chain race? If he remembered right from one of Matt’s video games, that was where cars raced dragging other cars. A competition where those racing hoped not to break the chain or get hopelessly tangled up in each other. Analogically speaking, it meant they could only hope that didn’t lose each other, either to death or in the upcoming conflict.

He flipped through Light’s notes as he thought about the unstoppable part. He was becoming more certain they didn’t have to follow this path. They could beat the odds, change their ‘fate’.

His notes filled up about half of the book. He curiously turned through the rest of the pages, freezing as he came to one in particular. There was a corner of it missing, ripped so well that it almost looked like it was cut out. It would be about the same size as the piece of the Death Note Mr. Yagami was carrying…

He hadn’t paid much attention to Light touching the piece of the Death Note. He knew it wasn’t enough to bring back Kira and it was a personal moment for the father and son so he gave them as much privacy as the room allowed. While Light was obviously going through a crisis…no, he shouldn’t dismiss the possibility.

He pulled up the camera feed, finding only Miss Amane in her room.

“Chief Yagami.” He hurried out of the chair, ”I need the piece of the Death Note.”

The older man barely paused in passing it over. As he suspected there was a little ridge around the edge that suggested it had been torn out instead of cut by scissors. Not something anyone was expecting to notice, and the size and lines were similar enough that unless someone were looking for it, they would not be able to tell the difference.

“What’s wrong, Near?” A voice drew him out of his head.

Matt, Mello, and L were walking back into the room.

“Light has the piece of the Death Note,” He said quickly, letting the notebook and the fake slip of paper fall out of his hands, ”I can’t find him on the security feed. He isn’t with Miss Amane.”

“What are you saying?” The Chief demanded.

“Light may attempt to kill himself with the Death Note.”
Oooh boy. This reached 4,000 words so fast. I didn't want to leave it like this but I'll probably post the next part early tomorrow...er, today I guess depending on time zones.

Despite being another sad chapter, I'm ridiculously happy with myself for winning a game of Words with Friends with my Swiss flatmate despite not speaking any German. Though I think German is the worst language for that format of that game. Of the little I do know, only about five of the words are less than seven letters, not including articles.

Where is Light? I'm torn between having him be on the roof or a random, generic room.
Misa had been happy when Light led her out of the room. She really didn't have to do anything for Kira to win. All she needed to do was let herself be arrested and Rem would take care of it for her. Considering they already had evidence against her, and the video confirmed everything they suspected, it was way too easy for them to win.

Granted, it was Kira who made the plan so of course it was brilliant.

The door closed behind him, "Misa…"

"Isn't it great?" She smiled, "Rem will get rid of Ryuzaki and the others for us." His eyes narrowed in anger and she took a step back, "Of course, it sucks that your dad is part of that. Maybe we can make a deal-"

"Shut up," Light interrupted, shaking his head, "It's over Misa. I don't want to be Kira."

"You're only saying that because you don't have your memories." She rolled her eyes. Once he remembered, their plan would be back on track.

Together, they would make a better world.

"I am never going to be Kira again," He said, and something in his tone made her believe him, "I don't want to, and the task force wouldn't let me."

"It would be easy for Rem to kill Higuchi while you're holding it." They were going to have to let him hold it if they were going to find out where the other notebook was hidden. Now that he knew all he had to do was pretend like he was going to tell them long enough for the third Kira to die. Then there was nothing they could do about his memories, "Don't you want to create a better world?"

"It wouldn't be a better world." The smartest man she knew ran a hand through his hair, "Nothing good can come from murder."

She huffed, "There's a difference between murder and execution."

"Then why has half the world outlawed capital punishment?" He challenged.

Misa frowned, confused, "What's that?"

"Never mind." He pinched the bridge of his nose, "If I couldn't be Kira, would you continue without me?"

"Huh? Why couldn't you be Kira?" They already saw how easy it was for Kira to return.

"Hypothetically," He said, "If I wasn't around, would you try to be Kira?"

Hypothetically…oh, she didn't even want to think about it. But since he asked…she doubted she'd be able to get the notebook back on her own. If Light wasn't around Ryuzaki would probably just destroy it anyways since they knew the rules were fake. She'd never find the other on her own. Light was the one with the plan, the one that made all of this possible.
Rem could only save her once.

"I couldn't be Kira without you," She answered earnestly.

"That's what I thought." He nodded, before turning around and leaving.

Misa sat down on her bed. That was a weird conversation, but he was probably a little upset about Ryuzaki's death in the future. She kinda felt bad Watari died…but the new world would take sacrifice. Kira understood that even if Light didn't. She just had to wait for the others to do their job.

People wanted Kira. The world needed Kira.

She brought her phone out to look up capital punishment. Oh, the death penalty? That hadn't been gone long. She looked it up, and only thirty years ago there were less than twenty countries with it outlawed. Laws changed all the time. They could easily go back to instituting executions as a punishment for crimes. Besides, both China and the US had it so it wasn't like it was just the smaller countries killing criminals.

She stared up at ceiling.

Rem could only save her once. What would happen now that they had the heirs against them?

She believed they would be victorious.

They had to be!

She wasn't really paying attention to time when the door to her room slammed open. She sat up, noticing it was Ryuzaki coming towards her, "How long has it been since Light left?"

"I don't know." Misa shrugged, "We only talked for a few minutes."

"What did you talk about?" The detective demanded, looking agitated.

"Is something wrong?" She asked back, because it was unlike him to look this upset. Also, if he wanted to know what they were talking about he could just check the footage on the cameras he had in her room. She didn't have to tell him anything.

"Misa, Light has the piece of the Death Note. We believe he will attempt to kill himself." She gasped. Even if they weren't in agreement right now, she still cared about Light, "I need to know what you talked about."

She nodded. Ryuzaki wouldn't lie about this, would he? She thought back, "He was asking me if I would keep being Kira if he couldn't."

"And what did you tell him?" His typically cold grey eyes were almost desperate.

"That I couldn't be Kira without him." Oh no, was that the wrong thing to say? She hadn't known her Light was suicidal! She got up, "We need to find him!"

Except if he was suicidal…he would make sure they couldn't intervene. All he had to do was write his name down. Forty seconds…he was probably already dead.

Was he doing it because of what she said? Was he doing it so that Kira would never kill again? If he'd asked her that like that, she would have told him she'd give up being Kira too! Ryuzaki swept from the room, and she hesitantly followed back to the main room. She thought he just forgot why
it was worth it, that he had given up on their cause.

Not that he had given up on life itself.

She still loved him. She couldn't stand to see him die…

She desperately hoped they were on time.

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To be or not to be, that is the question.

Light watched the sun set. What a fitting time to die. He'd leave the world at the same time as the last rays of light colored the sky. He looked down the building, unable to even feel the flutter of fear most would at just the thought of falling from this height. It was too easy to climb over the railing and just sit on the edge, the piece of the Death Note he'd kept hidden in his shirt cuff now in his hand.

Was it really just yesterday he thought himself innocent?

He didn't fear death. He didn't fear what came after death. His conscience was decided, it would not make a coward of him. He told Ryuzaki the flaw in the young prince of Denmark was his inaction. If he had killed himself as he wanted to in the beginning, or had the willpower to kill his uncle as he wanted to after the revelation…no one else would have died.

His fault was past, his sins already committed. There was no prayer he could say, even if he wanted to. He doubted there was any god who would listen to his repentance now.

"My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent," He muttered, resisting the urge to laugh. He should have done it by now, "And, like a man to double business bound, I stand in pause where I shall first begin, and both neglect."

He wouldn't be Claudius anymore. He wouldn't put his own ambitions and desires above what was right. He closed his eyes, leaning back against the railing. Why was he hesitating? He knew what he had to do. He could jump forward and let himself fall. He could write his name down on the piece of paper, experience the pain all his victims faced. He had to do something!

Without him, Misa couldn't continue as Kira.

Without him, there was no chance of Kira returning.

He rubbed at his wrist. This was the second time today the handcuff was off, but this time he was more aware of the missing weight on his arm.

He'd miss Ryuzaki, but this was for him and everyone else.

Ryuzaki wasn't completely safe even if he did die, but he was safer without him than if he stayed. He'd also never have to see the sorrow in his eyes at Watari's death, or feel his terror in the death grip as they watched his own death. He promised he would protect him, and this was the only way he could ensure he would never hurt him again.

He was, after all, his greatest enemy, just without his memories.

He opened his eyes, wondering if Ryuzaki managed to straighten things out with his heirs. That was also his fault but he hoped his advice on how to handle a younger sibling helped.
He wondered how long it would take them to realize he was gone. Probably not too long, if they checked to see he was really with Misa. Near had his notes. Those included all the plans he could think of to convince the model to help them against Rem. He also wrote where in the woods it was more likely he would have hidden the Death Note.

He'd done all he could, because he couldn't become Kira again.

Then he'd gone to the roof, wondering if he'd be able to hear a bell toll for him. He craved the same acceptance as Ryuzaki in the future. It wasn't raining, so the scene wouldn't be the same, but he'd always liked high places. He liked a clear sight of the sky since he'd grown up in the city where the buildings always blocked it. He looked up, the evening star now visible.

The evening star after sunset, the morning star before sunrise. It technically wasn't even a star. It was a planet, whose luminescence was false. It was just reflected light like the moon. It wouldn't be seen without help.

If he never picked up the Death Note...he'd never have been seen. He was nothing.

It was easy to switch the pieces of paper. Everyone was paying attention to his face, not what his hands were doing. He knew it was only a matter of time before Mello snapped and Ryuzaki would be forced to talk to him alone. The one thing he knew for certain about the teenager was that he wasn't in control of his emotions after all. He'd done his best to be helpful to the others in the last episodes.

He wanted them to have one last good opinion of him.

He pulled the pen out of his pocket. "But long it could not be till that her garments, heavy with their drink," He wrote the first character of his name. The moon was to his back. Wasn't that what his father told him at the beginning? That he turned his back on his name when he became Kira?

He wrote slowly, unhurried, "Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay."

Night came next, "To muddy death." Would someone's world be darker without him? Would it be like the night had settled without light? He doubted it. If he was any sort of light in someone's life, he was one that blinded them. He was a light that hurt to be around.

His hand shook as he tried to write the last character. God.

A tear slipped down his cheek, and he wiped it away angrily. It was hardly the time to cry, not when he was steadily sinking in the river. He was drowning in the blood he spilled. He was past the point where tears could help. The last life that would end by his hand was his own. He set the pen to paper. One last character, then a forty second wait before it was over.

Trying to be a god was what had started this whole mess. Writing god would end it. No going back.

If he could just bring himself to write it.

He laughed, a broken sound, even to his own ears. He needed to be stronger than this. No one else was willing to stop him. This was his only chance.

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L ran to the roof.

Statistically speaking, around half of suicides occurred within thirty minutes of the person making
the final decision to end their lives. Of that, most occurred within ten minutes, especially in Light's age bracket. There was a fifty fifty chance Light was already dead. He was very decisive and once the name was written there was no going back. There was no stopping the impending heart attack.

There was no saving him.

Light was decisive, but he wasn't rash. He put thought into his actions. He'd been thinking about it for awhile now. He hoped something in that time gave him something to live for.

If he created any hesitation, there was a chance he was alive.

If there wasn't a part of Light that wanted to be saved, he was beyond saving. Even with everyone else checking the tower, it would take too long to do a thorough sweep of all twenty-five floors. They could get lucky and stumble upon wherever Light decided to die, but if it was truly random…they wouldn't find him in time.

The roof was so obvious he didn't put too much hope in him being there…but if his death was what pushed him over the edge, then he might go over a physical edge.

He knew this was coming. He knew not to leave him alone.

He burst through the door. It was a clear evening. The outside lights had just turned on. He walked out, looking around, trying to decide which direction his friend would go in. He paused for just a moment, when he heard the broken laughter of a broken man. He moved towards it immediately.

His mind stopped as his body moved. Light had a pen to the little piece of paper. He couldn't see how much of his own name he already wrote, but if his heart stopped so would his own. He vaulted over the guardrail, landing in a crouch by his side. He knocked the pen out of one of his hands, the other he pinned down. He loomed over the younger man.

Light didn't look ashamed to be caught, nor did he look relieved to be saved.

Maybe he hadn't saved him?

He couldn't bring himself to check the paper. He couldn't bring himself to ask if this was his last minute of life. His free hand pressed onto his chest, feeling his heart still beating beneath it. He started counting to forty, aware he might have less, feeling like time moved slower. He stared into those broken brown eyes, knowing that if he saw the life leave them it would break him.

This could be it.

Light complained about his terrible timing, but he was out of time.

"I love you," He said.

There was no other word for it.

He felt Light's heart skip a beat, and for a terrifying fraction of a second thought that was the end.

It continued beating strong under his hand, even after the forty seconds had passed. Light stared at him in confusion, "You...what?"

"I love you," He repeated.

"You're insane." He didn't look away.
L pulled him up into an embrace, "A madness most discreet."

He hadn't failed. He was fine with Light not returning his sentiments as long as he was alive.

"You shouldn't…" Light pushed himself into a more comfortable position, placing him essentially in his lap, "You shouldn't have stopped me." His breath moved the hair by his ear.

"You shouldn't have tried to end your life," He replied in kind, "This isn't the solution to our problems, Light."

"Our problem is Kira," The college student muttered.

"But the answer isn't your death," He insisted, "I am better with you by my side, and I need you to finish this case."

"You'd be fine without me." Light tried to pull back but he just held him closer. He could count the number of times he'd given a hug on both hands, making a significant portion of them today. Both were because of the young man he was currently holding. If he could keep holding him, he might get used to hugging people.

"How can I go forward when my heart is here?" He asked quietly.

Light's breath stuttered, and his grip loosened more, but he rose to the occasion, "These violent delights have violent ends."

"I would hardly call my feelings for you sudden." He allowed him to pull back, but made sure he could look him in the eyes, "Nor do I think they will end." He smiled, "The more I give to thee, the more I have, for both are infinite." He lifted the hand he was holding to his lips to press a kiss to the back of it, before taking the slip of the Death Note.

The character for God was only a few lines from complete. It was too close.

But he made it in time.

"Romeo and Juliet ended up dead." Light didn't take his hand back.

He chuckled, "Then we'll take it slowly and wisely."

Brown eyes lit up with slight amusement, "You're assuming I share your feelings."

"I am." He ran his thumb over the back of his hand, "Was I wrong to?"

"…No."

"Then it's as okay for you to die as it is for me to." He brought his other hand up to touch his face, noticing it was wet from tears, "I know you feel you have to die for me, but please try to live for me."

Light tensed again, and for a moment he thought he wouldn't answer. He averted his gaze, "If I wasn't Kira we'd never have met."

"What matters is that we did meet," He said confidently, then slowly leaned forward. He gave Light the chance to back away if he wanted to. He rested his forehead on the others, "And that we make each other happy."

"I don't deserve it," Light muttered.
"Let me decide that." He kept his eyes closed, "Let me save you."

The beautiful young man sighed, "You already have."

He had never kissed someone because he liked them, much less loved them. It had always stemmed from curiosity, the kisses more like an experiment than an activity he enjoyed. He was looking forward to enjoying this one when there was a shout.

"Found them! Everything looks fine!" Matt shouted.

He pulled back to see the computer genius running towards them, slightly annoyed at the interruption. Light pushed him away so he could rise, "Welcome to the wonderful world of having younger siblings."

"I hate it already," He muttered.

Matt latched onto Light in a hug, "You promised me we'd play video games."

His…love sent him a bewildered look and he made a mental note to tell him about A later. Mello and Near showed up next, the former punching the older teenager and berating him about how he should be smarter. The latter came up to him, "How close was it?"

"Too close," He rested a hand on his head.

"Will he be alright?" The youngest inquired.

"Maybe." One conversation couldn't fix everything, but it was a step in the right direction.

It would take work, a lot of effort, but he always appreciated a challenge.

Getting Light to love himself as much as he loved him might be one of the greatest he'd ever undertaken. Which would only make it that much more satisfying when he succeeded.

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, I know his name should technically be the other way around but I like how this turned out and English is my first language.

I accidentally made myself 32 crescent rolls this morning cause I didn't expect the dough to rise so much. Does anyone know what the technical difference between them and croissants are? Because I know they're two different things but my flatmates don't and they seem really happy at the idea that I could make croissants...

Hope you guys liked this chapter! Leave a kudos if you did!
Souichiro looked his son in the eyes. If the eyes were the windows to the soul, he could see how broken Light’s was. He was suffering under a terrible burden, one he couldn’t understand or begin to help with. It was frustrating as a parent to admit there was something he couldn’t help his child with. From the way Matt hadn’t backed away when he pulled his son in for a hug, there were people who could.

“I’m sorry, Dad,” Light whispered into his shoulder.

“I’m not mad.” How could he be? He threatened the same thing not too long ago. He was still uncertain what he would do if Light were gone…

He had been terrified after Near had announced his son’s intentions. The first place he went to check was their room, before he and his team split up to check the other floors. It was horrible because they didn’t have cell phones. He had no way of knowing if the others found him, his son or his body. He didn’t know until Mogi delivered the good news.

Matsuda joined their hug, wrapping one arm around both of them, ”You had us really worried, Light.”

“Matsuda.” Aizawa stepped forward.

Light chuckled, causing everyone to freeze, ”Thank you for worrying about me, Matsuda.”

The young detective’s grip tightened, ”Of course I’m worried about you! You’re like my brother!” He and his son moved so they could look at him, and he blushed, ”I mean, don’t feel weird! I see the Chief kind of like my dad too!” His blush deepened, ”Ah…haha, can we just ignore everything I’ve said?”

Souichiro chuckled this time, ”I am flattered you see me that way.”

Matsuda never spoke much about his family. He wasn’t close to his parents and he didn’t have any siblings. He didn’t view the detective in the same way he did Light, but he’d taken the young man under his wing as soon as he joined the NPA. If he had a work son then it would be Matsuda.

“So am I.” Light stepped back, ”Is that why you were always so obsessed with whether I had a girlfriend or not?”

“Aha.” The sometimes absent minded detective rubbed the back of his head, ”I just thought you looked a little lonely. What kid hangs out at a police station?”

His son rolled his eyes, ”A genius one.”

He was doing everything he normally did, but there was a slight emptiness to his actions. He wasn’t withdrawing from interaction so just that was a good sign. They couldn’t force him to have a reason to live, but they could remind him their lives wouldn’t be better if he died. He squeezed his shoulder one last time before stepping away and letting the others move closer.

After what Matt told them about A…he didn’t mind letting the kids be closer than he was.
He wondered what Adam was like. If he was supposed to be a generation above the boys, would he have been around Light's age? Likely older if Beyond went to a real jail for his crimes, but Ryuzaki could have pulled strings to protect the other heirs. Both were smart enough to be considered replacements for Ryuzaki, much like his son.

A couldn't cope with the pressure put on him by those around him...he couldn't be what everyone wanted him to be so he ended his life. Beyond then gave everything, even his morals, but he still didn't know the entirety of the case.

How much of them did Mello see in his son?

Matt seemed like a caring boy once he started taking all this seriously. He was scared at the thought of losing someone, especially when many of them had seen it coming. It made sense for him to stick close to Light. Mello, however, went back and forth between caring too much and not caring at all. He didn't value all human life, simply the lives of those close to him.

Suddenly he didn't want to know how much of Adam and Beyond the blond saw in Light.

“I think now would be a good time for dinner.” Watari smiled, ”We can continue with the viewing after.”

“How much longer do you think we have?” Aizawa asked, checking his watch.

“If we assume that the opening switched halfway through what we are being shown, then we still have thirteen episodes,” Light answered as he leaned against the back of the couch, ”Which will be around five more hours if there aren’t too many interruptions.”

“How long?” Matsuda tilted his head, ”Is that a good thing?”

“That depends.” Ryuzaki sat on the armrest, ”If Kira falls for the trap, Mello, Matt, and Near should be able to narrow down who is Kira.”

“What trap?” Mogi asked.

“A few episodes ago Ryuzaki said that I could succeed him as L,” Light answered, ”There would be chaos if we let it slip that L’s dead, so naturally you are going to have me fill in for him. It would be ideal for Kira to have the power of L.”

“But we’ll know he’s not the real L.” Mello nodded, ”We’ll work separately, but we’ll eventually have to work with the Japanese task force. It should be obvious to us that the second L and Kira are the same person once that happens.”

“Still doesn’t guarantee we’ll win.” Matt shrugged, ”But it means we’ve got a good shot at it.”

“We’ll win,” Near said confidently, ”It’s the cost I’m worried about. We haven’t seen Kira driven to desperation yet.”

The Chief frowned, acknowledging the boy had a point. What would be the price for victory? Ryuzaki and Watari already died so they could give the heirs an advantage. If they couldn’t work with the task force it meant they wouldn’t be able to freely exchange information. It increased the chances they would be caught in the crossfire…

No, not caught in the crossfire. If Kira was L he could order them into situations where they would die.
There was no doubt in his mind he would sacrifice all of them for his own survival.

“I wouldn’t worry too much about your future actions,” Light said.

“Hypocrite,” Mello muttered.

His son raised his eyebrows, then looked at Misa, ”There’s still a chance that Kira could return, so I should take his actions seriously.” She blushed and averted her gaze. Did that mean she had a plan? Though it looked like Light was aware of that…best to let him handle it. If it were a threat he would tell them about it.

“Not that seriously,” Ryuzaki chided.

The college student ignored the detective, ”Anything you three do is because of Kira, so don’t consider them a reflection of yourself. Desperate times call for desperate measures.”

Watari returned with the next round of food, Light and Ryuzaki wheeling their chairs closer to the rest of them. There wasn’t much conversation as they spoke, all of them contemplating what else would be revealed.

How many of their deaths would they be seeing?

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Mogi didn’t see what the purpose was in showing them more of the future. They knew who the third Kira was, as well as who the other two were. They had enough information to stop the killings, though they would have to wait a few days to gather acceptable evidence against Higuchi. They didn’t need to see more, and if it was going to show the kids joining the fight…

Light warned them not to feel guilty, and that was probably for a good reason.

The Death Note entering their world only brought suffering, mental and physical.

Even if it never came to be, it was still cruel to know what should have been.

The episode started with something they’d seen before, a condensed form of Ryuzaki’s original broadcast. Then his suspicion of the police, the detective's voice overlaying Kira’s actions. Then the FBI's investigation and deaths, followed by Naomi Misora’s. Then the focus on Light, from the initial voiceage of suspicion to their first contact.

It swiftly moved into the appearance of the second Kira. He tensed once again at Ukita’s death. Ukita was the first one of them to die. Watari and Ryuzaki were next, and in a sense, so had Light. Four of their already small group were gone. If the college student was correct, they were only around two-thirds of the way through this. He didn’t want to see anyone else he knew personally die, didn’t want them to think for the rest of their life they should have died like that.

They rewatched Kira being brought in to help the investigation, then Misa’s arrest and resulting confinement. Then Kira being confined as well, once again giving up his memories to return to being Light. The way they were released got shown before it showed Light helping with the investigation.

Next came the suspicion of Yotsuba, followed by Matsuda’s foolish, but successful, attempt to infiltrate them. There was a brief repeat of him faking his death before it moved on to Misa
tricking Higuchi into admitting he was the third Kira. From there it skipped to the plan to capture the businessman being carried out. He made the eye deal, but was ultimately arrested.

Mogi closed his eyes as the fake rules were read again. He didn’t want to see Ryuzaki and Watari’s deaths again.

Except the deaths weren’t shown again. The repeat was the record Ryuzaki was keeping of the Kira investigation meaning he couldn't record his own death.

“The fact that now you are reading this message means I am no longer alive.”

The message appeared on the computer screen as his voice read it aloud.

“I hereby leave this record as my firm achievement. That is all.”

Kira was shown deleting it, and the message disappeared into pixels.

The scene switched to show what was left of the task force, with Aizawa back, ten days after the funeral. He was relieved the funeral wasn’t shown. The revealed Watari’s identity, Quillsh Wammy, an inventor who founded orphanages around the world with his fortune.

“He was a fine man, a hero.”

“Thank you, Matsuda.” Watari smiled.

Their future problem was that they couldn’t stay in that building anymore. The Chief made a noise of agreement, before turning to the murderer at work on the computer. Kira was busy transferring the system and creating everything they would need to continue the pretence L was still alive. They intended to continue coordinating police efforts.

“But, who is gonna take the place of L?”

Ryuzaki’s trap, just as they said it would. The power of L wasn’t something Kira could resist.

“What are you talking about, Light? You are the only one who can take on the role of L.”

Just as expected. Kira tried to pass it off, creating excuses that would later likely be the basis of why they would be unable to stop Kira. He shook his head as Matsuda tapped on Aizawa’s shoulder to have him back him up. It was decided they would work out of Kira’s apartment, with the college student acting as both L and Watari. Discussion then switched to what should be done with the notebook.

He was surprised Kira didn’t try to be the one to hide it, or keep it in his possession.

He chuckled at Matsuda’s half-hearted attempt to volunteer to be the one to hide it. He hoped the younger man never changed. It would take time, after all, for Near, Mello, and Matt to build up the reputation to be able to challenge L. Time they would spend running in circles on the orders of the criminal they were trying to catch.

He wondered if they would ever doubt the second L. He knew he had easily fallen for the act. Even when he was tailing Kira he hadn’t been able to see him as anything suspicious. He was loyal to the team. If an outsider tried to get him to not trust anyone on it…he wouldn’t listen. Which meant he would continue to unknowingly help his enemy.

This was going to be frustrating to watch.
But there had to be a point to this somewhere.

He hoped it wasn’t just to mess with them.

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Matt watched as the conversation faded out of Kira’s notice, replaced by the music. The music that used to represent the interconnectedness between L and him, the competition between detective and criminal. Even though nothing changed in the melody, it suddenly sounded a lot sadder. Kira’s eyes were remarkably dull as they turned to look at the chair next to him, imagining L there talking to him.

"Even Kira would miss L," He muttered to himself.

The eyes remained dull as they looked at Misa across a table. He asked her to move in with him without a hint of enthusiasm. The model celebrated what she perceived as a victory, the young man only saying a half-hearted word of agreement to not seeing any other girls.

They were even dull as he stood on the rooftop, close to the edge so he could look down upon the city, look down on humanity. Matt shifted in his seat. He thought the mass murderer would look more victorious, like he had at the end of the last episode. Where was the evil smirk? What happened to the thrilled look in his eyes when he held L’s dying body?

Why did he have to look so much like Light did not too long ago?

Though this time, a part of him wanted the college student to jump.

“I guess things are gonna get pretty boring from now on.”

Boredom. That’s what started this all. Ryuk got bored and decided to screw with the human world for amusement. What would happen if he got bored here as well?

“From this moment on, I'll show you the creation of the new world.”

And the determination was back. The music picked up as they showed Kira clenching and unclenching his fist, as if testing his newfound freedom. L had literally been his shackle, the one thing holding him back. He couldn’t read the killer’s expression well, but it almost looked like he missed the restriction, like he still missed the great detective even though it was his fault he was gone.

Then again, maybe it was like playing a video game against Mello.

Without the restrictions he gave himself, it was no fun winning.

Boredom was also a part of what created Kira. He had been tired of the way the world was, tired of the same old news cycles spouting more about the dark side of humanity.

Creating his idea of a new world relieved some of that boredom, but that was only part of it. The Death Note was something new, something that broke the monotony of normal human existence, but it wasn’t what he wanted. No, as much as Kira was insulted by opposition, he craved a challenge.

Just like how L didn’t want crime to happen, but wanted difficult, interesting cases.

Light wanted a challenge as well. Huh, they really were perfect for each other.
Slowly, the Kira on screen raised a pen, and his eyes got an insane gleam in them, the iris almost completely disappearing. He started to write as criminals and news broadcasters appeared, a long list of kills steadily forming. It went from criminals he didn’t recognize to Wedy, who got into an accident on her motorcycle after a heart attack, resulting in the start of a fire.

Next to die was Aiber, whose body was found by his wife and son. After that showed the Yotsuba group having another meeting. Namikawa went to extend a hand to Shimura, before he fell forward, blood spewing from his mouth. Shimura only had a moment to realize the rest of the group was dead before his own heart stopped and he collapsed to the floor like his coworkers.

A narrator explained the time skip to 2012, when Kira would be joining the NPA.

Five years? None of them acted for five years? He glanced to the other two. Mello seemed irritated by the fact, but Near was unfazed. Well at least they wouldn’t be seen as kids when they formed their own teams, and he was sort of curious what older him would look and sound like.

He vaguely heard Kira made people both scared and willing to cheer him on. The people supporting him soon gained a voice in society, and then nations began accepting his judgment. He wasn’t surprised by any of that. To the normal human, this would look like the work of a vengeful god, and not a young man with a killer notebook and a god complex.

“The world was heading into a dark age in which Kira’s will was the only law.”

How ironic they said it was a dark age over an image of the sun rising. But that was the beauty of Light’s name. Light beamed down on humanity, while Kira also looked down on humanity. The sunrise mirrored the older teenager’s rise in his mind, the sun itself often used as a symbol of God.

The scene then switched to the computer L had been using at the beginning. A little timer counted down the seconds to zero before sending a transmission.

The message went to Wammy’s house. Roger was looking at a picture of Watari. In his hand, his phone read that L was dead. It cut to him sitting behind his desk, his chin resting on his laced together fingers.

“What is it, Roger?”

The scene zoomed out to show Mello and Near in front of Roger’s desk. He scoffed quietly. He knew he wouldn’t be there. The first people who would be told of L’s death were the two who were likely to replace him. Even though he was third everyone knew he didn’t want it so they wouldn’t tell him.

“It’s L…He’s dead.”

It showed Near working on an all white puzzle, the only color being a black L in the top left corner, before the episode ended.

“What the fuck are we doing for five years?” Mello hissed.

“Gathering evidence,” Near answered, ”No one will believe that we are L’s true successors unless we can prove our abilities, especially with no way to confirm L is dead.”

“Still, five years?” The blond crossed his arms, ”Kira’s getting pretty damn close to winning.”

“The three of us can’t win on our own.” The white-haired boy shrugged, ”Nor can we solely depend on the institute, not with Kira aware of it.”
Matt winced, “Yeah, we don’t want them to become targets.”

“Fine.” Mello’s scowl softened. ”Which agency? FSB? SVR?”

“My thoughts were more towards the FBI or the CIA.” Near tilted his head, ”Americans are remarkably stubborn. It is unlikely they would submit to Kira’s will.”

“Unless more agents die,” The computer genius pointed out, ”They were pretty quick to call off their investigation when Kira killed the people they sent to Japan.”

The first rank blinked, ”True.”

“MI6 is again, too close to the main institute,” His best friend muttered, ”MSS probably wouldn’t oppose Kira. RAW?”

“I like the BND,” Matt offered.

“That’s because they’re known for electronic espionage.” Mello rolled his eyes, ”But maybe we’re looking at this wrong. Agencies have to follow their governments, and governments are the ones that might bow to Kira.”

“What are you saying?” He asked.

“Criminals would be more motivated to stop Kira.” His friend smirked, ”We could join the Mafia, Yakuza, or Bratva. They definitely have resources.”

Matt stared at his friend, wondering how he could even consider that to be an option, ”I’d rather stay on the right side of the law, even if they might submit to Kira one day and abandon us.”

He remembered what Light said about promising themselves they wouldn’t make allowances for wrong by saying it was for a greater good.

If Mello thought like his future self, he would join one of the criminal organizations.

Matt might not be able to stop him, but he hoped he didn’t go with him.

Chapter End Notes

Alright, I know when I want to put the scene of Light and Matt playing a video game, but I have absolutely no idea what game it should be. What I play, the few times I play video games, is anything Mario or Lego. I know, I know, pathetic. Which is why I need help.

What game should they play?

It doesn't have to mean anything, it doesn't have to fit the timeline. I'd like it not to be a car racing/ car centered game because I plan to have the video game scene after his death, but that doesn't matter cause odds are the game would then involve guns and that's not much better.

Please leave your answer in the reviews! It would be a lot of help!
Mello didn’t realize how weird it was to see himself on the screen until he did. Sure, it was essentially just drawn pictures of him, but it was different from that one time Matt reprogramed a video game so the character looked like him. When their lips moved and his voice came out, it was unnerving. Especially since they were sentences he’d never said before.

He scowled when it was revealed it was only December when they were told of L’s death. That was only a few months away.

They didn’t really have a way of knowing exactly when the events were occurring. Even though Light said he was going to share his suspicions about the Yotsuba group soon, that didn’t mean that the events were that soon. But this scene was confirmation they were close. If this video came a few weeks later it would have been too late for L.

He flinched as the future him got upset. It was almost exactly what he said when they watched L die, except he didn’t know Kira was behind it. Future him got mad and reached over the desk to jostle the old man. He looked ready to keep yelling when Near decided to overturn his puzzle, interrupting his tirade and reminding him of his presence.

The all white puzzle with the letter L. A gift from the great detective himself, which was why Near kept solving it despite being able to do it in minutes.

“If you can’t win the game, if you can’t solve the puzzle, then you’re just a loser.”

He involuntarily growled at that sentence, and future him froze. Not that what Near said was wrong, but it came off like he didn’t care, that suddenly L didn’t matter because he didn’t win.

“They’re not showing his eyes,” Matt muttered before he could work himself up.

Hidden eyes, hidden emotions. That was a reoccurring pattern within the show. Right, he reminded himself. He didn’t know how Near was feeling. He was always better at controlling his emotions, but that didn’t mean he didn’t have them.

Roger revealed L hadn’t picked between them, then asked if they could work together. What L always intended for them. If only he knew that L knew he was going to die, then he would have figured out his intentions. Mello crossed his arms. He could guess what was about to happen.

“Mello, listen, you too, Near. Can’t the two of you work together?”

He looked horrified at the prospect of working together. Near tilted his head, ”New music.”

“Alright. Sounds good.”

“It’ll never work, Roger.”

It was new music. A guitar, but with lower notes and a different melody, just enough to be different from Kira’s. Considering he was the main focus of this scene, he assumed this was his music. Still, it was the same instrument, as if he and Kira were cut from the same cloth.
Light Yagami needed a Death Note, something of supernatural origin with never before seen power, to convince him to make all his mistakes.

He didn’t need anything.

He watched himself say they didn’t get along. He claimed the two of them always competed, even though it was just him trying to prove he was better. After a pause he decided Near should be the one to succeed L, like he always thought would happen. He admitted to his own inability to be objective and almost made it sound like an insult that Near could.

“**And as for me, I’m leaving this institution.**”

It finally showed Near’s eyes as he closed the door behind him on his way out. They were cold, but he almost looked angry. Though if that was at himself for leaving or because Kira had killed L… either way it was a display of something.

“I wonder if I’m going with you,” Matt said.

“You’d leave with me?” Mello asked.

“Of course I would.” His best friend looked at him, “All you have to do is ask.”

He probably wouldn’t ask. He just found out L died, the last thing he’d want to do was ask his best friend to risk his life as well. As long as he stayed away from the investigation, he was safe. Besides, it was too much to ask him to leave Wammy’s.

“Not that either of you will have to leave,” Near pointed out.

Mello didn’t say anything to that. Even if the Kira investigation ended here, there was always the next case, and the one after that. They were bound to disagree at some point, it was only natural since they were two different people. No amount of respect for each other would stop them from fighting if their plans were incompatible.

The scene switched to show an American flag. He recognized the room as the oval office, and nodded. So the current president would win for his second term, nice to know. But that meant that Near was doing as he said he would, aiming to work with the FBI and CIA. He still thought the investigation would go by faster if they worked with criminals.

It would mean a lot more dirty work, but the first rank cared about legalities as much as he did. As long as they got what they wanted in the end, as long as they defeated Kira, then they would do whatever it took.

Even if it made him terrified of what he could do…it wasn’t enough to stop him. Not now.

“Near’s got his own music too,” Matt said happily.

Of course the youngest had the synthetic piano. It wasn’t the same as L’s, but it was similar. Just like the two of them were similar, except, like the differences in pianos, Near was more mechanical. Not that he meant that as an insult anymore.

Near found out about the Death Note from one of the police officers who assisted with Higuchi’s arrest. He informed the president of the US that the Japanese police force were in possession of said notebook, and the future L was fake. After being called the true successor, the Americans created their own Kira investigation task force.
The SPK, the special provision for Kira, made up of people Near picked.

Whereas he was who the fuck knew where, doing who the fuck knew what. He was pretty sure if it was something good he’d be shown like Near.

Fuck. They were supposed to be on the same side. They were supposed to be fighting Kira, not each other.

But of course he was fucking everything up. Just like he knew he always would.

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Matsuda tilted his head at his future self, ”I look weird with shorter hair.”

“You do,” Aizawa agreed, ”Somehow, you manage to look younger in five years.”

He hummed in agreement. Light certainly didn’t. His shoulders broadened a little more, and he looked more handsome than his younger, prettier face. He sighed at his frustration. He was complaining about who Kira should kill to the two Kiras and his boss. They talked about Kira until Mrs. Yagami interrupted, asking if they could take a break for one afternoon.

Then Sayu came in, and whoa did she get pretty. He suddenly wanted to see a picture of the Chief and his wife when they were younger, because both their children were unfairly attractive.

He blushed when his future self blushed, and suddenly he was glad they had rearranged themselves. He was no longer sitting next to the Chief but on the opposite end of their row. Mogi hopefully wouldn’t hurt him, and he could hide behind his larger frame. Light sent him an amused look, but it was nowhere near as intimidating as the one his boss had on screen.

He hated when his glasses caught the light and hid his eyes.

“Geez. Sayu, you’re all grown up. And pretty.”

“Are you interested in actually being my brother?” Light asked.

He made a noise he didn’t know was possible for humans. At least none of them pointed out this meant he was still single in five years.

“I’ll never let Sayu marry a cop!”

His head shot up, seeing his chance for revenge, ”Would you let Light marry Ryuzaki?”

“Matsuda.” Light blushed, ruining the glare he tried to send him.

“What?” He asked innocently, glad their attention was on him instead of future him accidentally calling Mrs. Yagami mom, ”He’s like a next level cop, right?”

“You’re right.” The Chief smirked, ”But I’ve already talked to Light about how I feel about him and Ryuzaki.”

“Dad!” The teenager protested.

“When was this discussion?” Ryuzaki inquired.

The Chief opened his mouth to answer, but Light cut him off, ”That doesn’t matter.”
“It’s rude to talk about people behind their backs, Light,” The great detective grumbled.

“It doesn’t matter,” The college student stubbornly repeated, missing future him now crying on his table because Sayu called him old. He wasn’t that old! He still had plenty of time to meet someone! He bet it was because of the Kira investigation he didn’t have any time to date.

“A heartwarming scene from the most unfortunate family in the world.”

Any cheer he felt faded as they returned their attention to the screen. Sure, Kira was cursed with misfortune, but Sayu and Mrs. Yagami weren’t involved with him. Nothing bad should happen to them, right?

The Chief got a phone call, and they were off. On their way to headquarters they were informed someone had kidnapped the Director. A little bit later future Aizawa informed them the kidnappers wanted the Death Note in exchange for the Director. The situation got serious too fast for him to even be happy Ide returned to their group.

“You grew facial hair,” Matt noted.

“I don’t think it looks bad,” Aizawa defended immediately.

“It doesn’t. It’s just weird.”

It was a little weird. Still, not any stranger than himself with shorter hair. The Chief leaned forward, "Do you think it was your people, Near?"

The only people they had been shown who knew about the Death Note outside of Japan were Near’s people. It would make sense that he’d be behind the kidnapping. America sometimes went to some pretty drastic lengths in the name of national security.

The white haired kid paused in twirling his hair, "No. I doubt even the CIA would allow me to abduct another agency’s director."

"It’s probably me," Mello admitted with a scowl, "Anything Near could find I could find."

As if to confirm what the heirs said, the next scene showed an FBI agent wanting to talk to the Director about handing over the notebook to help their Kira investigation. The Chief once again assumed it was them behind the kidnapping. When the agent got confused it went to Near, whose people looked equally confused while he listened apathetically, easily deducing the situation.

The scene then briefly showed the Director cuffed to a chair, before it turned to Mello, a few years older, probably taller, but definitely Mello. He dramatically took a bite from his chocolate bar as those he was working with started talking. The Director told them who went to work with L originally, but he couldn’t say anything about the Death Note. That earned him some taunts.

He couldn’t be mad about the insults to his organization. It’s not like they could succeed with Kira working for them.

Matt’s snickering, likely brought on by the ridiculous coat Mello was wearing, ended at one line.

“If he was able to bring us the head of a mafia boss-“

“So you did join the mafia,” The kid in the striped shirt said.

“I warned you I might,” Mello replied.
“Yeah, but that means I’m probably not with you.” Matt sighed.

“I will be the best! I don’t care what it takes. I’ll beat Near by any means necessary.”

“I really am an idiot,” Mello muttered loudly.

“This hasn’t happened yet,” Ryuzaki reminded his heir, but he didn’t reply.

The next scene showed the deputy director had died, but it also revealed more of Mello’s outfit. He had on a deep red vest that didn’t cover his entire torso, tight black pants, and the rosary he was wearing now. Matt sighed, “I can’t take you seriously if you’re wearing that.”

Ridiculous outfit or no, he still correctly deduced that Kira didn’t know about them and therefore couldn’t kill them. He also knew Kira knew Takimura was kidnapped, which limited the amount of people Kira could be.

“So, what’re we gonna do, Mello?”

There was barely any hesitation.

“We’re gonna kidnap Soichiro Yagami’s daughter, Sayu Yagami.”

Both the Chief and Light tensed at that statement. He hoped Ryuk was wrong about misfortune befalling them.

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L took Light’s hand in his as the scene moved on. As much as he worried for his heirs since they weren’t working together, at least they were still geniuses and had the support of the organizations they’d joined should they get into any trouble. Sayu wasn’t a genius. She was normal, and normal people were forever changed by kidnappings. Especially since Mello wasn’t bluffing.

Kira realized the kidnappers could come after them, but it wasn’t until after Misa’s slight distraction that he realized their families were also in danger. As soon as he realized that the Chinno, the Deputy Director got a phone call from the Director’s phone. It was Mello, naturally, informing them that the Director was dead and the new deal was for Sayu.

“This hasn’t happened, Light,” He whispered the reminder to him.

“It easily could,” The college student replied, ”If not for the Death Note, then because Dad is the Deputy Director, and if that isn’t dangerous enough, if anyone finds out who I am while I’m working with you there will definitely be people coming after her.”

Which was why he only allowed other orphans to try to take his place. He didn’t want any unfortunate family members to suffer. He squeezed his hand, because he couldn’t promise something like this would never happen. No matter how hard they tried to protect her, without severely limiting her freedom there would always be a risk.

“I can’t believe they’d go this far.”

He both could and could not. He used family members against suspects before, but never as hostages. It was Aiber’s pregnant wife who convinced him to give up his schemes as a conman and pursue more legitimate lines of work. But besides the torture of Light and Misa, who were technically guilty though they didn’t remember, he did not harm innocents.
It seemed his heirs had not learned that.

“I’ve just realized something. I think it was Kira who killed the director, not the kidnappers.”

L perked up in his seat. That was an interesting thing to say. It meant they would be leaving the police out of this one, but Kira couldn’t kill her without narrowing the suspect pool even further. He thought Kira would send a warning out to all the police under the pretense of trying to stop the kidnappers from fleeing the country with Sayu, just so he had the option of killing her.

Did Kira not consider the possibility of killing her? Was there a part of him that hesitated to kill his little sister?

That would be helpful when they needed to get the second notebook’s location out of Kira. If there was any part of Light still in there, he was certain he could reach it.

It was difficult to see behind the act, but if he truly didn’t want to lose the notebook he would have made some announcement and killed her off. He wondered who Mello’s next target would be. Matsuda and Mogi didn’t have any family, Aizawa’s family and Mrs. Yagami would undoubtedly be better protected. Ide he wasn’t sure about, but Mello did not know about him.

It would have been amusing if he picked a different child of the Deputy Director to abduct. What would have happened if Mello abducted the second L?

Neither Near nor Mello could confidently say the Director was killed by Kira, but since they were right he allowed them to go with the assumption he was. Which meant both were now suspicious of the Japanese police force even more so than before. Now he just needed to see who would reach out to the second L first and see how long it took for them to put the pieces together.

“You took my photo?” Mello looked at Near.

“It would be better than leaving it for anyone to find.” Near shrugged.

There really shouldn’t be any photographs of any of them in existence, not since the Kira investigation started and he realized the killer needed a face to kill. But it was Mello’s risk to take with keeping that one in existence, and it really was too rare for the young teen to have anything to smile about.

Mello gave the Deputy Director proof Sayu was still alive after demanding he come to Los Angeles in the next two days.

“LA?” Matt voiced his thought out loud.

Why was it that when his heirs turned down a dark path they ended up in the city of angels?

He always warned Mello if he didn’t watch his emotions he would become like Beyond…but he never thought it would happen.

He wondered if it was deliberate. Last he checked, the American mafia largely operated in the northeast of the nation with little diaspora into the midwest. It did have a presence in California, but not a strong enough one to adequately support Mello in his confrontation of Kira. Mello could be making a statement to Near, an outright opposition like B had made to him.

Though his reasoning could be mirroring his own presently. He knew Ryuzaki was the alias Beyond used when trying to trick Misora. It was one he intentionally kept using. It was a good reminder he wasn’t infallible, though the more he used it the less it reminded him of his failure.
When Light said his alias it almost felt like his real name.

What would his reaction be when he told him L had been his real name all along?

Kira then called the FBI director, who gave the phone to Near after listening for a moment. Near had the security of anonymity as he informed the second L he was aware that he was not the original.

“You can address me...as N.”

It was good to see Kira bothered.

“...this strange feeling...What is it?”

There was a nice image of himself surrounding Kira in chains, entrapping him and binding them to the same fate. Like he had always said.

He smirked faintly. His plan could still work even if Mello and Near refused to cooperate. Near was cautious. He would never show his face to anyone, not until he was confident he could win. His caution and patience would keep him alive while Mello’s bold moves would force Kira to act and reveal himself. Ideally, those two factors would work together.

But even separate it would be enough to bring Kira down.

So long as they didn't drag each other down first.

Chapter End Notes

Someone asked me in a comment yesterday if I planned on increasing the rating to E or M by including smut. I've never written any before, but there's no reason for that. I just haven't. But now I'm curious if other people want me to. I'm not asking for ideas, I can come up with something on my own, but I just want to know if people actually want to read that.

Let me know!

Also, I go home tomorrow for spring break so expect a big difference in when the chapters will be posted.
Light had a feeling his family wasn’t going to come out of this unscathed.

He managed to put that aside. It was getting easier to put aside what was happening in the future.

He was glad Ryuzaki was holding his hand, but he really should be worrying more for his heirs. He’d been getting better at figuring out how the younger boys were feeling. Matt was managing to take this all in relative stride. Mello was drawing in on himself. Near…well, he hadn’t quite figured out the youngest yet. He thought he was bothered, but he was also the one who hadn’t changed.

Matt and Mello were changing. Where the former had been distant and carefree in the beginning, he was now attached to Aizawa and cared enough to have outbursts. Whereas Mello was making attempts to control his emotions and came a long way in getting along with Near. The white haired kid didn't show any sign of disagreeing with his future self.

He didn't have a reason to change yet. He was technically doing everything right in the future, but there was something off in the way he was going about the investigation.

He didn’t want them to feel guilty about what they hadn’t done, but he did want them to learn from what they were shown. In the future they were making all the same mistakes he and Ryuzaki did. They were willing to go to any lengths to win.

Mello was ashamed at his actions, which they’d have to watch out for, but Near…

“N…Why do I feel like I’m talking to L?”

No, Kira was wrong. Near was similar to his predecessor in method, but not completely in personality. No matter how many games and puzzles he surrounded himself with, he didn’t seem to be enjoying them. There was always a glimmer of interest in Ryuzaki’s eyes, even when all he was doing was staring at him over security cameras. He was always completely focused on the Kira case, not with little challenges.

Future Near decided to give him the lead on the rescue of Sayu, even though he had more power and resources in America. Light shifted in his seat so he could see the youngest.

“Of course saving people’s lives is important, but as the SPK, our primary goal is very clear. We’ll work to get the notebook.”

There it was.

When Misa made Ryuzaki choose between himself and the Director of the NPA, he almost chose to sacrifice himself. Even though it was dangerous for him to show his face outside of headquarters, he went through with the plan to save Matsuda. The plan he did make to take down Kira only intended to sacrifice his own life. Winning was a priority, but he was bothered by the loss of innocents in his pursuit of victory.

“I want you to do whatever’s necessary to make sure both you and Sayu get out of this alive.”
It was sad Kira was the one saying the Death Note wasn’t as important as an innocent life. He couldn’t tell if it was an act, but it was what he would say if he were in control. The notebook could always be reclaimed, but once a life was lost there was no getting it back. He feared what Mello would do with the power once he got it, but there were no good options in this.

Mello planned to take out Near, which meant he would target the SPK if they hadn’t protected themselves well enough. Unless the heirs were aware of each other’s real names but killing Near would be too easy. He wanted victory, he wanted to see his opponent be brought to his knees in front of him. He would knock Near down, force him to come out from behind his screens, make it one against the other.

Any person willing to go up against Kira was willing to risk their lives. They went into this knowing there was a good chance they were going to die.

It was the difference between a soldier or a civilian dying in a war.

In both instances, a life was lost, but the weight of them was different.

By this point in the Kira investigation, it was a war.

“What’s bothering you?” Ryuzaki asked, already inside his personal space.

“Near,” He replied quietly.

“You see it too?” The great detective shifted.

“You see it too?” The great detective shifted.

"Do you think you can talk to him?” He inquired.

“Hm…no.” Ryuzaki looked at him with a smirk, "You are the one who values human life more.”

“I think what I did will bely any argument I make.” How could he convince a kid to see the worth in others’ lives when he was so eager to throw his own away? When he still wasn’t entirely convinced continuing to live was the right decision. He doubted he would have another opportunity to attempt to remove himself from the world, not with the way the handcuffs had been replaced by an entirely too tactile detective.

“The same can be said for me,” Ryuzaki replied.

“You haven’t sacrificed yourself yet.”

“Just as you did not kill yourself.”

“I would have.” He knew he should be ashamed, but he couldn’t be.

“I would still sacrifice myself to stop Kira.”

“This argument is going nowhere,” Light huffed. This was one of the people he couldn’t talk into seeing his way. That was part of what made him special.

“Regardless of our choices regarding our own lives, you and your father possess a moral fortitude that is rare even amongst officers,” Ryuzaki told him, “That would be more helpful to Near than any wisdom I could impart.”

“I can’t claim the moral high ground,” He hissed.

“You can.” His…whatever he was insisted. They hadn’t put a label on it yet and they probably
should so they could begin explaining them to his father, "Everyone but you can see you and Kira are different people."

His jaw clenched. They were hardly that different, "Could you try anyways?"

“I don’t think I will.” The detective shrugged, "They are my heirs, Light, and my responsibility. You do not have to get involved."

He sighed, seeing his game easily, "You really need to stop it with the tests.” He pinched the bridge of his nose, "They are a part of your life, so of course I’m going to get involved. If you won’t do anything…”

Ryuzaki smirked, "Good luck, Light.”

He resisted the urge to punch him. That would give away to everyone else in the room they were having a more intense discussion than their normal commentary to each other. He decided to give it time. If Near’s ambivalence cost Sayu her life, if the distance he put between himself and others grew…

He wondered who gave them their names. There was no one further from mellow than Mello, and no one more distant than Near.

But he would talk to him, if need be.

Watari sighed. At this point, he pitied the poor girl on her blind devotion to Kira. Like her pet bird, she was there to look pretty and sing a meaningless song. All the while, she was trapped in a cage. She would never be free to spread her wings, to see what she could become on her own. He glanced at her, but the meaning behind her future pet was lost on her.

Some people were born to lead, others lived to serve. But he had the presence of mind to question L.

“If things go badly, I may have to kill Sayu…”

He hoped the youngest Yagami made it through this. Light especially seemed to care about her, enough that he suspected it affected Kira’s decisions. He truly was a good older brother, despite his annoyance at others for being the same as Sayu.

In the future the task force made their move, all of them going separately to the United States with Aizawa trailing the Deputy Director.

“Not the hair…” Matt complained, and on screen the future Aizawa looked equally pained to lose his hair.

They only made it to the airport before their plan was derailed. One of Mello’s people intercepted the father, forcing him to get on another flight Aizawa couldn’t follow without giving away his cover. The plane then diverged from its flight course, threatening to crash the whole thing if anyone tried to interfere with it.

That forced Kira to ask N for assistance, but even then the most the other heir could do was keep surveillance with their satellite and promise there wouldn’t be more interference. He winced at Mello’s obsession with getting the notebook. He had truly strayed from the path he hoped for them.
Perhaps L was truly as special as he thought he was.

“When the time comes, what’s the right thing to do as a police officer, as a human being, and as a parent?”

He already knew what choice the Deputy Director would make. He would act like a father, because it was the right thing to do as a police officer and a human being to save the innocent.

The man was dropped off in the desert. They had him in sight on the satellite feed, but then an entranceway opened, revealing their base was underground.

One of Mello’s men outlined how the exchange would go. A revolving door made of bulletproof glass. If he put the notebook through there, he would unlock it and move the door so that Sayu was released. If he didn’t agree to the deal Sayu would be shot in front of him.

“You can’t seriously think that handing the notebook over to someone you don’t know is a good idea, can you?”

Near asked that because he didn’t understand.

Kira was angered with how it was going and his inability to do anything about it. He even snapped at Misa, with an outer expression of rage he hadn’t seen outside of his reactions to L in private. He held the pen over his Death Note, but didn’t write the name that would prevent Mello from obtaining the third one.

“Is my only option to kill Sayu?”

He didn’t, allowing Mello to test the notebook for its authenticity.

“I can’t do it!”

He gave the reasoning that it was because the police didn’t know about the case, but he was the one who had made the decision not to inform the police.

The man whose name was written in the Death Note died in front of Mello and the mafia boss he worked with. He was killed because he was stealing from the group. With that confirmed, the notebook was traded for Sayu, and the two went their own way. The FBI director informed them they were leaving by helicopter. Kira ordered them to monitor it.

“Oh sorry, I’m afraid we’ve been tricked.”

Near didn’t sound at all sorry.

“How did you get a missile?” Matsuda asked.

“It’s pretty easy to get one if you know the right people.” Matt glared at his friend, but not too harshly, ”You better not be abusing my contacts.”

“You know where to get a missile?” Aizawa inquired of the third rank.

“Officially, no.” Matt’s glare faded as he looked away from Mello. Watari was well aware of his less than legal side activities. It drove Roger half mad, even though Matt reached the level where none of his work could be traced back to him or the institute a long time ago, ”But I know people who probably know where to get missiles.”
“I doubt you are helping me at this point in the future,” Mello said without his usual fire, "I wouldn’t ask you to become a criminal.”

Matt’s expression softened further, ”I mean…I’d help you with catching the other mafia bosses to prove yourself, but I wouldn’t want to join it myself…though it’d probably be good if I was aware of what was going on with the world’s missiles.” The last part was added as an afterthought.

“What do you mean?” Aizawa asked.

“I mean, we know Kira can control people’s actions before their deaths.” The computer genius fiddled with the end of his shirt, "Not that I think he’d ever use a country’s leaders to launch weapons, but it’d be good to keep an eye on them anyways, you know, insert some failsafes just in case Kira decided he didn’t like a country or something.”

L actually paused the video at that truly sobering thought, but it also would explain Matt’s lack of appearance in the series. If he wasn’t directly opposing Kira but acting as a safety net in case Kira were to use powerful people to do terrible things…it gave him a way to be neutral in Near and Mello’s fight while still being there.

“Could you do that?” Matsuda wondered.

Matt shrugged, "I’ve never tried.”

He better not have tried. Even though his hacking was harmless, there were some things that were too dangerous.

L restarted the video to show the helicopter being blown up by the mafia, meaning the notebook was on the missile, which was beyond their ability to track. Well, Matt might be able to track it but he would be working with Mello if he was anywhere.

Watari closed his eyes. The notebook was not good to leave in the hands of someone with ambition. He had no doubts that Mello would use it, and the results would be terrifying.

Near knew what was going to happen seconds before it happened.

He hated bring right about one of them falling and using the Death Note. Granted, the hand being shown writing the names of his team wasn’t wearing gloves so he doubted Mello was writing the names himself. Undoubtedly, it was on his orders.

Not that future him would arrest Mello.

It was advantageous to the cause for him to use it, if only he could have picked other people. He would be the one able to figure out if the thirteen day rule was real, which would then bring Kira down.

His future self’s hand slipped and he knocked over the little city he’d constructed out of dice. Everything he built was falling down. How fitting, seeing as the organization he built was reduced to himself and three other people. A part of him wondered how Mello knew which agents were working with him. Did they have a traitor? Did Matt hack them? It wasn’t clear, though he leaned towards the former.

He saw it coming, but there was nothing he could do to stop it.
Even in the future he seemed barely fazed.

“The majority of the SPK’s members have just been killed by the notebook.”

“I’m sorry,” Mello apologized.

“It won’t happen,” He replied, not knowing what he had to be sorry for. He didn’t know any of the SPK members personally. He only knew the future director by reputation.

He felt bad about their deaths, but in the same way he looked on any other tragedy. Something unfortunate, but all too common to bother moping over. They had all known the risk when they formed a task force against Kira. If Kira was dangerous enough to defeat L…he probably didn’t put too much faith in the abilities of ordinary people.

Though, if he had taken the lead against Mello, the results likely would have been different. He could already see the alternate plan where he didn’t use this as a way to learn more about the imposter L.

It would have been easy for him to lie and say his group had the Death Note. Mello knew him, knew he wouldn’t hand over the killer notebook no matter how many hostages he took and killed. He might have even released Sayu, though there was a chance he would have killed her out of spite of the Japanese police working with him…no, there was no point to her death once he revealed was involved.

Mello was above pointless killing.

But just because they could have done something differently that may have saved their lives didn’t make it his fault they died.

He watched his own face. It was identical to the one he made when informed of L’s death. It was possibly the closest he ever looked to angry. It strengthened his resolve to beat Kira by whatever means. He couldn’t afford to work from the higher ground, not with two opponents who wouldn’t follow society’s rules.

“Considering their preparations, it would have been impossible to avoid this.”

“That doesn’t mean you just accept it.” Matt frowned.

“I wrongly thought that the second L would not turn over the Death Note,” He replied.

“It was more than that, You should have taken the lead,” Light said, ”You were the one already stationed in the States and you have more experience with Mello.”

“My primary objective is to solve the Kira case,” He defended his future actions.

“The primary objective should always be to do what’s right,” The amnesiac murderer replied.

He didn’t have a response for that without falling on an ad hominem attack. He didn’t care as much. It was what made him an objective detective. A better detective. As long as he wasn’t the one who pulled the trigger, he wasn’t the killer. The guilt that constantly plagued his peers was not something he let affect him. It didn’t make sense to hold himself accountable for the actions of others.

He wasn’t sure why Light was trying to make him feel guilty. There were forces beyond his control. Misfortune could happen to anyone. If he spent all his time feeling bad about those things,
he’d never be able to think straight. He’d never have been able to move on from his parents’
deaths.

Near didn’t dwell on what ifs. There was only what was and what wasn’t. Reality wouldn’t change.

Besides, hadn’t Light said most of this was Kira’s fault? Or was that just so Mello wouldn’t be too
hard on himself, and he was to be held responsible partly for his future actions?

Or did Light believe he would act in the same manner as his future self now?

…would he act in the same way? Was it such a bad thing if he did? He didn’t think he did anything
wrong, though watching his actions this way made it obvious what he could do better…

What was right was subjective. He thought it right to prioritize the Kira case, which would
ultimately save more lives than risking losing important information by saving singular lives. But
he hadn’t gained anything from this. If anything, he only created more reasons not to think Kira
was a member of the Japanese task force.

Was feeling responsible for their deaths supposed to make him a better person?

The better person didn’t always win.

He wasn’t a sociopath. He may be antisocial but he had a conscience. He did feel guilt and other
emotions, but he was in control of them, not the other way around.

Seeing himself in the future reminded him he should be careful about getting close to anyone in the
room. He still intended to try to be friends with Mello and Matt, but outside of that he would keep
his distance. He already cared more than he wanted to about Light. He’d be unable to deny being
worried when they thought he had killed himself.

Granted, some of his worry had to do with the effect Light’s death would have on L.

L served as a warning of the dangers of attachment, and Light was the perfect example of the self-
destructive guilt he was trying to avoid. He couldn’t pick and choose which emotions to feel, he
doubted anyone had that amount of control. He’d rather be generally apathetic than let them
overwhelm him.

The final scene revealed where Ryuk had gotten the second notebook he dropped in the human
world.

Another Shinigami was entering the picture, and it wanted to take the notebook back.

Which would certainly shake things up a bit.

He put his thoughts over what Light said to the side. In his experience, emotion was what led to
mistakes. If he came out of this alive and victorious, then his methods couldn’t be that terrible,
right?

…why did that feel wrong?

Chapter End Notes
Oh boy. Posting this after being awake for 25 straight hours. Good news is I made it home. Let me know if there are any mistakes, I wrote this on the plane home.

I hope you like it!
Aizawa placed a hand on the Chief’s arm. He couldn’t imagine what he was going through. If his daughter was abducted by the mafia...he definitely would not have handled the situation as well. The older man tensed beneath his hand as the future depicted Sayu after. Her expression was blank, as if she died in the kidnapping even though she had made it out of it alive.

He always thought of Sayu with a smile. Seeing her without one...

It was wrong. This whole future was wrong.

Mello turned around, his blue eyes conflicted. He opened his mouth, closed it, and then tried again, "I’m so sorry."

"She’s alive, Mello," The Chief replied, because apparently reminding him this was the future didn’t stop him from apologizing. He already silently warned Matt off trying to fix this by himself. He doubted Mello would take the forgiveness from his friend anyways, "You didn’t kill her. Remember that."

“I might as well have,” The blond muttered.

Aizawa glanced at Light, who elbowed Ryuzaki. The detective whispered something to him, and the college student sighed, "Mello, if you want I can call Sayu and you can talk to her."

"Why would she talk to me?" The teenager muttered.

"You’re kidding, right?" He chuckled, "Why wouldn’t Sayu want to talk to my boyfriend’s brother?"

“What?” Mello and Matt asked with completely different tones and faces. Mello’s eyes lost their guilt to look annoyed. Matt couldn’t look more excited.

“We’ve been telling her I’m on a trip since my confinement started.” Light crossed one leg over the other. Aizawa found himself smiling as he continued, "It would be easy to say I found a nice guy. It might even make her less disappointed I broke up with Misa."

“You’d let me talk to your little sister?” The blond heir inquired sharply, disbelieving.

"Of course.” The older teenager tilted his head, "Unless you’re a threat to her, there’s no reason you couldn’t."

Mello stared at him, "But…"

“But what?” Light challenged, "You aren’t going to hurt her, are you?"

“No.” The kid deflated, glancing back to the Chief.

His boss just smiled, easily seeing what his son was doing, "Maybe it would inspire Sayu to try harder in her studies if she had such an intelligent friend."

Aizawa laughed. There were truly too few men like the Yagamis. He knew the Chief was bothered.
by his future actions. He blamed himself for Near’s groups’ death because he handed over the Death Note. Light still wasn’t okay either, wouldn’t be for a long time as he bore the weight of his actions. Yet both refused to let others suffer under similar guilt.

“So you two are dating?” Matsuda asked.

“No…” Light paused, before adding, ”Not yet.”

It would be difficult to start anything until after the Kira investigation concluded, if they all survived to see its end. He was happy they had something, however, and the Chief didn’t seem too bothered by it. He didn’t like the great detective much, but it wasn’t his place to try to get Light to change his mind. If his father didn’t disapprove, then he didn’t have a problem with it.

But seeing what Ryuzaki’s heirs were capable of without him…it gave him a new appreciation for the great detective. He said he hated the way he operated. If that was hate, he didn’t think there was a word that fully encapsulated his loathing of how Mello and Near were operating in the future.

This was the future though, so he decided not to say anything. Perhaps they’d be better with Ryuzaki still around. Maybe they could see that the normal way of doing things, while not the most efficient, was sometimes better.

“If this is your way of asking me out-” Ryuzaki started.

“You do not get to lecture me about timing,” The college student interrupted, ”Are you going to say no?”

“…” The detective turned back to the screen, ”No.”

The Chief chuckled, ”You still haven’t asked my permission.”

Light frowned, ”I haven’t-“

“Not you,” The older Yagami quickly assured his son, ”Nor am I being unfair to Ryuzaki. I would expect anyone I work with to ask me before getting involved with one of my children.” He relaxed somewhat, ”But now is not the time for that conversation.”

It wasn’t, but it was a nice reminder the present wasn’t as dark as their future.

Sidoh came to the human world to demand Ryuk return his Death Note. Considering a Shinigami needed to write in it to continue to live, he wondered how close to death he was. An unexpected twist, something not even Kira would be able to account for. Whether he would also be neutral though…looking at him, he thought it probable. It wasn’t like he cared for the outcome of events.

Future him reported about Wammy’s house. It was a crazy idea, but he was slightly wrong in his summary of it. He’d forgotten they didn’t know that N stood for Near. They didn’t know they were the true successors to L. He also forgot they still didn’t know what they looked like either. Except Kira seemed to be taking it more seriously, realizing he hadn’t actually defeated L.

Kira told Misa to look through the list the FBI had of known mafia associates, luckily finding the one currently in possession of the Death Note. With his face and name, they got him to send a letter with their current address on it. He internally sighed at the model’s lack of pants in the scene.

If he needed more evidence Light wasn’t straight, it was his continued ability (even if it was as Kira) to not let the incredibly attractive young woman distract him.
Yet he couldn’t see Sidoh, who saw the note with the location of his Death Note before Kira could completely destroy it.

A more playful music came on in the background as the determined Shinigami entered their lair. Ah, so no one could see him yet because he hadn’t reclaimed his notebook. To do that, he snatched the book out of Mello’s hand and dropped it on Snyder’s head. He chuckled a little at the blond’s surprised expression and at the mafia boss’ dismissal at his wonder.

Snyder freaked out.

“If you don’t want everyone to think you’re crazy, pass the notebook around so they can see me too.”

The mafioso did so, and once it was passed around the others open fired on the being, shooting right over Mello’s head. He leaned forward in his seat. This was something no one accounted for, something they hadn’t even discussed the possibility of. Would Sidoh tell him about the fake rules? Would Mello ask him about the identity of Kira?

An extremely knowledgable (though not that bright), neutral third party could be what tipped the investigation in their favor.

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Misa had been watching the way her future self and Light interacted. Five years was a long time, it would be about a fifth of her life and an even larger part of his. He should have come to love her by then. With her by his side, doing her duty as his girlfriend and the second Kira...he should be treating her better than this. They should be in love!

Except they obviously weren’t.

He snapped and yelled at her future self. When she tried to make him a drink after a frustrating day, he slapped it out of her hands. He still only needed her for her eyes. Her worth to him hadn’t grown in time like she thought it would.

She could tell she was struggling to keep his attention.

The outfits she wore drew the attention of all the men in the future but Light and his father. She saw the way they blushed and gawked at her in the frilly pink slip of a dress, the way she immediately had their undivided attention despite the case they were working on so diligently. Even though it would be good for his act to at least show a little interest, he hadn’t even looked away from his computer.

Kira didn’t love her, not even enough to include her in his act.

Five years was a long time to date without even talk about engagement. They had even been living together for a long portion of that. It would actually be more suspicious, once he had a stable job, to remain unwed.

Even if it was just for the sake of their mission, she would have enjoyed getting married!

But no, Kira was still no fonder of her than when she first showed up on his porch.

Kira would never come to love her, just as Light said he couldn’t love her.

“I won’t forgive any mistakes.”
She bit her lip. She wasn’t him, she was bound to make mistakes.

“Oh, so you’ll share chocolate with a random Shinigami but I don’t get any?” Matt asked sarcastically when the new Shinigami was shown eating an identical chocolate bar to the young teen. Sidoh easily revealed the two rules on the back cover were fake, and future Mello contemplated what that meant for Kira, his final thought coming closer to the truth.

The punk then ordered the god of death to act as a watchdog.

He did look scary in the future.

The next scene showed Mr. Yagami getting a call from Kira. The rest of the task force listened in as Kira outlined the plan, going so far as to send them another Death Note. It briefly showed her entering something into the computer, before switching back to the plan. Kira would kill all known mafia associates, and that would be the task force’s opening to reclaim the Death Note.

Of course the task force didn’t have any other choice but to go through with the plan outlined to them by Kira. Mr. Yagami didn’t hesitate to volunteer to be the one to make the deal for the Shinigami eyes, with Matsui bravely trying to volunteer himself instead.

“I was responsible for handing over the notebook in the first place. Since that moment, I’ve been unable to live with what I’ve done.”

“That was beyond your control,” Aizawa said, ”No one expected you to let Sayu die for this.”

“Guilt isn’t a productive feeling,” Near added without turning around.

“Guilt is a way of knowing that your actions don’t align with your morals,” Mr. Yagami responded.

“But it only seems to be destroying you,” The white haired kid said.

“Guilt can do that,” The older man allowed, ”But it can also inspire you to do what’s right.”

“If Dad writes a name in the notebook, then, when the time comes…”

“Kira can’t even think about killing his father,” Ryuzaki pointed out.

“Is that supposed to mean something?” Light asked with a small frown.

“Possibly.” The detective left it at that.

Misa sighed, looking at the two of them. She wasn’t the one to find Light when he had been about to kill himself. She hadn’t been able to help him when he needed her most. He was willing to die to make sure Kira never returned. Seeing where Kira returning would get her…she didn’t want him back either.

A god should be kind to his followers. She’d thought because she was a good person that Kira would have the same devotion to her that she did to him. They were supposed to be creating a better world for honest people after all.

Kira couldn’t love.

She was an idiot for thinking he could.
Mello leaned further into the couch. It was only fitting he was the one surrounded by the corpses of his group after he made Near go through the same thing. Ha, his plan was supposed to be perfect? What a joke. He knew Kira would go to any length to destroy his opposition. Of course he would do whatever it took to stop him once he got his hands on the notebook.

Sidoh was being distracted by Ryuk. He shouldn’t have thought he could intimidate the Shinigami into working for him.

There was a very real possibility he would be watching his death. He watched as he ordered the two remaining men to bring the Death Note upstairs, before he disappeared. His men didn’t make it, easily apprehended by the task force. That gave the Deputy Director the other notebook.

Kira should have stopped there. Without the Death Note and the support of the mafia he didn’t have that much power. Even though he knew the rules were fake, he didn’t have the resources to take Kira down on his own. He doubted he would be able to go to Near, even if he wanted to bring the bastard down. He doubted he could even reach Near without being killed for what he did to the rest of the SPK.

It may have been a good thing Kira insisted they keep going. The group might not have had the time to withdraw before he blew up the exits, trapping them all inside. It had to be a lie since he seemed like he knew a way to escape.

Of course it was the Deputy Director who found him in the surveillance room.

He closed his eyes when his real name became visible. He hadn’t heard it in years and when it returned it was his death sentence.

“Your real name. It’s Mihael Keehl.”

Kira in the future now knew his name. He was compromised. That was, if he even survived this encounter with the older Yagami. The man had every reason to kill him. He kidnapped his daughter, threatened to kill her in front of him, broke her spirit. He then used the notebook to slaughter innocent agents. He became a monster. He needed to be taken down.

“Could you have a more Russian name?” Matt muttered.

“Shut up,” He muttered. His name didn’t mean anything to him. He no longer used it, and he didn’t plan to use it in anytime in the future.

His friend moved closer to whisper in his ear, ”Mine’s Mail Jeevas.”

He snorted, ”Is that a real name?”

“Why do you think my fake name is a real name?” Matt joked, because he always joked at the completely wrong time.

Mail Jeevas, huh?

No, he liked Matt better, but he was touched he trusted him with his real name. One bright spot in this shitstorm.

“If you give up, I won’t kill you.”

That didn’t make Kira happy, but he kept his murderous thoughts to himself. Mello just stared at the screen as his future self was shown mercy. How could anyone like the Chief exist? There was
every reason to kill him. Hell, he wouldn’t even be mad if he just shot his future self. Revenge was a powerful motivator. He deserved whatever it led the Deputy Director to do.

It was stupid to let him live.

“For what it’s worth, I give you my word that I never wanted to kill you.”

That was worth nothing.

Fuck. He really didn’t want to see this. He was fine watching his own death, but to watch him kill the Chief…probably the best man he would ever meet. Fuck. He felt Matt’s hand on his arm, but he couldn’t even glance at his friend. He didn’t deserve his concern. His friend’s future self was smart enough to not get involved in his mess of a life.

“Tell me, Yagami. You’ve never killed someone before, have you?”

He asked him the same question after Higuchi’s arrest, but this time he didn’t get an answer. One of his men picked up a gun and shot the Deputy Director in the back. There was no blood, but the pain was enough to have him fall to the floor. His man failed to take the notebook from his body while he put on a mask of sorts. The others quickly entered the room, shooting down his man and leaving him alone.

That’s when he blew up the building.

The destruction he caused wasn’t completely shown to them. They just heard the panic of the police officers, and a few disjointed scenes before it cut to the hospital, where the Deputy Director lay dying.

Fuck, this was worse than the SPK’s deaths. Those were all quick, but this looked like it was going to drag out.

“You can’t die on me like this!”

How much of this was an act by Kira? No, even if it was an act it was still heart wrenching his desperate plea brought his father back to consciousness. He woke up with his eyes still red. The Deputy Director’s eyes filled with tears as he gazed upon his son.

“Light…you really aren’t Kira…I’m so glad…My son.”

He was going to fucking cry at this rate. But if anyone deserved comfort before their death, no matter how much bullshit it was, the Chief did. He spared his life even after he threatened his daughter, even after he threatened the lives of all his men. He didn’t see killing as the solution to his problems, even though it was.

Kira insisted he shouldn’t talk, and his first thought was that it was important his father stay alive. But he had to get him to write Mello’s name in the Death Note. At this point, it was hard to tell if he insisted on his death because of what he could potentially do to his plans as Kira, or for what he did to his family.

No, at this point he wouldn’t be surprised if Light Yagami and Kira wanted him dead.

Fuck. The Deputy Director’s last word was his son’s name.

Kira lost it. That much anguish, those tears…it couldn’t all be fake. Not when he hadn’t killed Sayu when it was better for him. Not when he couldn’t finish the thought of committing patricide
earlier in this episode.

They’d never know if Kira would kill his own family.

Because his future self was doing a good job of that on his own.

The rest of the task force were in tears as well in the hospital room, all of them with their own injuries from his explosion.

“Mells, you’re crying.” Matt sounded worried.

Was he?

**“He got to die believing his son wasn’t Kira. I guess that means he was happy.”**

The Chief didn't take the gun when they were going after Higuchi. That got him shot. The Deputy Director didn't use the Death Note and killed him. Not doing so got him shot and killed.

They were the actions of an idiot, but also of a genuinely good person.

A good person wouldn’t be able to live with themselves if they did those things. He’d thought his suicidal attitude was because he was too weak to choose to live, but he couldn’t have been more wrong. He had the strength to do what was right even if it meant his death. He was a stronger man than he would ever be.

He looked at Near, who was staring at him. If he weren’t so mad at himself he would have laughed at getting him to look concerned. He wiped at his face, ”How do you not feel anything?”

He didn’t mean it to be an insult. Near was so unbothered by what was going on and he couldn’t bear the guilt like the better men could.

The first rank kept staring at him, his eyes widening a little as he seemed to come to a realization. He slowly shook his head, ”You shouldn’t want that.”

“Why the fuck not?” He felt his anger rise above his guilt, ”I’m being overemotional, right?”

“No…” Near reached forward to wipe away more tears, ”You’re not.”

He turned away from him because he wasn’t being helpful. Matt pulled him into a hug. He hadn’t even cried when L died, but he had been able to channel his anger at the detective. He couldn’t bring himself to be mad at the Chief, not when either path would have killed him.

Those who lived good lives did not fear death.

Mello feared death.

Chapter End Notes

Jet lag is a bitch. I really meant to post this last night but I fell asleep. Probably won't post until Sunday cause my family is going camping.

8 more episodes until they finish watching the series! Next one has future Mello and Near meeting!
I hope you enjoyed this chapter!
Souichiro was reeling after his death. In a way, he was glad it wasn’t Kira who killed him. It was one burden his son wouldn’t have to bear. Though Mello was obviously upset by his death, he wished he it hadn't been shown. If he halved his lifespan right before that mission, and his name wasn’t written in the Death Note, did he only have five years left to live?

Or did the mere presence of Kira in his life affect it?

He didn’t want to ask. Light got up from his chair to check on him, and he wondered if he, in all his genius, saw what he had seen, or if he was just worrying over nothing. His son gripped his shoulder tightly, ”How are you feeling?”

“We aren’t going to let this happen,” He answered. Those words had become the mantra for all in the room.

“We aren’t,” His son agreed, ”But that didn’t really answer my question.”

He winced, ”My lifespan…”

”Don’t worry about it.” Light looked determined, ”If this is truly an opportunity to change the future, I’m certain our lifespans will change as well.”

He tried to smile, ”Five years wouldn’t be too bad.”

”You are going to live to see Sayu graduate,” His son insisted, ”At least.”

”Yeah, Chief,” Matsuda agreed, ”We’ll make sure you live a long life.”

Aizawa patted him on the back. He looked to see Mogi nodding. He actually managed a smile at their certainty. He looked relatively healthy in the future. If the stress of the Kira investigation and Sayu’s kidnapping hadn’t stopped his heart nothing else would. Retiring wouldn’t keep him entirely safe, but perhaps he should stick to desk work once he the position of Deputy Director.

A desk in the NPA building should protect him from anything that would end his life.

A desk surrounded by these men definitely would protect him.

”You’ll get to retire,” Aizawa finally said, ”Even if I have to lock you in a room and guard it myself that entire week.”

”The world without Kira will drastically be different from the one we will make.” Light squeezed one last time, before stepping back, ”We’ll make it one.”
He then went to help Ryuzaki with Mello, whose name was now known. He watched him for a second, recognizing the same patient smile Light had for Sayu as he talked Matt into letting his best friend go. It was another strange comfort that Kira was unable to kill her even after his descent into insanity. It reminded him of before he was made Chief, when it wasn’t awkward for some of his men to invite him to smaller parties.

Light had always been good with other children so long as he wasn’t treated like a child himself. He’d always had a patience for them, though that could have been an act. Granted, most people’s patience for those younger than them was just a mask for their annoyance so perhaps he could let this part of his mask slide. He was certainly better than Ryuzaki, who still wasn’t good at comforting anyone.

Besides his son, but he didn’t have to do much since Light was already fond of him.

“We’ll just add explosions to the list.” Light smiled softly as he knelt in front of the heirs.

“What list?” Mello crossed his arms.

“The list of things you won’t do,” His son answered, “Right next to kidnapping, torture, and working for major crime syndicates.”

Matt chuckled, but the blond’s frown only softened, ”What about killing?”

“I don’t think anyone can make a promise to never kill.” Light shifted, ”There are other ways to gain information than torture. There are other ways to get leverage without resorting to kidnapping. There are legitimate ways to get resources without turning to crime. There will always be another path to defeating the criminal you are after, but while there is a price on your conscience for killing, there is also a price for mercy.”

“A price for mercy.” Mello glanced at him.

The Chief nodded, ”I know the risk of confronting any armed criminal. There is always the chance I will fail to de-escalate the situation and get myself killed…” He shook his head, because that was exactly what happened to himself in the future, ”Sparing a life is sometimes harder than taking one.”

“But we don’t do things because they are easy,” Light continued, ”Avoid killing where you can, but don’t make it a rule. Not in this line of work.” He held his gaze until the younger teen nodded, and then he rose, ”It’s a good thing you’re alive in the future. You can tell Near the rules are fake.”

Right, because future Near did know about the notebook but had no idea about its true capabilities. Yet he was still the safest behind his anonymity.

“I don’t think I will.” Mello shook his head.

“All it took was watching this for you to realize you would work better with Near,” His son pointed out as he returned to his seat, ”Living it should get you to do the same.”

“He’d be an idiot to let me close after what I did,” The blond muttered, but Ryuzaki ignored that in favor of continuing the video.

Souichiro put all thoughts of his potential death aside. Even if he only had five more years, that was a lot longer than he thought he had during his first heart attack. Throughout the entire case he thought each day would be his last, that Kira would get upset at the continued lack of support from the Japanese police and take it out on the highest ranking members of the NPA.
The opening scene showed Near with the remaining three members of the SPK. The blond man inquired what his thoughts were about the whole notebook retrieval mission.

“That would make the second L and Kira one and the same person.”

Exactly as Ryuzaki predicted. It hadn’t taken Near all that long to put the pieces together.

He sincerely hoped if more people were lost without the influence of the Death Note…that this wasn’t the end. Especially his son.

He listened to the various scenes depict how Kira was changing the world. People were afraid to give their name, they were threatening to post each other’s names on the internet. Crime went around the world. But the ending image was of his wife crying alone in one of their homes. He was dead, his son as good as gone, and his daughter was in no position to offer comfort.

Kira’s world was not as great as he thought it would be. It came at a price.

He grimaced at Demegawa’s show. Of course he would do that, there were always scum trying to make money by sensationalizing murder. He chuckled when Matsuda took back the apple from Ryuk, but that ended when the President of the United States said the nation would no longer oppose Kira, citing the end of war and the death to any who oppose him as his reasons.

“I was right.” Matt leaned forward, ”Sorry, Near.”

“I will manage,” Near said, but he looked subdued.

“Do you guys ever think that maybe Kira isn’t completely evil?”

He felt bad for the way the team reacted to Matsuda’s question. It was what normal people were thinking. The world had become a good place for good people…

“How can you think that’s a real peace?”

It wasn’t real peace, but it was a believable facsimile of it, and the closest the world would ever get to it. There would always be conflict, it was just in human nature. As such, there would always be crime. So long as people had the freedom to choose some would choose poorly. But it was the freedom to choose that mattered more than the crime rate.

“When it comes down to it, I’ve always been a really weak person.”

“That’s not true, Matsuda.” He leaned forward to see the youngest NPA officer, ”You’re stronger than you know.”

A weak person wouldn’t be on the task force after all this time and the death of the greatest detective the world had ever seen. A weak person would have given up when they were found by the Yotsuba group. A weak person wouldn’t have gone into Yotsuba headquarters in the first place.

He wasn’t weak, and he was sure he’d prove that one day.

“On some level, Kira probably knows that what he’s doing is evil.”

That was an interesting admission. Kira could have gone without commenting on the argument. There was some distance between him and the rest of the group and he knew they were likely giving him space with his death being so recent.
“If Kira gets caught, then that makes him evil. But if he wins and rules the world, then I guess he’s justice.”

Except there would always be opposition, no matter how small. There would always be the chance that Kira would be caught.

He would never truly be justice.

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“There is no way accepting Kira will lead to anything good.”

L bit his thumb. The last few minutes already confirmed what he thought most dangerous about Kira. He had been given too much time, garnered too much support. His heirs didn’t understand normal people well, he himself was only enlightened to their outlook when he met Misa. It was obvious to them Kira was no good, but their voices alone couldn’t appeal to the masses.

At this point, there would be riots if they managed to stop Kira. The supporters were dangerous.

No one was surprised Mello lived. He hadn’t considered the possibility of him dying in his own explosion.

“Your face…” Matt trailed off as they all saw the burn stretching up the left side of his face, ”If you don’t come to me in the future I’m gonna be pissed.”

“You’d help me after all that?” Mello inquired.

“I couldn’t look at that and not get involved.”

It was a horrible scar, one that would mark him for the rest of his life. A permanent reminder of what he did, if he felt any guilt in the future. Future Mello held a gun up to Lidner’s head as she came out of the shower.

“It appears you are right,” He muttered to his boyfriend.

He had been at a loss as to how to comfort Mello. The teen didn’t respond well to physical contact and he was not the best with words. Matt knew that, which was why he hadn’t let go. He still knelt there, failing under Near’s demanding stare. Then Light came with his pretty words that were more than just pretty words, and he thought about bringing him back to the orphanage.

Being good with children wasn’t something he expected from Light, but he wasn’t that surprised.

“What should we do?”

“Let him in.”

Near was smirking in the future, amused by the whole thing. He didn’t even turn around when Mello aimed his gun at the back of his head. His men both pulled their weapons to prepare to kill him as well. He found himself a good team if they were willing to put aside their revenge just on his orders alone. He glanced at the first rank, who was watching the scene without blinking.

“It seems like things’ve been going just as you planned, Near.”

L wondered if they would work together.
“I’ve pretty much figured out who Kira is and it’s mostly thanks to everything you’ve done.”

They wouldn’t. Not with a statement like that. It was the truth, but even he could feel the accidentally condescending tone Near said it in.

“Shut up Near! I’m not just a tool for you to use in order to solve your puzzles!”

“Mello, if you really wanna shoot me, then go ahead and do it.”

L couldn’t tell if the second rank would shoot him or not. Luckily, Lidner intervened, reminding them if they both died they lost. Finally, Mello got to his true purpose, which was to get back the photo of him he left behind at the orphanage when he left. Near handed it over without any fuss, and Mello stared at it. Not just the picture, but the message on the back.

“Dear Mello…” Mello read out loud, “What the fuck, Near?”

The white haired boy shifted, “…I would miss you if you left.”

“I could have written it,” Matt said, ”It’s literally the only picture we’d have of you.”

“Your handwriting’s shit,” Mello snapped at his best friend, ”Near wrote it.”

“You are dear to me.” Near looked away nervously, ”Even in this future…” Even if he killed who knows how many people in order to gain a position in the mafia, killed his entire team, and blew up the Japanese task force.

He glanced at Light. Perhaps he and Near were more similar than he first thought.

The blond hesitantly reached out and wrapped his arm around his shoulders, pulling the distant teen closer to him, ”You have shitty taste in friends.”

“I don’t have any friends,” Near muttered, while Matt moved to put him in the middle.

“You have us,” Mello promised.

In the future, seeing the picture seemed to change his mind.

The scene narrowed in on their eyes. Mello’s part was tinted a light red. Near’s was a light blue. Then the background changed to a stained glass background, reminiscent of the church pictures that flashed in his death. They must have remembered they were doing this because he was no longer around. They were both his heirs. The bell even tolled a few times, and he hoped that didn’t signal another death.

Mello told Near about the shinigami and the Death Note, even that some of the rules were fake. Then he turned to leave, pulling out a chocolate bar while Near fiddled with his hair.

“Near.”

“Mello.”

“Which of us is gonna reach Kira first, I wonder.”

“The race is on.”

Near actually laughed at end of the competitive talk, even when he let a murderer walk free. He
thought about the rules and came to the same conclusion as him that the thirteen day rule was suspect. He then decided to call Kira, lying about temporarily catching Mello and therefore opening up the notebook’s rules for discussion. He forced Kira to admit the thirteen day rule was likely false.

Aizawa was the first to realize that mean Kira’s confinement was meaningless. Matsuda defended Kira, as he thought he would.

“I will volunteer to write down Mello’s real name in the notebook.”

“Finally taking some risks.” Mello smirked.

The plan might have worked if Near had more charisma. As it was, he came off as uncaring, and that incensed the task force. Kira, naturally, picked up on that, and made it a group decision. Matsuda was the only one willing to do it Near’s way, and only out of vengeance for the Deputy Director. The other three said no to the test, making the decision final.

Near was making big moves, but for every action there was an equal, opposite reaction. The United States officially announced they wouldn’t oppose Kira. They also disbanded the SPK. He had to be careful not to turn those that were neutral against him.

L likely wouldn’t have been able to do that. Ide had been unable to work with him due to his general unpopularity. Aizawa left in the future for similar reasons. The three working for Near seemed to be willing to go along with anything he planned, but he wouldn’t be able to sway the masses to his point of view if push came to shove.

Kira could, and that worried him.

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Matt was excited. Mello caught Near up to speed on the capabilities of the enemy. From there Near was able to increase his certainty Kira was the second L or at least working for the task force. He knew Aizawa, and the doubt Near created would be enough for him to likely reveal who the second L was, thus who Kira was.

“I don’t wanna believe he is Kira.”

But Aizawa was amazing and therefore would doubt the second L anyways despite having worked under him for five years.

“Aizawa’s green,” Matt noted happily, because neither Near nor Mello got a new color. There were different meanings for different shades of the same colors but he really didn’t remember them and they were all generally the same anyways. Green was new, just like when Matsuda got yellow. Namikawa got purple, but that was the color of wealth so it was rather obvious.

“What’s that mean, kid?” The older detective asked.

Mello frowned, ”Greed, envy, the environment-“

He elbowed his best friend because none of the traditional meanings of the colors applied, ”Green’s the opposite of red.”

“And Kira’s red.” Aizawa smirked, ”I like it.”

If he ever showed up he hoped he was green or yellow too. He wouldn’t say he was exactly the
opposite of Kira like Aizawa definitely was, but he completed their little trio so maybe he’d be yellow.

Kira called the president, and he was reminded he’d been right. With the deaths of all those agents and all the known affiliates of the mafia…yeah, he couldn’t really blame the president for not wanting to get involved with that. He couldn’t outright support Kira, but it was the United States. Anything they did to oppose the killer would be more publicly known.

“The SPK is still trying to catch me despite your recent announcement. I want you to stop them immediately and formally just ban them.”

Matt snorted, ”Like that would stop you.”

Except Kira then demanded the location of their base of operations. The next scene showed Demegawa going somewhere, too excited to go crush an organization who defied Kira. He shifted a little closer to the boy between himself and Mello. Near was smart and capable, but there was little anyone could do about an angry mob.

Future Aizawa was conflicted about what he should do, but with his friend’s encouragement he decided he would contact Near. He smiled, happy Aizawa had someone like Ide, though he kinda wished Ide was involved sooner so he could make the call. He also wished they didn’t have this conversation in Kira’s apartment with Kira standing right outside the door, but he doubted Kira would kill the task force.

He would have done it by now if he was going to. It wasn’t like anyone knew Light Yagami was on the Kira task force.

He had no way of knowing what Near knew, so the task force was safe.

Then Matsuda barged in and the tv was turned on once again. They had Near’s building completely surrounded by an angry mob, cameras covering the exits and Misa waiting for them to emerge so she could kill them. Not that she would have to with the way the crowd was looking.

Dragged out and beaten to death was not how he wanted to see Near go down.

He could barely enjoy hearing Near swear before Kira was announcing his victory and the episode was over.

“I’ll find a way out,” Near promised.

“I’m sure you will,” Matt replied, ”I don’t think Mello and I are nearby to save you.”

“How would we disperse an angry mob?” Mello asked in an amused tone.

“I don’t know but I’d fucking do it.” He grinned, knowing it would involve a lot of smoke bombs and tear gas.

Near would be fine. Aizawa would call him and then they’d bring Kira down.

Chapter End Notes

Man, I always forget how dangerous my hometown is until I go home. Spent the
morning talking to the police, but I was just trying to be a good person so I'm not in any trouble. I'd high key recommend any of you that are old enough to drive to get a steering wheel lock for your car. Discourages thieves. Also have your local police's non-emergency number saved on your phone. If you see something, report it there, you never know when it'll be helpful and they're sometimes less busy than 911 if there's ever too many calls directed there at once.

Anyways, thank you Carrietta_Dragana for convincing me to have the note on Mello's photo written by Near instead of a random person like I originally had. That's the change in Chapter 25.

I hope you enjoyed this chapter!

Edit: Over 200 kudos! Thank you all!
Mogi was starting to understand why they were being shown this far in the future. The kids got to see how low they could fall, and they got to see how blind they could be to one of their own. He could guess what his future self was thinking. He wouldn’t act against the leader of their task force unless he was certain someone else would. Not because he didn’t have doubts…

No. He had doubts but his respect for the Chief would conflict with that.

Aizawa never blindly trusted anything. He doubted Ryuzaki, he would doubt Kira, and if the Chief gave him a reason to he would doubt him as well. He didn’t place his trust completely with anyone. Matsuda trusted the Chief, and when he died happy his son wasn’t Kira…he could see why the younger man didn’t believe Near despite how much sense he made.

The quiet man knew Near would figure a way out of the building so he wasn’t worried despite Demegawa’s rants. It was hard to worry with Matt snickering. All he had to do was find a way to distract the mob and then get out with a helmet on or something. It was just a matter of distracting the angry mob. As an officer sent to his fair share of riots, that wasn’t easy.

The conversation between Kira and Near reminded him of Ryuzaki and Light’s arguments, except the exasperation wasn’t there. It was convenient the youngest heir was being attacked right after he announced his suspicions, but the United States also withdrew their support so that wasn’t the only explanation that made sense.

The green was stronger this time as they showed his friend’s inner thoughts. His future self and Ide were also looking to him. Technically, he was the senior agent, and with the Director and Deputy Director dead he could have been promoted. Aizawa as his boss…that was a strange thought. Not one he didn’t expect to happen someday, but that day was supposed to be far away.

“Near, we have to evacuate immediately!”

He almost laughed at how calm the heir was in comparison to the blond man. Near complained about how despicable the protestors were, completely missing the point of the warning. At some of his words, Ryuzaki tensed, but Mogi focused on the hiring of anti-Kira protestors, while the ones supporting Kira just crawled out of the shadows.

They dropped money.

“I always knew you would squander your inheritance.” Ryuzaki sighed.

“I am using it to save my life,” Near defended.

“You could have dropped fake money,” The great detective muttered.

“You’re encouraging us to make fake currency?” Matt inquired with false innocence.
“I worked hard for that money,” Ryuzaki said petulantly, ”Earn your own.” He pointed at his heirs, adding, ”Legally.”

Light smirked, ”Does gambling count as legal?”

“No.”

The money falling caused enough of a commotion for the police to be brought in. The SPK took advantage of it to escape disguised amongst the officers. Kira scanned the group, but didn’t find anyone. Near must be taller in the future than he thought, granted they still hadn’t seen him standing up. It was an overall successful plan, except for the loss of all that money.

“If you don’t suspect the second L of being Kira by now, you are in the wrong line of work.”

They could suspect him all they wanted, but without evidence it was hard to take action against him. Besides, while he didn’t have anything against the kid in the room with him, his future self was almost scary in his apathy. He could see why his future self didn’t like him, and he almost agreed with Matsuda’s sentiment that the future Near was against them. Granted, he was.

It cut to future Aizawa staring at his phone with a drink in hand. He was agonizing over the same conflict as the rest of them, but then his daughter came in. Yumi was still as cute as ever, except now she had tests to prepare for. He glanced at his friend, who had a smile for his daughter.

That would be what convinced him. If he failed in the future, he’d have to watch his children grow up in a world dominated by Kira.

Yet he could still die and fail, and then his family would have to grow up without him in a world where Kira was synonymous with justice.

His thoughts weren’t revealed as he looked at his sleeping wife, but after Kira activated one of his contingency plans with Misa he was shown calling Near. Next to him, Aizawa slumped. He nudged him, ”You did the right thing.”

“Let’s hope it doesn’t get me killed,” He muttered as Misa was shown giving up her memories again.

A majority of his conversation with Near was skipped, but they came back during the review. He revealed the first L had two suspects, and then the act the Chief pulled to get them released. Near was impressed with Kira’s actions, and then he furthered the doubt Aizawa already had. But when the teen asked for the identities of the suspects, the task force member drew the line.

Near hung up on him.

“The person suspected of being Kira is Deputy Director Yagami’s son.”

He narrowed it down from the test which got them released. Though he wasn’t sure what would happen now that he got to know it.

Aizawa then revealed that he contacted Near. He stared straight into Kira’s eyes, but they were mostly hidden as he paused before he said it didn’t matter. Aizawa seemed confused by the reaction, and Mogi wondered if this was the plan. He was going to say he talked to Near, and then if he died he and Ide were to try and arrest Kira. Or tell Near it was confirmed.

He then said he was going to search their house.
Mogi smirked as his future self came along to help.

“It would be best for everyone if Light wasn’t Kira.”

It would have been best, but that wasn’t the way the Death Note fell.

Misa answered the door wearing essentially nothing. They managed to lie about a fake call there were explosives planted in their house. They began their search while she fretted about Kira. Without her memories this time, she just looked like a housewife, one whose husband never came home and likely never would with the way the investigation was picking up again.

He felt bad for future Matsuda. The rest of them seemed to have some suspicions, but he firmly believed in the Chief’s son. He turned on Demegawa’s show before the scene switched back to them with Misa.

He coughed to hide his laughter when Misa complained about Aizawa’s hair cut.

“You’re not cute anymore!”

His future self was not successful in hiding his laughter, and both Aizawas glowered at him. Future him had to snap to attention and call him sir. So he was promoted some time in the next five years. He ended up having to stay with Misa, which was only slightly preferable to being in the office with Kira and Aizawa butting heads.

Demegawa started asking for money, making Kira into a scam.

Kira couldn’t do anything against him though.

“What does he have planned?” Matsuda wondered.

>Delete!

A man was shown writing in the notebook and killing off the other leaders as they were shown. He did so with more dramatic flair than Kira had, and a more fervent look in his eyes. He saved Demegawa for last, saying the same word each time he finished a name.

“And delete!”

The sudden deaths threw Aizawa off.

Kira went so far as to pick one of his supporters to use his powers. Teru Mikami, someone he had saw on the television and had never met in person. From what they saw of his more ardent supporters, this wouldn’t end well. He was going to go too far without the real Kira to guide him. He didn’t see a way for that to happen without the task force then being able to capture him and neutralize another notebook.

“Teru Mikami…” Light said out loud as it showed him at a desk.

“You know him?” Ryuzaki inquired.

“By reputation.” The college student frowned, ”He graduated the year before I started. I remember an acquaintance of mine complaining that he wouldn’t be heading the debate team anymore.” He sighed, ”He became a prosecutor.”

“You chose a lawyer?” Matsuda looked offended.
“A prosecutor at least.” Though he doubted any defendant would subscribe to Kira’s ideals as much as the person whose job was to make sure criminals were punished by the law.

“Do you know anything else about him?” The Chief inquired.

“He’s…intense.” Light grimaced, ”I heard he used to get in a lot of fights and not just verbal ones. A professor told me that I almost had as strong a sense of justice as him and look where that led with the Death Note…”

“So he’ll easily reveal himself,” Ryuzaki decided.

“Let’s hope.”

Mogi hoped so too.

*******************************************************

Light hoped his father’s death would be the last in their group. He put it out of his mind as the episode introduced yet another Kira.

Teru Mikami. He only heard of the man, and he never looked for more information about him. He had a strong sense of justice, but he only saw the world in black and white. There was good and evil. There was always an enemy. An enemy he felt the need to fight. In his childhood, it was him standing up to bullies. It was simple to win.

It wasn’t simple in the real world.

“The more I confronted evil, the more enemies I had to face.”

He himself had been more careful when he confronted bullies, using other people to protect him without looking like a tattletale. His father wouldn’t approve of fighting, but he had been popular, even back then. All he needed to do was pretend like the kid being bullied was his friend, and the girls who liked him would protect whoever it was from the other boys. Even bullies had crushes.

Whenever he heard a girl was being mean to another girl…it was harder. They would get jealous if he got closer, or accuse him of liking them if he made a move to protect her. He would drop hints he would never like a girl who was a bully, that he liked girls that were nice to everyone. It created a false niceness, but even that was better than direct antagonism.

If it got really bad it was simple to create a situation where the bullies were caught by an adult.

As he got older he stopped caring as much. He saw what other people were doing as wrong, but he also saw no reason to get involved. If it ever resorted to violence he would have intervened, but the worst the bullies at his high school did was threaten. The threats were enough to make some people give up the money they had, but little else. At least, little else that he noticed.

His father always told him to stick to his beliefs. His mother once asked him if he was sure he wanted to be a detective, that there were other, less dangerous, ways for him to make society better, but even though she asked he never got mad at her about it. Parents naturally wanted what was best for their children, even if it was selfish at times.

“That was when the miracle happened.”

He would never be grateful for his mother’s passing. He refused to believe the deaths of anyone made the world a better place. Yet he couldn’t blame Mikami for thinking the way he did. It was
what he thought not too long ago. He saw the similarities between the young lawyer and himself, but he believed all that before he was given the power to make it a reality.

That was their key difference. If he weren’t Kira, he never would have sided with Kira.

Mikami sided with Kira before Kira existed. He also didn’t believe people could reform.

“Evil must be deleted.”

That obsessive behaviour rivalled Misa’s.

He wondered if that was why Kira chose him. He certainly had a similar enough idea of justice. Except he hadn’t gotten a Death Note like the model. He had to find another way to get Kira’s attention, and with the amount of program’s the task force monitored he succeeded. Though it wasn’t a matter of finding him worthy of sharing that power, it was that he couldn’t have that power anymore.

Except, unlike Misa, he took the initiative to take out Demegawa. He acted independently, but in a way that was almost indiscernible from the real Kira.

He killed Demegawa without needing to be told to.

Which left a vacancy in the position of Kira’s spokesperson.

Matsuda announced there was a new spokesperson, and he sighed.

“Kiyomi Takada.”

“What do you naturally have this much luck or is it just when you’re Kira?” Mello snarked.

“He’s always been lucky,” His father answered.

“Follow up question.” Matt looked at him, ”Is there any girl attracted to you that isn’t insane?”

“Hey!” Misa pouted.

“Mari and Yuri were normal,” Mogi replied, ”Or, they appeared normal.”

Light sighed, ”With the amount of girls that think they’re in love with me, I’d have to pick one of the ones with a stronger personality otherwise the others would tear them apart.”

“Strong personalities.” The third rank grinned, ”Nice word for insane.”

He rolled his eyes, ”If you went to public school you would understand the pain of having a fan club.”

Matt’s humor faded into disbelief, ”You have a fan club?”

Aizawa laughed, ”Does Light have a fan club? You’re kidding. When he won the junior tennis championship we almost didn’t get to congratulate him he was surrounded by so many girls.”

“One time it leaked to the press that he helped with a case and he got fan mail,” Matsuda teased, ”So much fan mail.”

”Sayu broke into his locker on Valentine’s Day one year before he could get rid of all the chocolates there,” His father joined in, ”There was enough chocolate to last us months.”
“I don’t even do anything.” He crossed his arms, not really mad. If they could find enjoyment at his expense he wouldn’t stop them.

“Right.” Mello rolled his eyes.

“Just watch.” He looked back at the screen, ”Kira is going to contact Kiyomi, and you’ll see just how easy it is for me.”

It was a lucky break for Kira. Kiyomi was a too obvious choice for him, so obvious no one would believe he picked her to be the new spokesperson. Yet because he knew her he would be allowed to get closer to her. He barely listened to Mikami’s explanation, slightly surprised she had become a Kira supporter. She’d always tried to be neutral in her view of the world.

“You are the man, Light!”

He blushed a little. He doubted he would have to use much effort to seduce her, but it was slightly uncomfortable for him nonetheless.

They made the plan. Since the police weren’t outwardly defying Kira he could go to her under the guise of wanting to help. He claimed it might not work but he knew it would work. He sunk lower in his seat during the phone call. Flattery worked well with Kiyomi, he knew that much. But he couldn’t be the only one trying to contact her.

Even though she knew he was with Misa, she was still willing to meet with him alone in a hotel room.

Aizawa snickered at Mogi in the apron, ”I didn’t know you could cook.”

“Some of us have to cook for ourselves,” Mogi replied.

“YES!” Matt jumped when it was shown him and Mello were listening in, ”Pause it, pause it, pause it.”

Ryuzaki did, and they all stared at the two of them. Matt didn’t look like he’d changed much, but he was actually wearing his goggles as he played on a handheld videogame. His hair was a little longer, but he was essentially in the same outfit. There were strange bands in his pants but his shirt was still striped. Nothing too strange about his choice in clothing, unlike his partner.

“Can we keep going?” Aizawa asked.

“I’m good.” Matt grinned, ”Glad you came to me, Mello.”

Mello just nodded as it was revealed that Matt had likely set up surveillance in his future home. The blond looked annoyed as he listened to Misa’s chattering.

Mikami took being Kira too seriously, making a leap from criminals to those who didn’t contribute to society. Too far, even for him, which meant he would need to get control again. The task force finished setting up surveillance of the hotel room, while Aizawa left him alone as he stood staring out one of the rooms.

Matt and Mello exchanged amused glances when Kiyomi entered.

He could have guessed what Kira would do. Say something fast and embarrassing. Act embarrassed. It made the statement seem more genuine. They sat together in silence, and he saw her eyes soften as she fell for the act.
“It really is that easy for you,” Ryuzaki muttered, “Should I be jealous?”

He huffed, “If it were that easy with you I wouldn’t bother.”

“How’s it going?”

“The mood’s perfect!”

“You didn’t even do anything!” Matt protested.

“I don’t have to do anything,” Light said, though it wasn’t something he was exactly proud of.

Then Mikami called her, and she admitted it was Kira out of surprise.

“No one should be that lucky,” Mello muttered, and he was starting to agree.

Mikami was smart enough to pick up that someone requesting a private meeting with Kira’s spokesperson could be Kira, and demanded to speak to him. It was easy from there to speak slightly in code. He figured out he wasn’t free to speak and was being watched, then proved he was Kira so that he had no choice but to remove all the surveillance.

He revealed he was Kira to her once they were alone.

“You are the only man that I’ve ever really admired.”

“You literally cheated on her with three other girls,” Matt grumbled.

He sighed. Yet another woman he was being shown manipulating due to their feelings for him. It wasn’t him, not in mindset, but he hated knowing it was because he was handsome that it was easy for him. Maybe he should put less effort into his appearance. Ryuzaki obviously didn’t care…

“You will be the goddess of the new world.”

It ended with him reporting to headquarters, where Matsuda was the only one really worried about him. He was going to pretend to be dating her. Naturally. He’d likely never date anyone seriously in this future.

“Could you help me get a girlfriend?” Matsuda asked.

“What?” It was a ridiculous question, but it snapped him out of his thoughts.

“When this is all over…” He rubbed the back of his head, ”I mean, I know you’re not interested, but even when we went to Aoyama your friends were really nice to me after you said I was looking for a girlfriend. I had to give them a fake number-“

“I know,” He interrupted before he could ramble for too long, ”They were disappointed.” His eyes lit up and he found himself chuckling. ”Sure. If I’m allowed to after this, I could smooth things over with any of them or I could help you find someone new.”

It would be up to Matsuda to make it work, but over eager, slightly oblivious, and dedicated to his work were a killer combination when it came to finding a new partner.

He was still single five years in the future after all.

“Could you teach someone to do that?” Ryuzaki wondered.
“Charm people?” He thought about it, then shrugged, "Probably."

“It’s almost a shame your morals prevent you from using it,” He smirked.

He narrowed his eyes, "Would you ask me to?"

Aiber had a son. He’d likely want to retire from a life of quasi-crime soon. If the great detective was looking for a replacement conman…

“Of course not.” The smirk faded into something more genuine, "I would not ask you to do something against your morals.” He reached out a hand, and he took it, "Your morality is one of your more admirable qualities.”

“And your lack of them is appalling," He returned.

His boyfriend almost pouted, "Why is Light not charming to me?"

“Kira tried being charming and he ended up in a cell for over fifty days.” Light huffed.

“You aren’t Kira,” Ryuzaki said.

He just shook his head, amused. Until the Kira case was closed, there wasn’t much of a point in putting effort into romance.

Still…Mikami was a poor choice.

It would be over soon for Kira.

Chapter End Notes

It's dawned on me that I don't have many episodes left until the last episode. My original plan was to include the alternate ending on Youtube...but someone asked me if I would use the Relight scenes and I promised I'd ask y'all.

Alt. end fits better with the premise of this story since he decides to go to the Shinigami king. It also includes a punishment for using the Death Note beyond boredom.

Relight shows Light as a bored Shinigami, and I would likely have to change it a bit since the after scene doesn't make much sense without the before scene and combining both would take a bit of creative liberty, which I'm not afraid to do.

Either way, this ends with Light entering the Shinigami realm. If you wouldn't mind, I could even combine them somehow or come up with something else based on those ideas. I just like basing what they watch on something you guys can actually watch so I don't have to be too descriptive on details.

Let me know! Please leave a comment! Everything is on the table!

Also, my mom accidentally scared a rat family in my backyard so now I have a 1-2 week old abandoned baby rat that none of us know how to take care of so any tips would be appreciated since we're going off what we read on the internet and would
rather not have to go to a vet.
Watari glanced at the children. Mello had been shown in the Japanese airport, and if Matt was with him both were in Japan. Near announced his plans to go to Japan as well. He had to call Commander Rester to ask him to escort him. He smiled slightly when the boy admitted he had never travelled alone. L would be at a loss for simple things without him as well.

They were still such children.

But they were also the only ones who could defeat Kira in this future.

He stared at Light. He had been contemplating something the last few episodes. L had three heirs, two of which actually wanted the position. He always thought about asking Matt if he would one day like to replace himself. He was getting old after all, and the older he got the more likely it was a criminal would strike at him to get to L. He didn’t want to become a liability.

A replacement Watari was hard to find. Anyone could cater to L’s needs, but they had to be smart enough to anticipate them and argue against them if need be. Yet with that intelligence often came ambition. It was difficult to find someone who believed in L enough to put aside their ego to just be Watari.

He always hoped Matt would be that person. He was more sociable than the other heirs and competent in his own fields. The problem came in his loyalty to Mello. The plan had always been for Mello and Near to work together. Whoever replaced him would end up being the tie breaker in their eventual arguments. It would effectively shut Near out, which they didn’t want.

Light though…if he was willing, he’d be a suitable replacement for the role of Watari. If he managed not to be identified after all this time, so would the Japanese teen. He already proven he could handle L and his heirs. With his charming demeanor, he might even be able to smooth relations between L and the various police forces worldwide. He could make them something greater.

He’d also likely run the institute better than Roger. He was a kind boy, good with children. He could see him taking over the role of recruiting the young genii. He hired Roger because he couldn’t run both, but he had a feeling that was the perfect challenge for the college student.

Why couldn’t he have an heir?

Besides, seeing how the heirs would have turned out under Roger’s supervision made him eager to take back his spot at the orphanage. He’d personally oversee it once more.

There was a brief glimpse of the task forces plan to get into the NHN by having Misa come back to the spotlight, before Near called Kira. He sighed when he announced his presence in Japan. He was baiting the criminal, trying to make it seem like he could be defeated. Which he easily could be if Mikami found any way to see the SPK or Kira decided to bring a gun and end everything himself.

“I’ll accept your challenge.”

The scene then depicted them rising together on an elevator as they spoke, faking politeness. They both knew the other was the enemy. It reminded him of the ending song, where he was riding the
elevator alone. It zoomed in on both of their faces, their eyes narrowing in dislike until Near hung up, leaving Kira to think alone.

He recognized this as a continuation of L’s original game.

“We’ll find out which of us is truly prepared to win and whose wits will prevail.”

There was an image near the end of his monologue. It was of a man with a weapon standing on top of a pile of corpses. The man wasn’t Near of Mello. In fact, he seemed to be dressed in robes like a priest would, or a similar dress to some of the roman statues he had seen. It stood perfectly stoic amongst the dead, half its body depicted in the light, the other half shrouded in darkness along the line.

“I can finally begin my reign at the top.”

The elderly man prayed for the best for all the young people in the room. From what they had seen, it wasn’t clear if Near knew giving up the notebook would erase the memories of it, thus ending Kira as well as arresting or killing him would. Not that he had any interest in saving Light Yagami.

He was relieved to hear Near hadn’t strayed too far from the path, but he had to wonder if he only threw out the possibility of just killing Kira and Mikami because it was exactly what L had not done. No, simply killing Kira wasn’t enough of a victory for them.

“L entrusted this case to those who came after him.”

Were him and Mello still working together then? They hadn’t been shown anything that suggested it, but he assumed after an initial meeting it would be easy for them to remain in contact.

The SPK were all the help Near needed to finish the case, but once Kira was defeated they were American agents first. They would go back to their agencies and then the white-haired teen would be alone. The Wammy boys needed to stick together because that was what L had built. Especially without some of the fortune L had built.

They needed someone permanent no matter the future.

Near wasn’t surprised L-Kira managed to make it so the only surveillance the task force could do was audio. He was good at double meanings, and even better at keeping up a tone that was both commanding and friendly. Even when he made Takada the next Kira instead of Mikami, he timed it expertly so her reaction could be passed off as surprise at the suggestion she start speaking her mind in her show.

She looked uncertain, though he supposed it was a large step from supporting a killer to becoming a killer to normal people.

“…alright. I’ll do it.”

L-Kira had Mikami transfer responsibility of killing to Takada without passing on the notebook. He was instructed to make a fake and act like it was real, presumably while hiding the real notebook in a secure location. He was to go to it only when Takada needed more papers. Of course, the fourth Kira followed orders out of blind faith, though he had a split second of doubt.

It would be hard for him to find the real notebook, even if he figured out Mikami was supposed to
have it. Simply eliminating Takada wasn’t possible in the path he’d chosen to follow. Mello might in the future, but it wouldn’t be him.

Lidner went undercover as one of Takada’s bodyguards. A close position to keep an eye on her, except when she went to her private meetings with Kira.

The scene went to him in his room of screens. Each one seemed to show either the news or the Kira talk shows. He knew that L-Kira couldn’t have been the one to pick Takada as the new spokesperson because he knew she wouldn’t have been his choice. Therefore she had to be close to the other Kira, otherwise he never would have entrusted her with that power.

His eyes lit up on screen as he thought, quieting his mind so he could simply observe. He’d done this from time to time as he tried to absorb as much detail as he could. The screens rotated around him as he rose to his feet, eventually focusing on Mikami speaking with Takada in the background.

“Could X-Kira be Teru Mikami?”

Mello smirked, ”Apparently Kira isn’t the only one with good luck.”

Near nodded. He would have figured out who Mikami was eventually, but it was good luck that just as he was thinking about a Kira supporter close to Takada he had made an appearance on her talk show. The faster he figured everything out, the higher his chances of surviving the final showdown would be.

He wouldn’t have gone to Japan unless he intended to show his face. Showing his face when he knew there was a Kira in existence who could kill with only a face was more risk than he ever thought he’d take.

Revealing his face wouldn’t be like what L did. His death wouldn’t secure Kira’s guilt. No, if he was wrong about anything he planned he and his whole team, along with the task force, would die. Kira would be left unchallenged. At least, he would lack enemies on his level. Though he wasn’t sure how well a rebellion would work against Kira.

He personally would continue to fight until it cost his life.

But he wouldn’t last long alone.

He thought back to when Mello had been crying at the Chief’s death.

There was a certain draw in expressing emotion the way he did, a need everyone instinctively had to comfort someone who lost control. Even though future Mello killed off almost all of her comrades, Lidner still jumped in front of the gun to make sure he wouldn’t fire it. He could tell in that brief moment that she, for some reason, wanted to help the angry, injured, blond.

His future team was protective of him, but that was because they needed him to win. He was certain if they started to die on his orders instead of by Mello he would be abandoned.

He was impossible to connect to because he didn’t display emotion the way others did.

Neither did L, which is why he felt a connection to him. Enough that he would copy his methods once he died. But that tenuous bond was nothing like the one L had with Light, who brought out emotions he didn’t think the older detective had. L did the same to the college student.

Emotions clouded thought, they were almost like a weakness. But his one admission got him to his current position.
Mello moved his arm back around his shoulders, and he shifted so the weight of his head wouldn’t cut off the circulation to his arm. The way he had his feet tucked to the side put them in contact with Matt’s legs. His arm was resting on his shins and every time Kira made a move against him he would shift in concern or squeeze his knee at the same time Mello squeezed his shoulders.

It was…nice. Warm and comforting for no logical reason.

Physical contact was right next to emotional expression in things he didn’t do normally. He was past the age where coddling would be beneficial.

He admitted he cared about them, and in turn was given physical reassurance they cared for him. The question was if he should express more. He still didn’t have anything he thought he should feel guilty for…no, he didn’t want to feel guilty. Mello cried because of his future actions. Future actions he could have prevented him from doing.

Just thinking about his tears made his heart rate accelerate and his breathing shift. When those blue eyes looked at him, asking him how he repressed his feelings…

It was wrong. Mello was overemotional at times, but his outbursts were what made him Mello. So he refused to answer. He told him he wasn’t being overemotional.

He instead decided he was too stoic, but it was his nature to not express what he was feeling. If he tried to be more expressive he feared it would come off as fake and push them away as much as his former self had. It was…pleasant. Having friends who showed they cared. He didn’t want to go back to being alone.

If that meant being a little less rational with his emotions…

The last time he cried he still had parents. He’d been helpless, unable to cure the illness that killed them. He watched them die from behind his tears, wanting to take off the protective gear the doctors made him wear so he could say goodbye properly. It would only have made them more scared than they already were, so he’d controlled himself. He hadn’t done anything stupid.

It was what was keeping him alive. His caution, his control, it kept him safe.

But was life worth living all alone?

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Misa blushed at her future self’s failure to kick the newscaster. She had given up her memories again. Light was spending all his time with Kiyomi or the task force. She knew what that meant. She was completely useless to him, to the cause. The plan with Demegawa to kill Near failed, and even though there was nothing she could have done differently he had said he wouldn’t accept failure.

She was truly nothing to him, and her future self had to watch him run off with another woman.

Just like she was watching him leave with another man.

Except he seemed happy with Ryuzaki. Kiyomi was just useful to him.

The white haired kid was already monitoring her. One of his agents followed Mikami. Then she was shown complaining to Mogi about how much work being a performer was. She was happy she was famous enough to make a comeback worthy of being one of the key performers at the music festival, but it was a hollow victory if she was all alone when she got home.
Kiyomi invited her to dinner. The bitch.

Of course she accepted. She was going to rub it in that she was the one Light was living with in the future.

She winced as she watched herself take the entire bottle of wine for herself. She suspected from her earlier behavior alcohol was involved. She was normally peppy, but something about it had screamed pathetic. Especially when she saw Mogi cooking for her. She had been on her own for a while now, she knew how to cook.

She was lonely in the future. Lonely and drunk.

That bitch was not making things better.

“I’m going to announce my engagement to Light at the pop music festival.”

That was an outright lie.

But it was enough to get Kiyomi to tense. A reaction, however slight. She might not be able to read the men that well, but she knew girls. She was as jealous and possessive as her futures self was. She was just too comfortable in her superiority to see they were exactly the same. As soon as she wasn’t useful to Light she would be cast away.

She was pretty useful, but it was only a matter of time.

It had only ever been a matter of time for her.

Even in this room she didn’t have anyone to talk to. She didn’t even try to comment or break the silence because all she’d get was their annoyance. She didn’t want anything to do with Light Yagami or the Kira cause anymore. She only stayed in the room because she was curious what would have happened to her without this.

“If you are able to, that is.”

She didn’t have her memories or Rem in the future. She could easily be killed. She tensed at the threat, but then remembered that CIA agent was in the room. She couldn’t make a threat like that and carry it through without revealing part of Kira’s plan. Still…she’d have written it down like an accident if Light hadn’t told her he’d been dating those other girls as a cover for her.

“You’ll probably be...executed.”

Her threat was empty because she forgot Light was Kira. Kiyomi laughed at her, thinking back to Light’s smooth words in the dark hotel room. He really was charming above all else. She then called the dinner unpleasant and left. She pretended she was victorious, and then stumbled out of the restaurant after her. Mogi was forced to take care of her.

It was just embarrassing, but no one in the room cared about her.

No one outside the room really cared about her either.

“If you read between the lines, they were arguing over which one was his lover.”

Pathetic. She was a young, upcoming model, a rising star in Japan and internationally. She’d probably put her career on hold for him, but she’d never lost the opportunity to come back. She should be more dignified than that. She had some self-respect.
“All I can determine is this; Light Yagami is popular with the ladies.”

Matt and Mello snorted at that.

“And the men.” Matsuda teased her ex.

Misa slumped in her seat. They cared about him even though they were being shown him at the worst he could possibly be. She wasn’t even sure when the last time they glanced her way was. In the future they seemed to like her a bit, but that was because of her looks and Mogi was probably able to tell she was lonely.

The final scene showed Mikami pulling out a notebook and writing the name of the man assaulting the woman on the train. As he stepped out the man died…which didn’t make sense since he was specifically ordered to get a fake one. Unless that was the fake one and that picture he took he sent to Takada!

Ha! She wasn’t completely stupid.

But she wasn’t sure where to start to get their forgiveness, much less their acceptance. They were good people, and she’d miss them once the investigation was over. Still…she was the one to kill their friend, to threaten innocents if she wasn’t given her way. For most of the time they’d known her she would have gladly done the same if it was for her boyfriend.

Words were just words. They probably wouldn’t believe her apology anyways, even though she was a pretty bad liar.

They believed Light repented. They started supporting him before he tried to kill himself.

She wasn’t that desperate for attention, and if she died for any reason Rem would kill them.

Rem! She could prove it by saving all of them from Rem!

Then they’d be grateful to her and they could all be friends again!

Then they’d probably let her go! She’d never have to give up her career. She’d never become a lonely, drunk, abandoned girlfriend to a man who didn’t care about her. She’d also have Rem in her life. The Shinigami seemed to be the only person in this series that cared about her, enough that she had died for her.

Maybe they could be friends too, and this time she wouldn’t try to kill her!

Oh, she could see it all working out just fine.

Chapter End Notes

Man, it's been a month? 30 chapters in 31 days...damn.

Baby Rat has survived through the first day, and is now used to being fed from a syringe! I really hope it opens its eyes soon, but it started crawling around more today!

I hope you all liked this chapter! I was sorta stumped most of the day on what I was going to do with this until I wrote Near and Misa's while watching One-Punch Man
with my dad so...yeah. I've never gotten writer's block so bad before but I've also been really excited about moving past the watching the episode part.

Thank you for all the support!!
Matsuda could feel they were coming close to the end. Mikami killed someone in front of Gevanni, who immediately reported it to Near, allowing them to know for sure he was involved with Kira. The white haired teen reminded his man to be careful of the Shinigami, because that was what got Pember found out.

It was what he was still a little scared of, because it wasn’t revealed which notebook their piece came from.

Ryuk was in the Shinigami realm. Rem was with Higuchi. But that didn’t mean they would always stay there. If one came who wasn’t attached to the piece they had…well, nothing would happen if it was Ryuk, and Misa hadn’t touched it so she couldn’t help if Rem was the one they could see.

He really hoped she saw what she was doing was wrong.

He also really hoped Aizawa would tell him he still suspected Light, but at the same he kinda hoped the older agent wouldn’t. His future self continued to put all his faith in the Chief. The Chief’s final words declared his son innocent. It would take a lot more than Aizawa to make him change his mind.

Yellow was his color. Positivity and loyalty. He was certainly loyal to a fault.

He’d either have to see Light kill someone like he did here, or he’d have to hear his confession before he would take any action to stop him. He hoped the latter wasn’t followed by the former. He didn't want to die like Ryuzaki…

He didn't have too much hope for his own actions saving him. He had to put his faith in Near. Maybe he would save all of them and not just stop Kira…but he really doubted it was a priority for the youngest in the room.

Aizawa was green, Kira’s opposite. He firmly believed their methods should be as just as what they stood for. He had people he genuinely loved. He had a complete family.

Matsuda thought about his own color more, trying to put together the color wheel in his head. He was pretty sure the opposite of yellow was purple. No one pointed it out yet, but purple was Mikami’s color now. Since purple was the combination of red and blue, it probably had some nice meaning to it, but he could look that up later.

He didn’t see many differences between himself and the prosecutor. They were both dedicated to their work, dedicated to their causes, willing to die if it would help, putting on an act to draw the attention of the enemy…

Mikami did what he did because it was his duty as a follower of his god. He did what he did because it was his duty as a detective.

No, they were different. Mikami saw the world in black and white. He saw it in shades of grey. His future self could see the good in Kira and the evil in normal people. He could see how the world was changing and be in awe of it while still opposing it. It made him weaker, but he didn’t mind not being the best detective if it meant he could still believe in something.
Or he could be looking into it too deeply. He had his fair share of bad experiences with lawyers. He hated having to go on stand with a defense attorney trying to make him look incompetent in front of a jury. Granted, most of the time the judge sided with the prosecution, but even he knew their high rate of convictions wasn’t exactly the best thing.

But that was kind of a shallow argument.

Aizawa decided to create a test to see if Kira and Takada were passing notes.

His future self was excited about the possibility of Kira having trouble with women. If Light never was Kira and never came out, he probably would still do the same. It was a little funny to see him stumble like that. It was rare for there to be any crack in his perfect mask.

He could see why Ryuzaki liked riling him up so much.

“Why are women like this?”

He didn’t know why Kira was complaining. He would love if there were women who would fight over him, but he was pretty sure he’d end up on the outs in that situation.

“He could keep two-timing them.”

Not that he’d do anything like that. He’d be lucky if he ever got one woman to stay with him, much less two beautiful, famous ones.

“Are you serious? You don’t see any problem with that?”

He wished they could have Ide back. They seemed to get along better than he thought they would in the future. To be fair, Mogi was undercover with Misa and Aizawa was in a pretty stressful situation. He could see why the most senior of them snapped, though it didn’t make sense for him to try and listen too hard to see if there was a discernible difference in their conversation.

They were both too good of actors. Besides a long pause before she agreed to help arrest Kira, nothing they said was different from how a normal conversation went.

He noticed his future self was wearing a yellow tie. Aizawa and Kira both had red ties, and Ide had a dark grey one. He wasn’t sure how long they had been wearing them, but he finally noticed it. Funny, how Aizawa was the one wearing Kira’s color when he was the only one of them acting against the man.

Not that any of them knew it was Kira’s color. Man, he’d probably never wear red again after this.

Still…he wondered if there was another way he was different from Mikami. The prosecutor was the only one able to kill Near once Kira set up a face to face meeting. If they were opposites…did that mean they played the same role on opposite teams? If so that would make him the one who could kill Kira…

The Chief told him he was strong, stronger than he thought, but was he strong enough to shoot Light Yagami’s body? Even if he would kill him if he didn’t?

It wasn’t the worst thing he could do. Worst thing he could do was change sides…which wasn’t outside the realm of possibility. He might not be strong enough to kill Kira, but hopefully he was strong enough to not join him.

He sighed. There wasn’t really a point to guessing how it would end when they’d be shown it soon.
Matt’s mind was racing.

The only part of Kira’s plan they were told was that Takada would do the killings, and Mikami was instructed to create a fake one. He had taken a picture of the man on the train before he wrote the name down, which suggested he had sent it to Takada who kept the piece of the Death Note close enough she could kill on demand without Lidner noticing.

There wasn’t a Shinigami following Mikami around because there wasn’t a Shinigami connected to the notebook. Ryuk still could decide being there was more entertaining, but they wouldn’t be able to see Ryuk without touching the task force’s notebook. If Near was focused on the notebook Mikami had, with no notice it was fake, he was in danger.

They still didn’t know for certain if it was fake, but it was implied to be. He didn’t think Mikami had it in him to defy orders.

It would put the prosecutor on a whole new level of crazy if he was saying delete even though he wasn’t the one doing the killing. Actually, if he was actually talking to himself out loud instead of in his head like a sane person he definitely had something going on up there.

It was unfair to judge the present him on his future actions, but maybe he’d keep a tab open on him once this was over. He had the mindset to become Kira, even if he didn’t have the power to. If he was a good enough lawyer to be consulted by news networks, though he wasn’t sure how much the NHN’s standards were influenced by Kira, then he might be good enough to convince clients that lost to take justice into their own hands…

Would he be guilty of murder then? He never really thought the joint enterprise laws were fair but he definitely could be dangerous to society.

That wasn’t the current (future?) issue.

Near was working on limited information. Kira already anticipated the path of his investigation, assumed he would find Mikami and put in his own countermeasures. He doubted they would test the fake one he was carrying. If it wasn’t revealed to be fake then the real one could come into play at an unexpected moment.

A missing puzzle piece resulted in an incomplete puzzle.

A loss.

And losing meant death.

If he saw Near or Mello die…he wasn’t sure what he’d do. Even if this was a future they’d never let happen, even if it was an anime, he would see their deaths in his mind for the rest of his life. That made it real enough.

It would be how they should have died. No wonder in all the stories prophets were portrayed as crazy.

It was kinda like when he failed in a video game. Even though he could restart, if he didn’t get it right the first time there was a lingering sense of failure throughout the other runs.

Aizawa confirmed Kira and Takada were communicating through notes. Awesome, but ultimately unneeded. He did decide to take the information to Near himself, and the younger heir trusted him
with his face.

“**You and the rest of the task force are already out of the picture.**”

“Way to be blunt,” He muttered.

At least he later admitted it would be useful to have someone watching Kira, even though watching him would do nothing.

He watched the music festival start. The SPK took Misa and Mogi into custody, worrying the whole team. Removing Misa wasn’t going to rattle Kira, not when he removed her powers and importance in his plans. He kinda felt bad for the big guy, but at least Aizawa gave him all the information he had. He knew it was necessary to catch Kira.

“**Light Yagami, I’m sure the significance of this move isn’t lost on you.**”

Perhaps not, but it was overall meaningless. It didn’t make him lose his edge, and nothing would be revealed by the model. He moved his hand to Near’s knee again.

Gevanni checked his watch, and his move was revealed. There was a flashback to him outlining Mikami’s schedule to Near. The youngest of the three of them then asked if he would go and touch the notebook he had at the gym on a specific night.

“**Sir, if there is a Shinigami with him, there’s a distinct possibility that I will die, isn’t there?**”

He was amused anyone would call Near ‘sir’ for a split second before the youngest began to respond.

“**Part of the reason you are doing this is to test that theory.**”

Blunt, apathetic, ”Not exactly the best way to ask someone to risk their lives.”

“**I can have Rester do it if you are too scared.**”

“Calling someone chicken is even worse,” He muttered.

At least L presented it as an option for Matsuda. He got to make the decision, but he was the only one that could do it. He was certain if another person could have done it, there would have been a volunteer.

“I will endeavour to be nicer when asking my subordinates to risk their lives,” Near replied.

“Just asking would be an improvement.” He grinned, because he would probably be one of those subordinates. He would like to be asked before he faced being potentially killed. He was relatively certain Mello would ask…not that he needed to.

He wondered what they were up to. They were together, and it was pretty useless to keep surveillance up on the house with Misa kidnapped. He was a little disappointed the argument there had to have been between himself and Mello wasn’t shown. Though maybe they hadn’t fallen completely out of touch in his quest to prove himself that led him to joining the mafia.

If Mello left…he was sure he’d chase after him.

Wammy’s would be pretty boring without him, and no videogame in the world could fill the void in his life Mello would leave.
The United States' agencies might not be able to find him, but he probably could. He knew his best friend better than anybody. He was only part of the mafia for a year or so before this was taking place. That left a good chunk of time where his presence was unaccounted for.

Matt wouldn’t join the mafia, nor would Mello likely allow him to, but it was possible they never fell out of touch.

Still…he and Mello shared a room. He should have been the one in possession of Mello’s picture this whole time. Unless he gave it to Near, which he doubted. Granted, he hadn’t been told L was dead at the same time as them. Near could have gone to their room and retrieved the picture before he was even aware what was going on. It made more sense than him somewhat betraying the blond.

Even if Mello did cut off contact for five years…would he really drop everything and fly to Japan just to help him in his obsession?

When he worded it like that, he saw why Aizawa told him it wasn’t his job to take care of Mello.

He didn’t think his loyalty to his best friend would make him do something he would come to regret, but there was little he wouldn’t regret if it was for the dumbass blond on the other side of the couch.

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Aizawa knew touching the notebook wouldn’t kill Gevanni, but he still let out a sigh of relief when the American mustered up the courage to grab it. He was relatively certain the notebook Mikami had was fake., but given his OCD like manner he was certain it was a perfect copy, which would give them a good idea of what the real one would look like.

He sent a grateful look at Mogi when the other detective revealed what they learned from the third Kira. The man allowed himself to be kidnapped, even though all he could do was raise suspicions about Kira. There wasn't a benign reason for him to be passing notes to Takada. He even convinced Misa to go along with it, and they all knew how stubborn she could be.

Especially given her history of confinement.

Granted, as long as she had company it looked like her future self was content.

A person could be controlled up to 23 days before their death. Another limitation that wasn’t useful to them but nice to be aware of.

“I need to confront L in exactly 24 days, if Gevanni is still alive until then.”

He closed his eyes at the future Near’s statement. Again, he wasn’t wrong, but his tone aggravated him. It made it sound like his man’s life came as an afterthought in his planning process. It was like he knew he should care about it, but didn’t put any effort into showing he cared. He already discarded their task force as unnecessary to the defeat of Kira.

He hoped their future selves proved him wrong.

He knew there would be a point where he snapped with Near in charge, just as he snapped at Ryuzaki. He hoped it came after they stopped Kira…but he’d have to see if he was let in on the plan or if he was going to be left in the dark, played with like one of his toys.

There was a vague scene of Kira and Takada that showed there was more to the plan, but what he
needed confirmed was beyond the scope of what was being shown. It would all come to light once Near met up with Kira, but it left him anxious anyways.

Both of them were more intelligent than he’d ever be. Even now when they knew most of the rules and limitations of the Death Note and in the future when he was spying on Kira for Near, the murderer still managed to appear a step ahead of them.

If they didn’t manage to catch up, they’d all be dead.

Near had Gevanni take pictures of the contents of the notebook for part of his plan, whatever that could be.

He tuned out the ending song, noting something distinctly different from last time. Near was doing exactly what L had done. He found out who the temporary Kira was, but decided to catch him in the act of killing instead of saving as many lives as possible. There was no Chief or Light to yell at him, no one in the SPK stood up to ask when saving life became less important.

Neither had he.

Granted, his future self hadn’t asked what he knew. He’d just been told there was a plan to corner Kira and the best thing he could do was nothing. He should have demanded more. He didn’t put his trust in anyone easily. Seeing the teenager for himself would have only reminded him of Ryuzaki.

Or had he changed that much in the future he too only wanted the investigation to be over? By any means necessary if need be?

He hoped that wasn’t the case. The NPA was down a Director and a Deputy Director in the future they were shown. He was the most senior agent in their task force, he ranked as one of the highest in their division. When he could go back to the NPA on a more permanent basis he’d likely be promoted to Chief. He’d be the one left with the task of fixing the justice system Kira so brutally messed with it.

He had to be the one who taught the officers killing criminals was wrong unless they were sentenced to death. He would have to teach such a sentence could only be decided in court. He was sure officers would get trigger happy during Kira’s reign. They didn’t feel the need to try for a difficult arrest when they assumed the criminal would just die as soon as they had their face and name.

Hell, they probably wouldn’t try to hunt down criminals once they knew their identities.

They’d be lazy, unused to having to do their jobs since Kira did a lot of it for them. He’d need all of his moral fortitude to rebuild the NPA the way it ought to be.

The Chief would be the perfect person to fix the justice system in a post-Kira world.

Him…not so much. He would try his hardest, but if he was disillusioned, if he followed Near’s orders in the end, he would never be able to clean up the mess made by the mass murderer.

That was just the mess within law enforcement. He did not want to see how the public would respond to a sudden lack of Kira. If the riot when they were told where the SPK headquarters was any indication, there would be outrage. Their anger would be focused on the police, because who else would have been able to stop Kira? They’d demand Kira be brought back.

He hoped this series ended with them destroying both notebooks so they could never be tempted to
take the easy way out again.

No matter how hard it was to rebuild, they needed to.

He just hoped it would be easier to rebuild with only one year of Kira being active as opposed to half a decade.

Chapter End Notes

The good thing about posting every chapter the second I'm done writing it is when my computer deleted it I didn't end up losing anything. Granted, I managed to recover it after awhile but it's not like I need it.

Finally saw Black Panther today because my dad was confused about something and wanted my expertise. My family's always surprised by how much I know about certain things and I told them I read a lot of fanfics. Now I'm slightly paranoid my dad will start reading them since he always makes an attempt to know more about what I like...oh well.

Also a little sick so if anything in the story is incoherent, let me know!
Mello felt Matt’s anxiety from the other side of the couch, but he wouldn’t feel any better even if he could reach more than his shoulder. Near was currently the focus of Kira’s wrath so it was Near they were more worried about. Especially since it was unclear if he knew the notebook was fake.

The episode started with sad music showing the reflection of a cityscape in a puddle, giving the illusion of looking up while actually looking down. A nice representation of Kira. He did everything thinking he would make the world better, raise it up above the muck, but instead he had just brought it down, made it hell.

It showed more pictures of buildings and regular people, all of it grey, sad, as if waiting for something. The task force, with Kira checking his watch. Misa and Mogi in their confinement. Near with his toys. Someone being arrested in front of NHN before Takada showed up. Himself on the phone.

He suspected he was in contact with Near then. He already had Matt, there was no one else he needed to talk to if they were running a two man op.

He wasn’t sure how he felt about having Matt visible. His own real name was known to the task force, and while the second L hadn’t been there when he’d blown up the mafia house, his men had. It wouldn’t take much to convince Matsuda to write his name down. He was sure Matt cared enough to want vengeance for his murder…

Wanting vengeance and wanting justice were two different things. It was the main difference between himself and Near in the future. Vengeance was hot, it consumed his future self and those around him in flames. Justice was cold, something no one could really understand but they made an effort to.

Neither were ideal. Justice alone was rigid, impersonal. Vengeance alone was chaos. There needed to be a middle ground, a better justice that considered emotion without becoming meaningless.

He went back to watching the show, trying to shove aside his thoughts and worries. Gevanni was trailing Mikami. The task force was watching Takada. Near and Rester were talking before Near checked in with Gevanni, who gave a thumbs up. They then called Lidner. There was another scene of him with Matt, where he set down his chocolate with a contemplative look.

He looked more serious than he ever had. There was none of his usual rage, just a sober calm. He wondered what he was thinking about that he wouldn’t eat chocolate. It was his habit, just like Near’s was to twirl his hair and Matt to do something with his hands. Another glimpse of Aizawa listening in on Kira and Takada, who were still passing notes. Then Misa losing to Mogi in a game and flipping the board.

There was another sequence of Gevanni in front of the locker. Then Near playing with his toys before Gevanni and Mikami were being shown again, the move he made not revealed to them. Then Ryuk watching Kira, whose eyes were shielded. Mikami was shown examining the Death Note he had, before confirming that whatever Kira had wanted to happen had happened.

“Game over, Near. I win.”
That was ominous.

Gevanni checked the notebook to make sure the names written there still matched up with the victims. Which didn’t mean much if Mikami and Takada were given the same list of people to kill. Still, Near had a plan. He hoped it was good.

Near invited Kira to meet him face to face in an old abandoned warehouse he bought. Everyone investigating Kira was to be brought to that spot, an opportunity to remove all opposition Kira would not be able to resist. He was doing exactly what the enemy was, letting him build confidence, enough he agreed to bring the other notebook to the warehouse as well.

The question was how much could Near play into Kira’s hands before the murderer could crush him.

“You shouldn’t worry so much, Mello,” Near whispered, “I am enough to defeat a serial killer.”

“Kira isn’t a normal serial killer,” He replied in a lowered tone.

“Neither was B but you told me L still caught him.” The white haired boy didn’t turn to look at him. He was glad he didn’t. He couldn’t take his staring at the moment.

“Near...”

“Light Yagami...”

“I know exactly what your plan is! I’m going to win!”

“Not you too,” Matt complained. Mello silently agreed. It was creepy when L did it and it was even creepier when Near did it.

The music slowed down again as it showed Takada walking into NHN. She didn’t get far before a red camaro pulled up, Matt behind the wheel with his goggles on and a cigarette in his mouth. Through the open window he fired a smoke bomb, then peeled out into the street. Mello tensed, so he was making a move. Matt was not sitting safe behind a computer screen.

No, he had Matt driving. They stole a car from the garage exactly once because he was not eager to repeat that hell. His best friend drove like he was in a video game. While they did get away with it, he was never eager to try again.

“Were you smoking?” Aizawa demanded.

“I don’t smoke now,” Matt defended, a grin on his face at being shown again, even if he had yet to say a word.

“You mean you won’t smoke ever,” The older detective corrected.

“I’m about to do Tokyo Drift in real life and your issue is with my smoking?” His best friend turned slightly to send him an incredulous look.

“Your driving is to save your life.” Aizawa crossed his arms, “The smoking is a bad habit.”

“Wow.” Matt glanced at him with a shake of his head. He tried to smirk, but he couldn’t remember if Tokyo Drift ended with the protagonist’s car exploding or not. He was pretty sure Han died.

Matt wouldn’t die.
He was revealed to be driving the motorcycle at the head of Takada’s motorcade. Lidner recognized him and seemed surprised he was there. That meant he didn't coordinate this with Near. Still, he hoped it worked in their favor. The female agent encouraged Takada to get on his bike, and then they were off.

“As for the rest of you, I need you to find that assailant.”

Shit. He was on a motorcycle. He could easily evade the bigger cars. Matt was driving a bigass red Chevrolet Camaro. Even with his insane driving skills he hadn’t exactly had a chance to do a test run on his getaway. He took a shaky breath. They kidnapped Takada. They’d keep him alive to find out where she was taken. Kira couldn’t kill him.

Kira couldn’t kill him.

He repeated that in his mind.

Mikami was the one with the eyes and he didn’t have the Death Note on him. If he broke habit to retrieve it, Gevanni would know where the real one was hidden…

It would mean they’d die, because Near had his confrontation set up. He wouldn’t move it forward to save Matt’s life, not in this future. They’d die and Near would live.

Kira figured out pretty quickly it was him behind the kidnapping, and Near called him before he could complete the thought. He couldn’t believe he had kidnapped enough people for it to be considered his style.

“I got my own music.” Matt said proudly.

It was faster paced, but he was certain it was the same instrument as him. He didn’t dare compare his best friend to Kira as he did himself. He was certain the electric guitar was meant to show their connection. It definitely fit the car chase, though that didn’t last long before he was cornered. It showed him behind the wheel, complaining about the number of body guards in his mind.

His voice was deeper.

They had him surrounded, guns aimed at him.

Matt came out with his hands up.

“Since when were the Japanese allowed to carry around such big guns?”

“Not the time, Matt,” He muttered. He wished he wasn’t concerned so he could comment on the absolutely atrocious vest he was wearing. At least future him had some style. That vest didn’t fit with the rest of his outfit at all. Unless he wore it to piss him off, which wouldn’t be unlike Matt.

“You won’t shoot.”

The shooting lasted all of six seconds, but they seemed to stretch on for a small eternity. He watched as bullet wounds appeared on his friend, who managed to remain standing for all of it. He fell backwards slowly, hitting the car on his way down. The end of the cigarette went out and it fell out of his mouth.

He didn’t take into consideration the bodyguards were also supporters of Kira. They wouldn’t feel any qualms against doing the same sort of killing their god did. He missed a crucial detail, and his friend was dead, lying in his own blood on the streets of Tokyo.
L paused it, and he tried to comprehend what he’d just seen.

Matt had died?

He was fully prepared to see his future self die, but not his best friend. Never Matt.

Matt had died before him?

This was all his fault.

“Note to self,” Matt broke the silence, “Don’t tell someone aiming a gun at me that they won’t shoot. They will shoot. Repeatedly.”

“Matt…” He couldn’t bring himself to be angry. Not when it was their friendship that led to his death. What right did he have to get angry with him after that?

He told Near earlier he had shitty taste in friends, but he’d never thought of himself as a shitty friend.

Aizawa swatted him on the back of the head, ”Take this seriously.”

“I really don’t want to.” Matt shifted away from both of them, ”I mean, I’m what, the fourth person in this room to see their death? We all knew what we were getting into—“

“What I got you into,” Mello interrupted.

“You don’t control me, Mells.” His best friend crossed his arms, ”I make my own choices. I wouldn’t regret dying if I’m helping you.” He smiled, and he searched his eyes for a lie.

There wasn’t one.

He was speechless once again. He never thought about the possibility of dying for Matt…kill for him, sure, but he never imagined them stuck in a position where he couldn’t find a way to save him.

He promised himself a long time ago he would protect the computer nerd. He should have known Matt made a similar promise.

“Idiot.” Aizawa reached over to tug on his goggles strap, dragging him closer, ”How would you feel if Mello died?” The smile slipped and the detective let him go, ”Dying for your friends is easy, but if they care about you as much as you care about them, you’ll try your hardest to live for them. Got it, kid?”

Matt stared at him, then bowed his head, “…got it, Aizawa.”

The older man ruffled his hair, ”It’s alright to be scared.”

Blue eyes flickered towards him, and Mello got it. His friend was pretending like it was no big deal because he was going to feel guilty. He was trying to prevent him from having the breakdown he had when the Chief died.

His emotions finally overcame his numbness, and with a yell he tackled his best friend to the ground. He stared down at him, ”If I ever ask you to die for me…send my ass to jail.” Matt had the nerve to open his mouth. He narrowed his eyes, instantly shutting him up, ”I don’t want to live with that on my conscience and if I think I can, I don’t deserve you.”
“Call me selfish, but you don’t get to die on me.” Mello growled, ”Or for me.” Matt’s eyes slowly filled with tears, and he internally swore. That was not what he wanted. Hesitantly, he let him sit up and hug him, chuckling a little, ”Besides, you know I wouldn’t last a day without you, Mattie.”

His friend’s shoulders shook and he hoped he was laughing, not sobbing, ”I told you to stop calling me that,” He lowered his voice, ”Mihael.”

“Mail,” He whispered back.

Matt trusted him with his name, his life.

He wouldn’t throw that away for anything.

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“Death is the only way to pay for crimes against Kira.”

Near wanted to join in Matt and Mello’s moment, but decided not to. He was slightly surprised when they retook their old positions, but he was glad that they did. They weren’t as untouchable as they thought in this future. If one of them could be killed, the rest of them could be.

He put his hand on top of Matt’s.

It wasn’t clear if in this future he was aware of Matt’s involvement. His future self had to be aware at that moment, but it was too late to save him. The beginning of guilt wormed its way into his mind as Takada had a flashback. She knew Mello’s real name, and soon she would have his face so she could kill him.

Lidner was the one to order the pursuit of Matt. She sent the men after him who had killed him. She could have ordered everyone to protect Takada. She could have sabotaged the chase, but she only helped Mello. He should have anticipated the involvement of the third heir, had his team give leniency to anyone Mello brought in to work with him.

He should have done something.

Mello ordered Takada to strip and put all her belongings in a box, presumably to get rid of her piece of the Death Note if she had one. Except he offered her a blanket, because apparently that was the line he drew with his morals.

“I do have a method for getting in touch with him.”

Was that who he was talking to earlier? If he knew about the plan and didn’t put anything in place to save Matt’s life…no, he would have warned Lidner. She wouldn’t have been surprised.

Takada asked for the blanket before she took off her undergarments.

Light made a worried noise, ”Girls hide things in their bras.”

“How do you know that?” His father asked as Takada slipped the piece of the Death Note out of her bra and hid it in the blanket. She now had everything she needed to kill Mello.

“Sayu does it,” The college student answered.

Kira couldn’t do anything. Without Takada, he couldn’t even reach Mikami.

“This is the only thing that can be done. If I don’t do it…”
“I will die,” Near muttered.

Even if he replaced Mikami’s notebook with a fake and knew the real one was elsewhere…he wasn’t searching for another person. He needed a way to reveal the other notebook’s location. Only the prosecutor knew that, though his future self probably assumed Kira would also know the location or have a piece on him to do the killings.

Lidner was in the perfect position to do this. If he removed Takada, he removed the link between Kira and Mikami. If Mikami started acting independently, without knowing what Kira’s plan was…he would likely reveal where he hid it.

Future Mello’s thoughts were interrupted by the news announcement that the suspect was gunned downed.

“Matt. I never thought you’d be killed. I’m sorry.”

“Idiot.” Matt punched his arm, ”Don’t get distracted.”

It was too late. They were shown Takada writing something on the piece of paper.

He squished his arm around Mello’s back and held on tight as Kira got a call on his phone. He answered and it was Takada. They talked for a moment, the woman begging to be saved as she tried to explain their location. It was as good as confirmation Mello was dead.

“I did what you told me to, Light. I did it!”

That’s when they were shown Mello’s corpse. His eyes were open as he stared at nothing, his skin almost purple in the darkened light.

No. Not Mello too.

“You really couldn’t last a day without me,” Matt muttered, but not even he could apply his twisted humor to this.

He let a little guilt enter his mind when Matt died, and that crack widened. He didn’t try to shove it down. He didn’t try to justify and release the emotion. All of this was his fault. He should have been the one to do this. Rester and Lidner should have done this instead of Mello and Matt. He had a way of contacting Mello. They should have been communicating.

He should have reached out.

He should have saved Matt.

He should have saved Mello.

They were both dead, leaving him the only heir left standing.

Logically…no.

He turned his face to the side and buried it in Mello’s chest. What was the point of all his logic, all his plans, if he couldn’t save his friends? Even if they weren’t in this timeline, they were the closest thing he had to friends back at the orphanage. They were the only companions he would have once the Kira case was over and the SPK was officially disbanded.
Without them…he would be alone.

“Near,” Matt sounded concerned.

“Nate,” He corrected in a voice only the three of them could hear, ”Nate River.”

They both put their lives on the line and lost while he sat safe, benefiting from their sacrifice without having to sacrifice himself.

“Damn.” Matt placed a hand on his back, rubbing it in soothing circles, ”I was hoping I didn’t have the weirdest name. Mail Jeevas.”

Mello didn’t react, so he must have already known. He expected as much, and he reached blindly for something of Matt’s to hold onto. The third rank gladly joined their hug. It took him a second to notice the growing wet spot on Mello’s black shirt.

Oh, he was crying.

He once again lost the two most important people in his life because of his uselessness. He lost the two people who reminded him of his humanity.

“I’m sorry,” He apologized.

“It’s not your fault.” Matt ran a hand through his hair.

“I could have saved you both.” Near trembled, ”Your deaths were unnecessary to the success of your plan. We don’t even know if it succeeded yet.”

“Calm down,” Mello soothed, ”It’ll succeed and then you can defeat Kira for all of us.”

He would.

They must have signalled to L they were ready to continue, and he turned slightly so he could watch. Kira told Takada to kill as many people as she could while she still could, tears running down her face as she accepted she was being sacrificed by a man who had promised her everything. The task force mobilized to go rescue her.

A brief scene was shown, but it was the one that mattered. Mikami found out about Takada and deduced she was in a situation where she couldn’t move. He also knew the real Kira’s hands were tied. Kira couldn’t continue the killings himself. He grabbed his briefcase and left his office, hopefully going to retrieve the real Death Note.

If he did, his future self won.

If he didn’t, everything was lost.

Mello had taken her to Karuizawa. On their way there, Kira wrote Takada’s death down on the piece hidden in his watch.

Karuizawa was on fire when they arrived. He could see the anguish on Lidner’s face. They didn’t know Mello was already dead. He wondered if his future self would think he burned to death. He held on tighter to the warm body next to him. He wouldn’t have anything of Mello to bury…if he didn’t win he wouldn’t be able to claim Matt’s body either.

Matt died without anyone knowing his name. Even if he could get him a grave it would only ever have his alias.
The fire burned Mello’s body as much as his tears burned his eyes and cheeks.

“I wanted to be cremated anyways,” Mello muttered.

“Please shut up,” He snapped.

“Someone’s being emotional.” He glared up defiantly through his tears and Mello wiped them away, reciprocating his earlier action, “But that’s okay.”

“I said shut up.” He looked away, letting his ear rest on his chest so he could listen to his heart beat, his steady breaths. He was alive, and he would stay that way. His hand moved to Matt’s wrist, feeling for his radial pulse for similar reassurance.

His body continued to shake without his permission, but he somehow felt better after crying.

How…different.

He was beginning to understand why Mello let his emotions run free. Once he calmed down a little, he felt good.

“We aren’t leaving you alone,” Matt promised.

Somehow his words triggered another round of tears on his part.

They were worth it.

Chapter End Notes

I mentioned this a few chapters ago, but what do you guys think about characters that didn't die from the death note? I mean, writing someone's name in the notebook is the only way to have someone killed before their time, right? How do you guys think lifespans work? Cause Soichiro, Matt, and Mikami (?) are the ones who are killed by means other than the notebook which suggests they would have died those days no matter what.

I might end up ignoring this detail completely, but I'm curious. Also, how many of y'all think Near cheated and used the death note to win? I've heard that's a theory but I've never looked into it that much since I like to pretend these episodes didn't happen sometimes.

Two more episodes left!

Thank you all for your continued support! Just a kudos goes a long way!
L stared down at his feet while he tightened his grip on his knees. Matt and Mello died in the same plan. Two of his heirs, who he should have been there to protect. He intentionally left them with the job of catching Kira. He set the example of dying for the cause, suggesting it was fine so long as the death ensured victory. He thought only his own death would be needed…

He still set a precedent.

“Tina’t think it will be necessary for you to talk to Near anymore,” He said as he watched said heir cry in Mello’s arms.

“That’s hardly what you should be focusing on.” Light moved his chair even closer.

“I failed them, Light,” He whispered. First, he failed the college student in the future, and now he failed them, possibly even Near should his plan end in all their deaths.

“You’ve been given a chance not to.” The college student slowly tilted his head up.

“I was failing them before.” It wasn’t just his death. He set a precedent for having others die to move his plan forward.

“You aren’t failing them now.” Light didn’t smile, but his expression softened, ”You won’t fail them anymore.”

He sighed. The other was being deliberately obtuse, ”I am not someone they should strive to be.”

“They won’t become you just by being around you.” His boyfriend shook his head, ”That’s not how it works.”

“I don’t know how it works,” He muttered.

“You think anyone does?” Light asked, ”Do you know how many times I’ve made Sayu cry?”

“Four?” He guessed, because he was perfect at everything he set his mind to, even with his obvious flaws.

“It was a rhetorical question.” The younger man rolled his eyes, ”The point is that you might not always succeed, but that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try.” He stood, ”Now, go over there and do something.”

He instinctively wanted to argue, but decided this wasn’t a battle he could win, or one he particularly wanted to fight. He rose, straightening to full height for a moment so Light wasn’t looking down on him as much, ”Help me?”

A nod, ”Of course.”

This time, Light didn’t offer any words. He sat on the armrest nearest his heirs and watched him expectantly. L sighed, but placed a hand on Matt’s shoulder. The third rank turned to look at him and he knelt so he was on their level. He observed the physical reassurance they were offering each other, and put a hand on Matt’s knee grabbing Near’s hand with his other.
Light placed a hand on Mello’s shoulders, and he struggled to think of what he should do next. He took in a deep breath, "I have been a terrible mentor."

"What?" Mello asked.

“As your mentor…” He thought about Watari, what he did for him, "My job is to push you to be the best you can be. I want all of you to be better than me because I know you all have the potential to surpass me.” Except for Matt, but after seeing the lengths he’d go through he couldn’t exclude him. He already dismissed him for too long.

"Are you seriously trying to blame yourself for our deaths?" Matt wondered.

“I hold myself partially responsible for all of your future actions," L said, switching eye contact every few words, "A good mentor is supposed to guide you to the right answer without revealing it.” Not throw them into a situation that felt the opposite of what he wanted accomplished, "If I were better at this, if I’d been more involved like I should have…maybe you’d have realized working together was the best way to win."

And if they worked together from the beginning, he believed Mello and Matt would be alive in the future they were being shown.

“I’ve always wanted you to learn to work together, to depend on each other,” He spared a glance at Light, who smiled. Hopefully that meant he was doing this right, "But I will try to be a better mentor from here on. You can depend on me.”

His gaze landed on Near, the one that followed the most in his footsteps. The white haired boy tightened his grip on his hand, "Did Light tell you to say that?"

His eyebrows furrowed together, slightly offended. Matt snorted, and Light chuckled, "Surprisingly, no."

“Surprisingly,” He muttered, deciding that yes, he was offended.

“Your idea of comfort is offering people cake," Light reminded him, and while he couldn’t deny that, he suddenly wanted cake. Which made everything worse.

“You aren’t helping.” He mock glared at him.

“I am.” The young man smirked.

“I thought that was a nice speech,” He muttered, looking at Mello, who appeared to be fighting back laughter.

“No offense, but I’m pretty sure Light’ll make a better teacher than you,” Matt said.

His glare was less mocking when he looked at his boyfriend, "You’ve turned my heirs against me.”

“We’re on the same side.” The college student crossed his legs, "You told me yourself that I’m charming."

He narrowed his eyes further at Light. He knew part of this was to remind his heirs he was very much alive and had no intention to change that. The other part was to cheer them up, but he suspected the newfound peace in his boyfriend’s eyes came from what they had yet to be shown. Kira’s defeat.
It wasn’t certain yet, there was always the possibility Mikami hadn’t made it to where he hid the second notebook before Takada died. He had the Shinigami eyes, he could see lifespans from just a picture. With her face plastered everywhere on the news, all it took was one screen at the right moment for him to see that she was dead and no action was needed by him.

Mikami was shown to be a creature of habit to obsessive levels. If his faith in Kira was enough, then he may not have taken action at all. He hadn’t acted independently since Kira found a way to contact him. Leaving the office could have been a way of removing himself from the temptation to act.

If it was, then there was a high possibility the last of his heirs would die soon after the other two.

But Light was confident he would be defeated, and seeing that Kira wouldn’t win would greatly benefit his state of mind.

He needed to see that even at his worst, even when his mind was twisted beyond recognition, he would still be defeated. It wasn’t healthy, it was similar to the line of thought that led them both to the roof…but he couldn’t deny he would be relieved to see Kira gone as well.

He also secretly hoped Near would find a way to save Light.

Even if his mind was already gone, he didn’t want to see his heart stop.

“What do you mean Light will be a better teacher?” Aizawa inquired, ”Did I miss something?”

Matt scratched the back of his head, ”I mean…Light’s coming with us when this is over, right?”

No one brought up what would happen after, just that there would be an after. He glanced at the Chief, who had a frown on his face. He needed to talk to him about his intentions with his son.

He wasn’t sure what his intentions were anyways. He could do his work from anywhere, but he promised to be a better mentor and that meant being at the institute in person more often. Flying back and forth between England and Japan would get tiresome…

“I just assumed,” Matt continued when the silence lingered, ”Never mind.”


L looked at his boyfriend, who shrugged, ”Yagami-sensei,” He corrected, ”Show some respect.”

There were only a handful of episodes left. They could talk about it after.

Though he did like the sound of Light-sensei.

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Souichiro said nothing as his son and Ryuzaki settled the younger teens. He would like his son to have a degree before he pursued a career. If things didn’t work out between Light and Ryuzaki, he wanted him to have something to fall back on. He didn’t want him to be dependent on the detective. Similarly with him moving to England so early in their relationship…

The next episode started, L settling on the ground in front of his heirs and Light throwing his arm over the back of the couch, balancing easily on the armrest. Matsuda shifted his chair forward so he could see past the college student, leaning closer to whisper something in his ear. Light tilted his head and blushed.
He didn’t want to know.

As expected, the world didn’t mourn long for Takada, if they mourned at all. Some blamed her for her own death, saying she failed Kira and got what she deserved. All the news networks clamoured to be her replacement. It was disgusting, and he wished the task force would stop watching those types of broadcasts.

“There is nothing to worry about.”

Was that arrogance based on something? Or had he truly gone so long without opposition he no longer needed a basis for his arrogance.

Near didn’t change his plan after all the deaths. The day after tomorrow for them. Two days before they either won or were massacred. The twenty-eighth of January, years in the future. The youngest heir didn’t sound worried, but neither did the mass murderer. Both seemed confident they correctly predicted the actions of the other. They felt their victory was guaranteed.

“There is a good chance we might all be killed. Don’t you understand that?”

“You might want to warn them out loud next time,” He muttered to the senior agent.

He felt bad about Matsuda’s continued faith in Kira. He knew it was his fault. If he hadn’t been so certain his son wasn’t Kira, neither would the rookie. He hoped that certainty didn’t turn him against Near or leave him open to manipulation. He never thought he would lead the younger man into such a bad situation.

Near was shown talking to his team, with a little finger puppet of Ryuzaki. He didn’t like seeing the toys depicting all of them. It made it look like this was nothing more than a game to Near, like they were nothing more than chess pieces on the board for him to move and sacrifice as needed. He would have said something, but he was certain the boy in the room with them didn’t think like that anymore.

“Let’s put our best into this, shall we?”

He moved his finger, as if Ryuzaki were saying it.

Strange, he was certain Light had been the one to say something similar when they began investigating the Yotsuba group.

Nothing more of the preparations was shown. It skipped to the call releasing Misa. She seemed unworried, largely because she no longer knew anything about the situation. They were then put in touch with Mogi so they could open the safe where they were keeping the notebook.

Aizawa thought about the notebook, going over the rules in his mind as he pictured the deaths. It was a mix of criminals and the SPK. He only thought about the real rules, the fake ones left off his mental list. He then strapped the notebook to his chest underneath his jacket. Well, that at least removed the possibility of it being in the possession of someone Kira could manipulate.

The senior agent confirmed Near was in the warehouse. Time slowed down in the show as they walked in.

Near was crouched in front of his team, wearing a mask he assumed was supposed to be of Ryuzaki’s face. That only made Kira angry, because he still thought of L as the most dangerous opponent he would ever face.
This was it.

The final confrontation. The end of one of these groups.

The mask also angered Matsuda, who thought it suggested he was only trying to protect himself and not anyone else. Again, probably true about the boy in the future. He kept himself safe this entire time while his people risked their lives. He admired Ryuzaki for confronting his main suspect directly, for putting his life on the line like the rest of them.

He had no such admiration for any of his heirs in this future.

Still…he could see them being worthy of admiration one day. Especially if he let his son teach them.

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“You’re gonna wait and see if we die?!”

Mogi tensed. That was really all they could do. If Near replaced the real notebook, they wouldn’t die. If Near hadn’t, then they had until Mikami showed up before they were all killed. They couldn’t just stop Mikami because then there wouldn’t be any proof on the real Kira. It was a complicated situation. He was sort of upset he had gotten taken before he could learn more of the plan.

They were waiting.

Matsuda had another outburst after the agreed upon half an hour, his dislike of the teenager obvious in his complaint. Him breaking the silence started a conversation. With Ide and Matsuda out of the loop, Near revealed more of his plan without Kira having to press for it.

“He’ll write down the names of everyone here who knows about the notebook, and kill them.”

Not a plan he was exactly comfortable with, but the best plan to win.

Before anyone could object too much to it, Mikami appeared. They caught a glimpse of everyone’s real name, but he focused on Kira fast. He then moved away from the door and started writing the names in a righteous fervor. He flinched at every delete, wondering which name was his as he wrote them down.

If Near was wrong…

“I was able to replace the page he would use today as well as all subsequent pages so that no one else would die.”

Did that mean if he wrote on a previous page they would die? He frowned, because it would only take forty seconds for it to be revealed the page he wrote on didn’t work. Any idiot would be able to adjust and write on a page previously shown to have worked. All he had to do was run when he saw them alive. With all the warehouses around, he could disappear. Then they were dead.

Kira thought he was victorious, revealing what they assumed all along. Takada had been doing the killings. He hadn’t realized Near tampered with the notebook so far in advance, that tampering was what Mikami noticed and managed to confirm.

It was still unclear if what he had was the actual, real notebook, or the one that had been tampered with.
“You are nothing compared to L.”

He wondered if it meant anything that Kira was red and the background around him was green. Opposites, as if the world itself was turning against him. Meanwhile, Near’s background when he thought of him was in space. He was above it all…no, he thought of Ryuzaki in the same manner. Perhaps he was thinking of him dead, forever out of the material world Kira wanted to rule.

He wondered what stopped Near from testing the Death Note. Ryuzaki died because he was willing to do just that. Aizawa or himself must have told him that.

He wasn’t willing to kill Kira without proving first he was Kira. He claimed his reason for that was because Ryuzaki wouldn’t have done the same. Ryuzaki would have tested the notebook for its authenticity, Near volunteered to risk his life to write Mello’s name in it earlier to prove the thirteen day rule false.

Neither of them had moral qualms about killing someone with it in the future, probably wouldn’t have if they hadn’t been shown this.

The white haired kid had a month of access to what he thought was the notebook. If Mello forced Mikami to reveal the real notebook, then he had three days of access to it. He should have at least tested the latter for authenticity, to make sure he wasn’t being shown yet another fake one.

But he didn’t.

Or he wasn’t shown doing so.

“At thirty-five seconds, I’ll claim my victory then.”

A confession if they didn’t die.

One last gloat before he could claim victory again if they all died.

He was sure this scene went on longer then forty seconds, but he had no idea how fast the geniuses could think and honestly he was fine putting off his potential death for a little longer.

Kira invited Mikami inside, which solved the problem of him simply running away. He came in and counted.

“Well Near, looks like I win.”

The episode ended right when Mikami said forty, not showing who the winner was quite yet.

“What do you think?” Matsuda asked,” Are we all going to die?”

“We’re not,” Aizawa said confidently.

“I don’t know,” Mogi answered honestly.

He could certainly hope not, but it would ruin the suspense of the show if they could have all the facts when they wanted them.

They’d know soon how this future ended for them.

If it ended for them and not Kira.
Went to a comedy club in the city last night, didn't realize how long I would be out. Kind of a short chapter but if the next episode wasn't the end I'd have combined it with that.

Might write the ending today, might not.

Can you believe there's only one episode left? I was so certain this would end up taking me longer or that I'd lose motivation halfway through but we almost made it!
Aizawa let out the biggest sigh of relief in his life when they didn’t die. He was certain they wouldn’t, but he wasn’t himself if he didn’t have a bit of doubt about that ending. Matsuda let out a louder breath, leaning slightly on Light. Mogi relaxed in his seat, and the Chief put a hand on his shoulders, “You survived.”

So far.

They proved who Kira was, now they had to arrest him.

Rester and Gevanni arrested Mikami, cuffing him and giving his notebook to Near. They were shown his name, and the names of the SPK members followed by a row of their own names. Kira freaked out, trying to say it was a trap, that this was all of trick. He tried to appeal to them through their distrust of Near.

He was surprised when he stepped up to place a hand on Kira’s shoulders, telling him it was over. He essentially confessed. He looked like himself when they began watching the videos at the beginning of the day. His future self couldn’t separate Light Yagami from Kira, which was why he was showing him what was almost pity.

“Light…why?”

Matsuda couldn’t in the future either, so much so he fell to his knees. Kira didn’t move beneath his hands until they tried to handcuff him again. Bad move. No way would Kira allow himself to be chained again, not after Ryuzaki kept him chained. He wondered if Light would have a similar aversion to any form of physical restrictions after this.

But it was a poor choice and only made Kira more aggressive.

“Light Yagami, L, Kira, it’s over. You’ve lost the game.”

Near revealed he would have lost. They originally only altered the fake notebook in Mikami’s possession. It was exactly what they feared. He was relieved to hear they switched out the entirety of the real notebook once they were aware of the real one’s existence, and he was slightly impressed by Gevanni’s ability to make an exact copy of the notebook in one night.

“Of course you’d be polite to the Shinigami,” Mello muttered.

It was probably the most polite anyone had been to Ryuk since Misa.

That proved to Kira he did have the real notebook. Ryuk apparently decided the game was up, and revealed that pieces of the Death Note worked just as well as the whole thing when it came to killing people.

“This was all thanks to Mello.”

“Wow,” Matt muttered, ”No appreciation.”

Aizawa couldn’t help but snort.
Mello’s kidnapping of Takada was enough to reveal the real Death Note. Mikami broke his tight schedule by going to the bank two days in a row. He wondered if that information was shared with Mello, or if they were just lucky the blond hadn’t moved a day earlier, thus conveniently having his bank visit coincide with the killing. He wrote the same death for her, just a minute later.

Future Mello had known he was going to die.

“But together…together we can stand with L! Together, we can surpass L!”

It was a nice realization. It just came too late in the future.

“Still feeling kind of left out,” He could hear the grin on Matt’s face.

“I used to consider you part of Mello,” Near said.

“That’s fair.” The third rank shrugged.

“Not to you,” The white haired kid muttered.

“Yeah, kid,” Aizawa agreed, ”You’re a lot more than Mello’s partner.”

Matt blushed. Mello punched his arm, ”Besides, I probably wouldn’t have told him you were involved, not if I thought he was using me.” The blond took a deep breath, then let it out, ”If I was planning to die, and I was the only one who could contact Near…”

“It would have kicked me out of the investigation once you were gone,” Matt finished, then punched him back, ”Asshole.”

The second rank winced, rubbing his arm, ”That’s fair.”

“The three of you will be quite the team.” Ryuzaki tilted his head back to look at his heirs.

“But will you be enough to surpass L and I?” Light challenged, a happiness in his eyes that hadn’t been there earlier, hadn’t been there since the first episode.

Well he’d be happy to see the villain that had taken over his body defeated to.

He ruffled Matt’s hair again. It was becoming a habit and he was glad it cheered him up as well as it did his kids. He couldn’t wait to see what the three of them grew up to do. He’d have to work hard to make sure he was the next police chief so that they’d have the support of the NPA whenever they needed it. That was what he could do to help them be the best.

“I think they can.” He looked at Light, but his gaze was drawn to the side.

“I think they can try,” Watari added.

Matsuda didn’t look nearly as happy as he thought he’d be. He couldn’t see him that well with Light in the way, but the way he was leaning forward, his arms on his knees, meant he was still anxious or thinking about something. Mogi was watching him, and he wondered what had gotten their resident optimist so down.

Kira was defeated. There was nothing the criminal could do now.

The Chief was also quiet, but that seemed to be more out of relief.

Aizawa sat back as the scene continued, the silence after Near’s speech lingering.
What was Matsuda worried about?

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Matsuda couldn’t get rid of the knot forming in his gut. He should be relieved his future self now knew who Kira was, but he’d watched himself sink to his knees. His future self had asked why. He hadn’t gotten angry. He’d tried to understand why the man he’d seen as a younger brother, who he gladly worked under for years, had become what he had.

Near challenged him to talk his way out of his situation.

He was sure none of the others would listen, but he knew he would. He was desperate for any type of explanation, any reassurance he hadn’t placed his loyalty in the wrong person. If someone could be used to get him out of there, it was him.

“Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha…!”

That laugh sent chills down his spine. He saw his future self horrified at the laugh. It was how he always laughed in his head or when he was alone. That he was laughing now meant the time for acts was over. For the first time, Kira would say his real thoughts aloud. This was when he would be exactly what they’d always imagined the criminal they were chasing to be.

Kira was revealed, and that terrified him more than he thought it would.

He went on a rant, claiming to be the god of the new world. He claimed to be the one maintaining order, the one who was justice, the only hope for mankind. He closed his eyes, unable to watch as they were told all the wars had been stopped, the global crime rate had dropped by over seventy percent and if he was allowed to continue, the world could be even better.

He could see that type of argument swaying him.

And Light was one of the few people who could do it. He was the only one that could have gotten that far…but he had only gotten that far because he was the Chief’s son.

If he hadn’t been…he wouldn’t have known as much about the investigation. He wouldn’t have had personal ties to the task force. There wouldn’t have been a way Ryuzaki would have released him from his original confinement. The task force wouldn’t have followed him after Ryuzaki’s death if he wasn’t the Chief’s son, someone most of them knew for years.

There may have been other people capable of becoming Kira, but he doubted there would be any with his connections, and even less who were capable of keeping Ryuzaki’s interest even without their power.

Near said he was wrong. He named him a murderer.

“In the end, you’re nothing more than a crazy serial killer.”

Was it so crazy though?

It wasn’t that long ago people believed capital punishment was an effective means of crime determent. If what Kira said was accurate and crime had gone down by seventy percent…his grip tightened on his knees. He shouldn’t be thinking like this. He was sure none of the others, except maybe Misa, were thinking like this.

He wondered if his future self was thinking like this, and his worry deepened.
Kira turned away, asking if Near was certain both notebooks were real.

“Is he bluffing?”

He blinked at the question. Sure, he was bluffing, but the heir still should have considered it a possibility. He did have the notebook locked in a safe that he was around, potentially unsupervised, for years. It wouldn’t be far fetched for him to have switched out the other notebook, especially since he knew that the task force would never use it.

That he didn’t…did he know it was real for sure?

Kira used the doubt the question sowed to open the compartment in the watch and begin writing down Near’s real name.

There were tears streaming down his future self’s face as he shot Kira in the corner, not even getting up completely from where he’d been kneeling. He made him drop his pen. He inadvertently saved Near’s life. He surprised the hell out of Aizawa, but there was something he had forgotten.

“What about your Dad?! What the hell did he die for?!”

Even if he believed Kira was right, he’d never go with him after what happened to the Deputy Director. He didn’t think he’d be upset enough to shoot Kira…

“My dad? You mean Souichiro Yagami?”

He tensed, even though that was more evidence of the difference between Light and Kira. Whatever he said next would decide his future loyalties. All he had to do was say he regretted it, that he loved his father and what Mello did was wrong…

No. He didn’t say that.

“You led your own father to his death. And now he’s gone, you call him a fool?!”

He didn’t know what was worse. He could have handled seeing himself sympathize with Kira. He prepared himself to see that awhile ago. He hadn't prepared to see himself shoot the criminal. He watched as Kira attempted to continue writing the name with his blood.

He shot at him four more times.

Somehow, that was worse than joining him.

“I’ll kill him. I’ll kill him! He has to die!”

Kira was lying in a puddle on the ground. He was writhing in pain, making a strange gasping sound instead of breathing. He future self stormed towards him, with every intention of ending him. He had never killed anyone before, and with the last five years of his future self’s life dedicated to catching Kira, he doubted that changed in the future.

If his first kill was the Chief’s son, insane or not…he didn’t want to watch.

“Matsuda!”

Aizawa yelled his name as he fired one last shot. It wasn’t shown for a terrifying few seconds if he shot the killer or not, but then Kira was shown, the bullet creating a hole in the ground next to his head. The rest of the task force was restraining him.
He slumped in relief. He hadn’t killed Light. Even if it wasn’t really Light.

He hadn’t fallen to his level, but only because of the task force.

“Thank you.” His head snapped up at the present Light’s voice. The college student was looking at him, ”For thinking about Dad.”

Dad. Not his dad, just the general dad.

“Light…” Of course it wouldn’t bother him he shot a version of him repeatedly.

He couldn’t say Kira deserved it because that would mean agreeing with Kira.

(Even if he did think Kira deserved it.)

“You’re a better son than I am.” Light put a hand on his shoulder, turning away from the others on the couch, ”If I was in the right state of mind, I would have done the same.”

“It was the wrong thing to do,” Matsuda muttered.

“Right or wrong intentions, you did save Near’s life.” He shrugged, ”Kira won’t be able to do anything now.”

“It’s finally over, isn’t it, Near?”

“Yes.”

“And no one else died thanks to you.” Light told him, ”Don’t worry about what you failed to do in the future. I wouldn’t trust you so much with Dad if I didn’t think you’d do everything you could to help him.” He smiled, ”I’m glad you’ll be here for him if I’m not around.”

Matsuda decided to take his advice to heart. This was in a future they wouldn’t let happen, and it was something he failed to do even in the messed up future. The others succeeded in far worse, and if they never let anything bad happen to the Chief he’d never be this vengeful anyways.

He still narrowed his eyes, ”By not around you better mean in England.”

Light’s eyes just lit up, amused, ”Yeah…England.”

He would make sure it was England. Light could leave with Ryuzaki and for no other reason.

He didn’t resist the impulse anymore. He lunged to the side to briefly embrace the college student.

Kira called out to Misa, then Takada even though one didn’t know what was going on and the other was dead. He was truly at a loss as to what to do, but he didn’t give up the notebook. It switched to Mikami suddenly stabbing himself, no warning in his thoughts or words. He screamed as he bled out. Ide went to try and stop the bleeding. Gevanni said it was useless.

His future self watched the scene for a second, but turned his attention back to Kira.

“Wait, Light!!”

He managed to open the door and run out. Near told them there was no point in pursuing him. Aizawa replied he wasn’t going to follow his orders. That seemed to surprise the teen, who began fiddling with his hair again, but he told them they could make their own decisions.
It wasn’t as over as they thought.

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Light watched Kira run, the desperation giving him the strength to despite his injuries. His breathing was almost painful to listen to. The sounds of violins played slowly in the background as he ran, thinking back to the beginning. The day he walked home with the Death Note. The day Kira was born.

The sun was setting on the day Kira would end, as he ran past an imagined version of his beginning, so calm, so in control.

It showed Ryuk watching him from atop a nearby tower. The Shinigami announced he lost, and he would be the one to kill him as he wandered into one of the other warehouses. The task force regrouped, words not necessary to convey they didn’t see him. Another scene showed them running, probably picking up on the blood trail.

“If they put you in prison, who knows when you’d die.”

He knew where this was going. Well, at least Matsuda wouldn’t feel bad about being the one who killed him.

“And I don’t wanna lie around waiting. So it’s all over. You’ll die here.”

Die by Ryuk’s hand. Die with his name written in the Death Note.

Exactly like how he tried to end his own life.

He should probably not be as happy as he was at that fact. There was no happiness in the others at Kira’s defeat. They all ended up doing something they weren’t proud of in the pursuit of the mass murderer. Well, perhaps not his father or Matt but they still died. They had all been dragged down.

“Well Light, it’s been interesting.”

Kira settled on a stairwell when his heart stopped. The music stopped as the screen faded, coming back to Misa on a train. Slowly, over the sound of the train, a piano started playing. He couldn’t tell if it was the same tune, but it reminded him of the scene of Kira and Ryuzaki on the stairs before Ryuzaki died.

This time, he wasn't on one of the top steps.

He wasn't above anyone. He had fallen.

The piano continued to play its lonely, mournful tune.

It showed Mikami lying in his own blood, and then Misa standing on the opposite side of the railings on a bridge, her eyes slowly closing. That was when the violins joined the piano, and then the other instruments, showing he and countless others were joining the detective in death.

The episode showed him looking up into the light, and then an image of Ryuzaki appearing in it.

When Ryuzaki lay dying, he thought back to the orphanage where his heirs were ready to take his place, to finish the case. The church bell tolled with images of stained glass windows, of churches. He thought it somewhat backwards, that the one that didn’t believe himself more than human died surrounded by all that religious symbolism.
Kira, who believed himself to be a god, had none of that. He was simply a man dying alone on a staircase in an abandoned warehouse.

Ryuzaki died staring up into his eyes. Eyes filled with victory. A face with a smile. A sinister smile, but still a smile.

Kira died looking up into an imagined Ryuzaki’s eyes. They weren’t shown the full expression of his face, but he could make out an almost frown. He was sure his eyes were filled with pity, with disappointment.

Ryuzaki never wanted Kira dead. He wanted him to face justice, to see the error of his ways and spend the rest of his life agonizing over it before he was executed.

It was a disappointing end for both of them. It was a hollow victory.

Light was pretty satisfied with it anyways.

Kira’s eyes slowly closed, his expression sad, and he wondered once again if the murderer regretted killing the detective, if he regretted any of it.

One last picture of his face in the light, before it showed Ryuk sitting on top of the tower. It moved up from him to an image of the moon. The character for his name.

He should probably be more worried about the ending, but it didn’t bother him so much if he was killed for boring the Shinigami. He seemed the most entertained when he was fighting against L or his successors. He wasn’t sure how he’d lasted in between, but that was probably because it was interesting to watch how the Death Note slowly changed human society.

If he wasn’t using the Death Note and he wasn’t fighting an opponent on the same level of genius as L or the others…

It was a possibility from the beginning. If Ryuk was willing to kill him after six years of being together, he was willing to kill him now.

It was nice to imagine a life with Ryuzaki and his heirs solving cases. He’d added helping other geniuses find their purpose in life and giving them the skills they’d need to pursue it. Their orphanage sounded like a fascinating place to live, to work. He knew he’d never be bored there, but that would largely be because of the detective by his side for as long as he was wanted.

“I guess that’s it,” Light finally said, "Ryuk’s going to get bored of me eventually…”

“Don’t talk like that,” Ryuzaki snapped, "He’s in the Shinigami world now, we can send him back there once we have Sidoh’s notebook."

A feat he still wasn’t sure how they were going to accomplish.

“And what?” He didn’t look at his boyfriend, "He can watch over me there until he gets bored and decides to kill me because he doesn’t want to keep watching?"

“Then we’ll entertain him,” Matt declared, "It doesn’t just have to be you, right?"

“I’m sure the cases we work on will be more than enough entertainment,” Near agreed.

“I’ll take on more cases,” Ryuzaki promised.

Light sighed, touched by the gesture but recognizing it as fruitless, "Ryuzaki…you were bored of
your lifestyle until Kira came along. He’ll get bored.”

“Are you saying you’ll get bored?” His boyfriend deliberately misinterpreted.

He glared, “I don’t think Ryuk finds you as fascinating as I do.”

“That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try,” Mello grumbled.

Light sighed, ”I didn’t say we shouldn’t try, but Ryuk was the most entertained by Kira, not me.”

“He only ever knew Kira,” Ryuzaki stared at him intensely, ”We will succeed.”

He glanced back at the scene, ”There wasn’t an ending, maybe this isn’t it.”

It was a diversion, a poor one at that, but he didn’t want to fight about this.

They could try their hardest, but all it took was a moment of boredom and he was dead. He couldn’t live his whole life in a constant state of battle with reality. That wasn’t a life he wanted to live.

“Ryuk isn’t a genius,” Matsuda whispered, just for him, ”He’s a lot like me, and trust me, I’d never be bored if I could hang around you and Ryuzaki. You guys might consider your lives repetitive, or boring, but they aren’t.”

That was…surprisingly helpful.

Maybe they were overthinking it.

L hoped for something more, but not this. It was as the opening sequence depicted, Kira lying in a puddle in the Shinigami world. He sat up, looking around in curiosity. He didn’t seem mad about being killed by the Shinigami, but he had also lost and seemed to accept he lost. Kira was startled by laughter, turning to see Ryuk standing by him.

“Welcome to the Shinigami world.”

Would this be what happened to Light if he died? Even if he never saw this or recovered his memories?

“Don’t you ever dream of being able to go to heaven or hell after using the death note, huh?”

He didn’t look like a Shinigami. He still looked very much human. He was told he would see soon why he was brought there. Before he could finish asking, he clutched at his chest and fell to the ground. An unknown voice intoned his first kill. Kira struggled back up only for his second kill to be said out loud and a truck to appear out of nowhere to kill him again.

L didn’t look away from the screen, but reached behind him to grab Light’s hand and tug him onto the floor next to him. When that had been said in the first episode, he hadn’t thought about what it exactly meant. He thought, maybe, he would become a Shinigami when he died.

A human could make a deal for the eyes, use the notebook, and Rem said they evolved past needing food. Evolution suggested a starting point where they had needed food, and Ryuk seemed familiar with their realm’s food. Also, shortening a human life was the way to lengthen theirs so he presumed a connection. It was never said where Shinigami came from, but their deaths were tied to
There was too much evidence to not think the two were somehow related.

None of that mattered at the moment because he was watching Kira suffer, and this was a future they could not change.

Light would suffer for as much suffering as he caused.

These repeated deaths were their atonement and then they’d disappear.

It skipped to Naomi Misora’s death, and he had to watch as his love’s body choked itself to death. He asked Ryuk to save him, but there was no way to avoid it.

There had to be a way to avoid it.

The next time Kira woke up in his afterlife, he laughed. It was his insane laughter that meant he had a plan he was looking forward to carrying out. Ryuk mistakenly thought he went insane from the fear of facing every death he ever caused, but L knew better. Kira said a number in the hundred of thousands, revealing it to be the number of deaths he had caused.

As long as he was experiencing those deaths, Kira continued to exist. He claimed that was enough time for him to find the Shinigami king and make a deal. He was going to offer him the same thing he brought to the real world. His intellect, a strategy to make the Shinigami world better than a rotting wasteland. He was going to sell him a better world…

“I can even kill the king if needed.”

“Oh.” Near let out a little noise.

Ryuk continued to follow the promise of entertainment, and the Shinigami seemed to believe it was possible for him to succeed against the king of these beings.

Though a part of L also believed Kira would find a way.

“I’ll show you the genesis of the new world once again.”

The scene ended with a new Shinigami. He was wearing the same jacket Kira normally wore. His hair was almost the same color, though a different style. As far as Shinigami they had seen went, he was the closest to looking human, the only difference seeming to be the skull like face. Even the red tie Kira had been wearing for most of this time was worn like a bandana.

The only thing he couldn’t figure out the resemblance to Kira was the goggles.

Otherwise that was Kira in Shinigami form. Not so different from his human form. He even walked with a limp like he’d done after getting shot by Matsuda.

That. That was how it ended.

“So that’s why this was sent,” Near said.

“What?” The Chief demanded.

“The Shinigami King must have sent this,” His youngest heir explained, ”I don’t want Kira in my world. If I had the power to stop him before he could rise, I would.”
This way would mean Kira would be punished before he killed enough to make it to the Shinigami king. A cruel medium, especially as Light regretted all those deaths. L got on his knees, throwing one over him to sit on his thighs. He had to stare into those warm brown eyes. He could deal with Ryuk, he could reason with Rem, but the Shinigami king was out of his reach.

How...how was he going to save him from that?

He couldn’t prevent his death indefinitely.

“Hey.” Light brought a hand up to cup his cheek, ”I’ll be fine.”

“No one deserves to die more than once.” He leant into the touch, before remembering he should be the one comforting him. Light wasn’t in the best mental state. He didn’t care about his own well-being. He had to do that for him. He took his hand and laced their fingers together, ”Especially not you.”

“It’s fine,” His boyfriend insisted, ”Honestly, this makes living with what I’ve done easier.”

“That’s unhealthy,” He replied, because it was. He wasn’t Kira. He didn’t deserve punishment.

“Don’t worry about it,” Light managed to smile. The worst part was it wasn’t a lie.

He was failing in the mission he had given himself, but it had only been a matter of hours. Those hours just happened to feel like days. By the end of his life, he was certain Light would come to fear this afterlife. If there was a way to purge him of the sins committed by his hands...he had a feeling there was a deal he could make but it wouldn’t be easy for his love.

L didn’t know when Light would die. He was certain they could keep Ryuk entertained while they were young, but what about when they were middle-aged? The god of death didn’t seem like the type who would like to spend time with the elderly. It would be prudent to keep teaching those who followed the path of L about the Death Note, just in case another Shinigami dropped one into their realm.

Two had dropped in one lifetime, in one year. Just one's repercussions forced the intervention of the other realm’s king. If that didn’t make one god of death think about acquiring a second notebook and dropping it they were definitely not related to humans. Which meant all the next generations of L would have to be able to see Ryuk.

They wouldn’t be worthy of the title if they just took his word they existed.

Still, one screw up and Light was dead. They needed to get started now on avoiding that afterlife.

Everything else they were shown of the future, they could change with enough effort.

Why should this be any different?

Chapter End Notes

Yes, I know the alternate ending is fake, but you can fight me if you don't think it doesn't fit in here. Or fit with the title of this episode, thus the chapter. If you don't know what alternate ending I'm talking about, here it is. Inspiration for Light as a Shinigami taken from the theory that the DN Relight beginning random Shinigami is
Light. Again, look it up if you care to.

Next few chapters will be resolution work! I hope I did the last episode justice!

Someone commented on an older comment, drawing my attention to it a few hours ago. I was asked if I considered doing something similar to this with the DN musical. I've got an idea for how I could make that work as a potential crack-ish sequel to this where some Wammy kids are shown the show and come up with a musical because if you like a show, it should have a musical adaptation.

Honestly, I'll probably end up writing it regardless of what people think, but I like hearing from you people.

Thank you all!
It was late when they finished, but somehow before midnight. They watched the whole series in a day. Matt didn’t want to move from the couch, even as the task force discussed what they were going to do next. It was kind of obvious. Tomorrow was Friday, if they could find a way to break in to Yotsuba and set up surveillance in their meeting rooms, they could make the arrest legitly on Saturday.

They could arrest all eight members, seeing as Higuchi left the notebook at home. With the video as evidence they could get a warrant to search his house, thus bypassing security. Then they’d have a notebook…

Which was when it’d get complicated because either Light would regain his memories and tell them or they somehow had to force it out of Kira. He really hoped L had a plan for that, because that last scene…man, he didn’t want to see Light hurt ever again. Not when he didn’t have to imagine what was going to happen to him after his death.

He honestly thought he preferred Mello’s traditional hell to that karmic monstrosity.

“You won.” He decided to focus on, looking at Near.

“We won,” The youngest corrected with a small frown.

“What’s wrong?” He wondered.

Near blinked, then looked at him, ”…nothing.”

And he thought they’d been making progress.

Mello was helping with the plan, so he continued to stare at him and the first rank eventually sighed, ”Do you think I used it?”

“What?” The third rank blinked, ”The notebook?”

“Yes.” He looked unhappy at the thought, ”Mikami’s death was suspicious…”

“And Mikami was the key factor in this,” Matt finished, because in the end, it had come down to Mikami. If he simply ran after doing what he was told Near wouldn’t be able to prove a connection between him and the original Kira. And his death was strange. If he wanted to create a distraction, trying to attack them would have likely yielded more attention than stabbing himself.

Near hadn’t seemed surprised by the death either. His man told them he would be dead in a few seconds so to not even attempt to save him.

It made sense for Near to reveal he used it to ensure his victory, especially as the logical thing to do once it was revealed one of the notebooks was fake would be to test the second. Even if Mikami wasn’t under control, it was probable someone else used it, either Near himself or on Near’s orders. One small death would go unnoticed by Kira in the days leading up to the confrontation.

If there was a time for Near to reveal he used it, it would have been when Kira was trying to bluff
his way out by claiming the notebook was still out there. Yet Near hadn’t been able to speak before
he had revealed the piece he had and attempted to kill the surviving heir. Then he’d been shot
and…yeah. He didn’t think Matsuda had it in him.

L had been willing to use the notebook, why wouldn’t Near have been?

“If I used it to do that…” Near trailed off.

Right. The corruption thing. Matt sighed, ”Would you use it now?”

“….” The younger boy thought about it, ”Probably not.”

“Then does it really matter?” He asked.

“…no,” Near admitted, ”It just feels…”

“If you used it, you were alone in making that decision.” The SPK members were competent, but
they weren’t on the same level as them. They couldn’t argue against Near successfully, which
didn’t make it an argument at all, ”I’m not going to let you use it, Light’s not going to let you use it,
neither is L. Hell, if we manage to keep Mello from burning it before we’re done it’ll be a small
miracle.”

That brought a ghost of a smile to Near’s face.

“Anyone can fall,” He continued, ”That’s why we have to catch each other.”

Out of all their futures, he probably had the easiest one to live with. He just showed up for maybe
five minutes overall and died for his best friend. He wasn’t shown killing anyone, none of his
actions directly or indirectly led to someone else’s death. He actually saved Near’s life since their
plan succeeded. His biggest fault would be not caring as much for what was going on.

He cared now. Problem solved.

It made him the least messed up moving forward. Except for Watari, who was offering a
handkerchief to Misa.

L didn’t look satisfied with the outcome of his discussion with Light, but he doubted they’d come
up with a solution for how to avoid the afterlife. They didn’t have a way to kill a regular
Shinigami, much less the king of them. Even if they killed one king, another would replace him
and continue his job, probably with more wrath because they killed his predecessor.

“Good work, Near.” L ruffled his hair, ”You managed to win.”

“I wouldn’t call that a victory,” Near replied.

That made the great detective’s smile widen, ”I’m glad you’ve figured that out.”

That the ends don’t justify the means? Oh yeah, they had learned that.

“What are you going to do?” Matt looked at Light.

“I can’t do anything without more information.” The college student shrugged, ”But it doesn’t
bother me that much.”

“Dying thousands of times doesn’t bother you?” He narrowed his eyes.
“Not when I have no control over it.” Light shrugged, ”I’ll ask Ryuk and Rem, but…”

“Don’t give up hope,” Near said.

“I won’t,” The older teen promised, ”But I’m not going to spend my life worrying about what comes after. If there’s nothing we can do, I want you all to accept that.”

Matt didn’t think he could, nor would L, but he nodded anyways. The college student smiled, ”Alright then.” He stretched, ”Matt, want to see if we can hack into Yotsuba’s security?”

“Hell yeah.”

Finally, something he could do. The start to their new future.

Watari helped Misa wipe off the mascara running down her face. It was easy to forget with Kira’s defeat and what Light (if not the unfortunate girl with them) would have to go through once he died. He hoped the second Kira would not face the same fate since her name was not written in Shinigami’s notebook when she died. Perhaps it was a combination of using it, then being killed by the Shinigami, that led to that fate.

No, he was doing the same thing as the others. They mostly overlooked the final scene for this young woman. She was standing on the edge of that bridge. She likely jumped and died.

“Thank you, Watari.” Misa tried for a smile.

“It was no problem, miss.” He returned the smile.

She sniffled, ”I’m…sorry.”

“Your situation is understandable.” He rose, then bent over position straining his back,”I run an orphanage. The number of children I’ve seen who have watched their parents die in front of them….” The trauma changed them. It was what made Mello so emotional, Near so distant. Many of those children were disillusioned by society, they felt alone, abandoned, like no one cared.

For Misa to then face a stalker trying to kill her soon after…she was strong if she could still smile. She lived through all that, he hoped it wouldn’t be Kira who broke her.

“Rem still killed you for me.” She shook her head.

She was…apologizing? He hadn’t expected that.

“If you are sorry you won’t let it happen this time around.” He carefully folded his handkerchief and put it back in his pocket.

“It won’t,” She vowed, with the same intensity she used to use when talking about Light.

It appeared they had her on their side.

That would be helpful moving forward. He sat with her for a few more minutes, then walked over to the others. He assumed he would have to prepare the surveillance equipment to set up in the meeting room at Yotsuba, but first they had to decide who they were sending in to set it up.

The risk was low of running into Higuchi, but it had to be someone familiar with the tech who could get into the room…
Wedy would be unable to get there in time for this week, and he doubted anyone wanted to wait another week.

Matt let out a loud noise of appreciation, "You sure know what you’re doing."

"Of course I do." Light was typing something in, "And if we just upload that…"

"We’re in!" The computer genius cheered, "Hey, L! Yotsuba has shit cyber-security."

"There’s an hour where the room won’t be in use…" Light reported, scrolling through the schedule, "Otherwise the night cleaners will be there until 2 am, and security will be sweeping the building until morning."

"Can you access their security feed?" L asked.

"Not from here," The college student reported, "But it shouldn’t be too difficult-"

"I’m sure the higher ups will be informed of any intruders that are caught," The great detective interrupted, "We’ll wait until that break tomorrow. More people in the building means you’re less likely to stand out."

"I’ll add something to the schedule to give me a reason to be there."

"When did we decide Light was going?" The Chief inquired.

"Only myself, Watari, and Light are familiar enough with the tech I use," L grimaced, "Of us three, Light is best suited for infiltration."

"You four are also NPA officers," Near added, "If you are recognized as such, it might alert the Kira group. It would be harder to fake your deaths than Matsuda’s."

"I shouldn’t have any trouble so long as I look the part," Light said distractedly, "Watari, do you think you could find me some appropriate clothes?"

"I’ll have them prepared." The older gentleman nodded.

"Then that’s all we can do for tonight." Light rose and retrieved the ID badge he printed off and left it on the table, "We should get some rest. If all goes well, Kira will be finished by Sunday."

"Shouldn’t we talk about…?" Matsuda trailed off, before regaining his confidence, "What’s going to happen if you die?"

Light sighed, "We can’t change it, so please don’t worry about it."

"But Light-"

"It doesn’t change anything," The college student interrupted, "So what? I know what I’m facing after death, and it isn’t forever. It's unpleasant, but the only person if affects is me and if I can put it aside to focus on now, all of you should."

Watari pursed his lips, but everyone stayed quiet.

Light left the room without argument. L waited a moment, before following him. One by one, the detectives left for their rooms. Watari walked up to the heirs, "Let me show you to your rooms."

"Rooms?" Matt tilted his head, "Could we share one?"
He thought about it, “The bed should be large enough.”

“Then we’ll share,” Mello decided.

He led them to the rooms, then went to obtain what they needed for the next day. It was quite easy to have a custodial uniform prepared by the time they needed it, as well as a tool kit containing everything they needed surveillance wise. He finished his task, then went to his room. It was nice to finally be able to sleep through the night without having to watch and ensure no one killed anyone.

For better or for worse, the Kira case would be finished soon.

-----------------------------------------------

“I doubt you used the Death Note.” Mello sat crossed legged on the bed they’d be sharing. Near was curled up by the pillows and Matt was sprawled near the bottom. It was a large bed, just like he assumed they would be. He’d spent the last few years sharing a room with Matt, it would be weird to sleep in a room alone.

“It is a possibility,” Near repeated.

Matt rolled his eyes, ”And I said it doesn’t matter if you did.”

Matt didn’t get it. The worst thing his future self did was die. He didn’t have to see himself turn into a monster, see himself at his worst. It wasn’t enough they hadn’t done them yet, not when it was by the mercy of some king they hadn’t. He didn’t have any blood on his hands. He hadn’t been involved with the deaths of anyone in the room. If he didn’t care about them so much, he’d have been fine.

“It does matter,” Near muttered.

“You didn’t need to use it,” Mello said firmly.

“To make sure I won-“

He interrupted, ”No offense, but this was a game to your future self and using the notebook to win would be cheating.”

Near considered his position, and then shook his head, ”I wouldn’t put my future self above cheating.”

“Oh my god,” Mello muttered, because if they kept talking about this they were never going to get any sleep and he was exhausted after the day. Even if all they did was sit around watching that show, he just wanted to sleep. He was sure he’d have nightmares, but that was why he and Matt silently agreed they’d all be sleeping together.

The white haired kid threw a pillow at him, ”Not having complete information is frustrating.”

“Why don’t we ask L and Light then?” Mello rose, ”I’m sure they can settle it.”

“Are you sure that’s a good idea?” Matt got up, sending him a searching look he didn’t understand.

“Light will welcome the change in discussion.” Near crawled off.

“Pretty sure they aren’t talking right now,” His best friend muttered.
“Someone should make sure they aren’t punching the shit out of each other then.” He led the way to their room.

Maybe one of those two could convince Near he didn’t use the Death Note in the future. Near was pretty sure he did, Matt wasn’t sure either way, and he opposed the idea. They were split, and he was sure Light and L would agree and tip the vote one way. They would never know for sure…

Matt hesitated a few feet from the door, “I really don’t think this is a good-“

He slammed the door open, ”Hey-!”

“Get out!”

He dodged a pillow, presumably thrown by L. It ended up hitting Matt, and when he looked to see where it was thrown from he wished he hadn’t.

As if he didn’t have enough mental scars already.

“I said get out!” L repeated, more mortified this time as Light recovered and pushed the older man off him.

They both had their pants on. Small miracles, but L was missing his shirt and Light’s was unbuttoned. Both of them were flushed, L’s an interesting mix of embarrassed, irritated, and whatever was leftover from what they’d interrupted. Light didn’t seem nearly as embarrassed as he stared up at the ceiling, his eyes distant as he seemed to be asking a higher being why.

He was internally screaming the question.

Mello remembered he should be averting his gaze. This was something he didn’t want to remember later, but he just managed to shift his focus.

Oh, so that’s where L’s shirt went.

He couldn’t bring himself to move. Matt grabbed his wrist, ”I told you this was a bad idea.”

“This is not the time for I told you so’s.” Mello reacted instinctively to his friend’s tone.

Matt dragged him and a silent Near back to their room. They all fell back on the bed, and his brain tried to think again. They had gotten together less than twelve hours ago, had they been avoiding their feelings so long that…

No, he was not going to think about that. He almost preferred when he thought L untouchable to this.

“Is now the time for I told you so?” His best friend asked sarcastically.

“You could have said they were doing that,” Near muttered petulantly.

There was a knock on their door and they all froze. A few seconds later, Light’s voice asked, ”May I come in?”

“Sure.” Matt crossed his arms, and the door opened.

“That.” Light closed the door behind him, ”Is how you enter someone else’s room.”

Besides his hair being slightly less than perfect and a suspicious discoloration on his neck, he
didn’t appear at all fazed by what had just happened. He grabbed the chair at the desk and carried it closer to the bed, ”What’s wrong?”

Right. They’d had a reason for going to see them.

”Did you seriously leave L?” Matt asked.

”I assumed something brought you to our room.” Light tilted his head, ”I can force him to get out of bed if you needed him.”

”You’re just fine.” Mello did not want to see L. He could barely look at Light.

”Near thinks he used the Death Note on Mikami in the future,” Matt explained quickly.

”Oh.” He nodded slowly in understanding, then focused on the youngest, ”I don’t believe you would.”

”Even in that future?” Near inquired, his voice small.

Light smiled, ”Even in that future.” He shifted, ”You are too much like L.”

”L was willing to use-“

”L was willing to test the notebook, just like your future self offered to do,” The college student interrupted smoothly, ”But proving the rule was false didn’t mean victory. Neither of you would use it to get a confession.”

”That’s what I said.” Mello looked to his new friend.

”My future self might act differently from L because he lost,” Near replied, insistent that he had fallen.

”Look,” Light got up and sat on the bed closer to the youngest, ”From what we’ve seen, the Death Note has a corrupting influence on the user. No one who used it had a happy ending, and we were shown all of their endings.” He held Near’s intense gaze, ”We would have been shown yours if you had used it, and if it corrupted you…I doubt I’d be the main concern of the Shinigami king.”

Near relaxed, nodding, ”That…makes sense.”

The college student smiled, ”Think you three can get some sleep or are there other matters to settle?”

The door opened, ”There better not be other matters to settle.” L came in.

”Ah.” Light’s smile turned into a smirk, ”I see where they learned it from.”

L hadn’t bothered to put his shirt back on, nor did he attempt to fix his normally unkempt hair, ”May I have my boyfriend back?”

”L…” Light stood, ”They had a legitimate problem.” He walked over, but thankfully for them didn’t focus on the detective. He turned back, ”Are you sure you’ll be fine?”

”Stop treating us like kids,” Mello grumbled, secretly enjoying it. What had they called him before the last few episodes, ”Yagami-sensei.”

The couple left, and they settled under the sheets. Matt got the light, and they laid in darkness for a
few seconds.

“So…” Matt trailed off, ”Do you still want the title of L even though that’s what he likes to be called in bed?”

“Matt!” They both protested.

Ugh, that was something else he wouldn’t be able to forget. He'd have to start calling him Ryuzaki.

Unless...no, that was crazy. The great detective couldn't be that insane...

L couldn't be his real name, could it?

Chapter End Notes

Lol. Next chapter will either be the infiltration of Yotsuba (similar to the drama because god forbid I be original) or a fill in the gap smut scene. If it is not the smut scene, I will likely then post it as a one-shot connected to this, but later.

I hope you liked this!
“Calm down, Matsuda.” Light chuckled as they drove towards the Yotsuba building.

“What if something goes wrong?” The rookie agent worried.

“Then security will arrest me and we’ll have to bring Yotsuba in on just the recent rise in stock value.” The college student adjusted the work uniform. He checked himself many times in the mirror. He looked average, “Besides, Dad talked to the director today. They’ll publicly withdraw support, but we have a week to stop Kira before you guys have to actually resign.”

“We still have the backing of the NPA.” Matsuda nodded.

If he did get caught by security, the NPA was willing to file his arrest under the false name he was carrying. He was confident, even if he did get caught, they wouldn’t know what room he had been in. They wouldn’t find the surveillance equipment. He and Matt figured out a way to get into their cameras. He had more than enough time to get caught somewhere else or figure out an avenue to escape.

There was minimal risk of him dying in this.

“And if anything we didn’t prepare for happens, you’re here.” He fitted the cap on his head, the bill properly hiding most of his face. Matsuda parked nearby, and he stepped out, ignoring the offer of good luck. He didn’t need luck. They knew their enemy, their enemy’s weapon. He didn’t allow the knowledge to make him arrogant, but he didn’t worry too much.

He had faith in that knowledge and in his own skills.

No one questioned him entering the building. He took the stairs because his badge likely wouldn’t work on the elevator. It didn’t take him long to get to the right floor, and he paused at the door to it, “Anyone waiting for me?”

“Floor’s empty,” Matt informed him, “Guard might stop by, but I’ll keep you posted.”

“Got it.” He entered, quickly picking the lock to the meeting room.

“Where’d you learn that?” His father demanded.

He wisely didn’t answer. The tumblers turned and he walked in, closing the door behind him. He locked it and moved to the far wall, setting up the small ladder. He calmly set the equipment down.

“Security guard is coming your way,” Matt warned.

“I can do this,” He replied, testing the drill.

“If Matsuda could hear their conversation through the door, the guard will hear the drill.” L’s voice flowed into his ear, “Get out of there.”

Light rolled his eyes, already halfway done with the task.
“You’re endangering the whole operation,” L continued. He wished he could mute the earpiece.

He finished just as he heard the door jangle. He forced himself not to freeze. He put the tools back and jumped down. The ladder made a somewhat loud noise as he collapsed it, but he slid it towards the table at the same time as he rolled closer to it. He held his breath as he heard the door open. The guard took a few steps into the room.

“What’s happening?” His father worried.

“Light…” His boyfriend trailed off.

It wasn’t like he was in a position to really answer.

The guard, thankfully, didn’t look too far into the room. Not that surprising. The room was supposed to be empty, so he saw it as empty. Random noises were easy to explain away as happening on another floor or just something wrong with the AC. It helped that it was also dark. He waited a few seconds after the door closed again to ask, ”Is it clear?”

“What the fuck, Light?” Matt demanded.

“Couldn’t answer when he was in the room.” Light rose, hoisting the ladder onto his shoulder again, ”Everything’s set up. Is the camera online?”

“Give me a second.” He could hear the clicking of his keyboard, ”Yeah. I can see you.”

He waved his hat, then covered the mic, ”Sound work?”

“Yep,” The third rank answered, ”Now get yourself out of there before one of these old guys dies of stress.”

Light chuckled, taking that to mean the floor was clear once again, ”I’ll be right out.”

Getting out was not as smooth as getting in. He made it down a few floors before he heard a voice from above him, ”Hey you! Are you supposed to be here?”

He ducked into the nearest floor, walking quickly and confidently. No one in the cubicle even looked up at him as he passed.

“Next door on your left,” Matt offered.

He slammed into it before he realized it was locked. He muffled a groan of pain as his shoulder collided with the unrelenting wood.

The younger teenager snorted, ”Surprising how effective a lock is, huh?” He shook it off, smiling at the now watching people. He deserved that one, and Sayu did a lot worse in the name of petty revenge, ”But seriously, fire exit’s at the end of the hall. I’ll stop the alarm from going off.”

He rolled his eyes and went through the fire exit. This time he didn’t encounter any problems.

He threw the ladder into the back, ”Let’s go.”

“You had us worried for a second there, Light.” Matsuda grinned.

“It was fine.” Light rolled his eyes, ”Nothing to worry about.”

“What was Matt talking about?” He asked.
He removed his mic, then snatched Matsuda’s off him. Once he was sure there weren’t any other ways for those back at headquarters to hear him, he answered, “The three of them may or may not have walked in on Ryuzaki and I…”

“No way.” The agent looked at him, which wasn’t good because he should be focused on the road, “Did you tell them there isn’t a lock on your door?”

“Somehow, I don’t think that would help.” He was mortified events went so far last night. Sure, he managed to put it aside at the time because it was important Near not think he would stoop so low as to order the use of the notebook in any way, but this morning...

He was just tired of having his privacy invaded.

“It’s like you have kids.” Matsuda cackled.

“I guess it is.” He didn’t dislike kids. He was apparently better at helping them than his boyfriend.

“Do you think Ryuzaki’s talked to the Chief yet?” The rookie asked.

“He hasn’t.” Another conversation that was waiting for the case to be over.

“He won’t say no,” Matsuda said confidently.

“When I first told him I was attracted to him he almost had another heart attack.” Light looked out the window.

The young NPA detective made a slightly surprised noise, ”A lot’s happened since then.”

“True…” In the end, his father would support him in whatever he decided made him happy, but he didn’t have to agree with it. He wanted his family to like his choice, “I’m not worried about it.”

“You shouldn’t be.” Matsuda pulled into the garage underneath headquarters.

There were more pressing concerns.

*******************************************************************************

“I want you three to lay low until this is over,” Ryuzaki said when it became obvious Light succeeded in his task. It went gone well all things considered, especially as they hadn’t expected the security guard to check the locked room. Still, the Chief’s son performed well, without panicking or getting caught. His face never even showed on any cameras.

Matt took off his head set, ”What did you say?”

“If Rem cannot see you, she cannot kill you,” The great detective continued.

“You want us to hide,” Mello grumbled.

“I want you to survive if events do not go as planned.” Ryuzaki looked at his heirs.

Worst case scenario; Rem killed them all to save Kira and Misa, who stood to regain their memories and no longer care about them. It was unlikely that would occur, but there was a chance. Rem couldn’t touch the heirs if she didn’t know they existed and couldn’t see them.

“If it goes that badly Near and I’ll be dead anyways,” Mello argued.
“We might as well stay and see if we can assist,” Near agreed.

Ryuzaki narrowed his eyes, before sighing, “Matt then. I will make arrangements for you to be somewhere safe tomorrow.”

“What?” The third rank rose from his seat near the computers.

“You are the only one, besides myself, whose name isn’t known to this group,” The great detective said.

“I don’t want to be safe,” The kid glared, ”I want to stay with my friends.”

“Someone should be guaranteed to survive.” Ryuzaki stood so he towered over the teen.

“Then choose another designated survivor.” Matt’s hands balled into fists, ”Not me.”

Aizawa moved closer to the boy as his mentor sighed, ”Matt, you are the only one-“

“Fine. My name is-“

He guessed his next move correctly, and placed a hand over his mouth, ”Keep your name to yourself for now, kid.” He ordered, ”You agreed you would try harder to live, didn’t you?”

That meant keeping his protection.

Matt twisted out of his grip, turning to glare up at him. There was an angry look of betrayal in his eyes, but he didn’t say his name. He didn’t tie his fate to the rest of them. Instead, he turned and left the room. He wasn’t sure if that was a silent agreement to their plan or just teenage defiance. He ran a hand through his hair, and resolved to give him enough time to cool off, clear his head.

That was half an hour ago.

In that time, the boy managed to set up a video game console. His goggles reflected the light from the screen in the dark room. He turned on the room’s lights to announce his presence and then sat down next to him, ”What game is this?”

“Undertale,” Matt answered shortly, but he answered, which was more than he expected.

He never heard of the game, but he also didn’t play video games. He watched him encounter an opponent, barely hesitating before choosing to fight them. He noticed another option was to show the monster mercy. He frowned as the opponent seemed to almost beg to be spared. The young teen ignored it all, defeating the enemy in a handful of moves.

“What’s your LOVE level?” He inquired.

“Level of violence,” The teen replied.

That didn’t sound pleasant. Especially as he watched it increase.

The kid’s expression was blank, so he continued to watch the game. He must have played it before since he seemed to know exactly where to find the enemies. Either that or he was just that good. He couldn’t figure out the plot of the game, but it appeared he was a human child in a realm of monsters, an underworld if the name suggested anything.

Except he appeared to be the monster going around and killing the others.
“Do you have to kill them?” Aizawa broke the silence.

“No.” He was starting to get frustrated with the short answers.

“Kid…” He trailed off, at a loss for what to do.

He got it. If he was the one being asked to hide, he would be angry. But he was a full grown adult and Matt was a kid. Matt was the type of person they were putting their lives on the line to protect.

Another enemy was killed.

“Are you going to kill all of them?” He sighed.

“It’s called a genocide run.” Matt glanced at him.

He would ask Watari to buy him some nonviolent video games later.

“Matt-“

“Mail,” He interrupted, pausing the game, ”If it all goes to shit tomorrow, I want you at least to know my name’s Mail.”

“Mail,” He tested it out, somehow finding the strange name fitting. He smiled, and reached over to mess with his hair, ”It’s not going to go bad tomorrow.”

“Then I don’t see why I can’t be there,” Matt muttered.

“It’s a precaution.” He rolled his eyes, ”Until we can make a deal with Rem, we should have someone who knows everything and can act if necessary.” He made sure the kid was looking at him, ”It’s not an insult to you. You are the only one that can do it.”

“I can’t.” The third rank sighed, ”Even with everything I know…there’s a reason I’m third.”

“I thought that was lack of desire.” He felt his smile fade, ”You are just as capable as Mello and Near.”

Matt half-smiled, ”Enough to beat Kira if I needed to?”

“More than enough,” He promised, and didn’t have to lie, ”Besides…you don’t actually have to go to another location.” The kid’s eyes lit up, ”As long as Light and Misa don’t know where it is…”

“It could be a room without cameras,” Matt finished with a grin.

“I’ll let you know as soon as it’s safe and you can rejoin us.” He ruffled his hair again, ”Sound fair?”

“Sounds fair.” He nodded, then turned back to his game.

Matt ended up restarting, telling him instead of completing the genocide run he was going to show him the pacifist run. He liked it a lot better, especially once he explained the differences in outcomes between the runs. Maybe he’d been working the Kira case for too long but he thought it was a damn good example of the different paths they all could take.

The genocide one led to the destruction of the universe.

The pacifist one has the monsters showing remorse and eventually integrating into human society.
Mercy was a powerful thing.

He’d still ask Watari to get something different so Matt wouldn’t do another genocide run when he was waiting for the arrest, but it wasn’t as bad a game as he thought it would be.

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Misa fiddled with the edge of her skirt. The arrest went smoothly. Why wouldn’t it? The NPA announced their withdrawal of support on the Kira case. L hadn’t made a public move since his announcement. There was no reason for Yotsuba to think they were under any sort of scrutiny. Their meeting last night confirmed they were confident in their security.

They were all arrested as soon as Mr. Yagami showed his boss the video they’d gotten. Publicly, they were arrested on charges of tax evasion, embezzlement, and other white collar crimes, with the reason for being taken into custody that they were considered a flight risk. It was barely a blip on social media, and the news only mentioned it a few times. The company already put steps to distance themselves from the group.

Privately, they were told the NPA was aware of their killings.

They were quick to turn on each other. Namikawa correctly deduced once again it was Higuchi.

They’d probably all be let off except for Higuchi.

“You ready, Misa?” Light asked.

“Yes.” She nodded, determined to do this right, ”I mean, Rem loves me, doesn’t she? It should be easy to convince her to do what I want.” He flinched, and she mentally kicked herself, ”I didn’t mean it like that!”

“No. It’s fine.” He held up a hand, ”You’re doing this for yourself, right? Not because I need you to?”

“Yes.” Another emphatic nod. If she wasn’t doing this for herself. It was pretty obvious Ryuzaki and Light were together now. Rem could kill Light for putting her through this. She didn’t like the handsome man and would gladly kill him once she no longer was as obsessed with him.

She was doing this for herself, for all of them.

As much as she agreed with Kira’s ideals…they wouldn’t do her any good.

Maybe it was selfish to end their mission, but she was tired of being alone.

“The better question is if you are ready, Light,” Ryuzaki spoke up from where he was eating ice cream.

“No amount of time would make me ready so why not now?” Light shrugged.

“That’s the wrong attitude.” The detective frowned.

“We need to find the other notebook so we can move on.” Her ex-boyfriend, if they were ever in a relationship at any point placed a hand on his shoulder, ”Kira is me without morals. I just have to remember what matters.”

“Or I have to remind you,” Ryuzaki muttered.
“We have the notebook!” Aizawa reported.

They now had a reason to bring Higuchi to their headquarters. She glanced back at the camera, to the god of death hovering over the greedy man. She'd been confused at first why they all startled when Higuchi came into the camera's view, but as soon as she touched the piece she'd been able to see Rem.

She took a calming breath, thinking back to what they discussed. If she convinced Rem to not kill them, she would be able to go free. Once Higuchi was executed, ownership of the notebook would transfer to Ryuzaki.

He would give Rem permission to follow her, and she’d have a Shinigami companion for the rest of her life.

They argued about having Higuchi give up ownership of the notebook…but in the end, someone needed to be Kira so the world could move on. Not that they ever intended to publicly release who Kira was, because they weren’t sure exactly what the Yotsuba men knew. The killings would stop soon enough. Once they did there would be an announcement Kira was found and executed by a coordinated effort.

Nothing would be said about the Death Note.

No one outside their group would know about it. No one would even know it was a group of four NPA officials, a few teenagers, and L were responsible for the arrest. That should make it impossible for them to be targeted later by those wishing to continue Kira’s work. Life would continue as it had before the notebook landed in the human world.

The notebook was brought to them with the third Kira, but the weapon was in the other room.

Rem, predictably, floated through the walls to check on her. Light stood protectively in front of Ryuzaki. Mello shielded Near. The rest of the task force tensed.

“Rem!” Misa beamed. She was excited.

“Misa.” The being looked confused, ”How do you remember?”

“Funny story.” She moved closer, ”Your king, or we think it was your king, sent us this video of the whole thing, from when Light picked up the notebook to when he died a few years in the future.” The god of death froze, and she held up her hands, ”It’s fine. It’s fine!” She insisted, making sure her attention stayed on her, ”We already made an agreement. If you don’t kill them, I get to go free!”

“Light Yagami…” The being turned to him, ”What are you planning?”

“Nothing,” Light replied honestly, ”Misa can live a normal life after this.”

“I do not believe you.” Rem towered over him.

“I know you don’t trust me,” The college student said, ”But it’s the truth. Misa won’t be punished for her crimes as Kira. If she is, feel free to kill me.”

The being stared at him, ”You do not have your memories.”

“Not at the moment.” Light grimaced, ”I don’t suppose you know where I hid the other notebook so I don’t have to regain them.”
“I do not.” Rem’s notebook stayed where she stashed it. She looked at Ryuzaki, ”Very well. But if any harm befalls Misa at your doing you will die.”

“Understood.” The detective stared.

The task force all let out sighs of relief, and she smiled. It really was too easy.

Which meant they had to move on to the next part.

“You should restrain me,” Light advised as they stood around the notebook.

“We can simply take it away from you should you lose control.” Near twirled his hair.

“I doubt it will be simple,” The college student muttered, ”Just do it.”

Misa watched as they chained Light to a chair, binding one arm with the palm up. He didn’t look comfortable, but he was about to potentially become the mass murderer who had led to the deaths of half the occupants of the room. She doubted he’d be comfortable anyways. She stood closer to Rem, knowing even the worst happened, the Shinigami would protect her.

“This is unnecessary,” Ryuzaki muttered as he clicked the last chain into place.

“If Kira hurts anyone…” Light trailed off.

“I won’t let that happen.” Matsuda handed him the notebook, ”Are you ready?”

“You know I’m not,” Light laughed, his fear obvious.

Misa wished there was another way, but he made a point earlier. They couldn’t move on from this unless they had both notebooks safely in their possession. There was no hurry to move on, but it wouldn’t do them any good to wait. It just increased the risk of someone else finding the notebook before them.

“I do love you,” Ryuzaki muttered, hesitating.

Misa could honestly say she wasn't jealous.

“Could you stop saying that when you think you’re going to lose me?” Light looked irritated.

“I don’t think I’m going to lose you,” The detective argued, ”I just wanted to remind you.”

“Consider me reminded.” The college student sighed, ”Let’s just get this over with.”

Ryuzaki set the notebook down on his hand.

Light screamed.

Chapter End Notes

Trying to wrap things up pretty quickly so I'm sorry if it seems rushed. There really was no point in dragging out Higuchi's arrest. Thank you to all of you who told me about Undertale! Literally have never played it so please let me know if I messed up anything. Promise Matt playing with Light will come up later!
My sister has really different taste in music from me, if I have a taste in music at all, but I got her to like Death of a Bachelor by P!ATD (? never abbreviated it before) and she accidentally downloaded the entire album. Ride out to grandma's yesterday was great! Sorry for not posting yesterday!
Kira

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Kira opened his eyes, panting as the remnants of Light Yagami were expelled from his mind for the third time. His vision cleared and he focused on the man standing in front of him. He watched the hope fade from his eyes yet another time and grinned, "Not going how you wanted, L?" He chuckled darkly, not bothering pretend to be Light.

He tried that the first time he woke up, but the nuisance figured out it was an act within a minute and took the notebook away.

"Kira..." L trailed off.

He tested the limits of the bonds again, already knowing he wouldn't be able to move freely. There was no way out of this for him, he could tell that much from Light's memories. He knew asking Misa for help would just lead to Rem killing him, but he refused to submit to his enemy. To the man he should have been successful in killing. To anyone.

He was the god of the new world.

Now, the only victory he could have was breaking them.

"Snap out of it, Light!" Matsuda insisted, the fool.

He laughed, "I love how you think there's a difference."

"Kira, you are being deliberately cruel," Near noted.

"You are being deliberately naïve." He kept smiling, "Light doesn't want to be in control. He doesn't want to live. I do."

He could get on board with them being two different people.

Light was weak. Kira was strong. Strong enough he didn't need those pathetic connections to others. He didn't need a soul or a conscience. He didn't need to be loved. He embraced what he was a long time ago, a monster, but a monster was just a word for something inhuman. He rose above humanity. He saw the world more clearly than anyone.

"You're lying," L replied.

"I'm not." He met his gaze again.

"Where is the other notebook?" The oh so great detective asked.

"Why should I tell you?" Kira tilted his head.

"You've lost. There is no way you can continue killing," His enemy said, and he wished he would say it as a taunt, "You gain nothing by refusing to cooperate."

He scoffed, "I gain nothing by cooperating." He tilted his head, "Are you going to keep asking politely?"
He promised Light he wouldn't torture him, but even Light, as weak as he was, knew it was the only way to get him to do anything. He may have lost, but he'd make sure Light wouldn't want to look his lover in the eyes after this. That little domestic shit he was starting? He would end it, and the heirs would never be able to look at their mentor the same way.

"Don't make us do this," Souichiro pleaded, as if he meant anything to him.

"I am determined to prove a villain and hate the idle pleasure of these days," Kira drawled with a smirk.

"What's that mean?" Matsuda asked.

L turned away, "Dive, thoughts, down to my soul."

He would leave him with no good decisions. His bad ones would destroy him. He wanted his bitterness, his resentment, to infect him, consume him, break him. For the chance to beat L in any way, he could be content with losing his ideal new world. He could die happy knowing neither of them ever would be.

"It's pathetic how much he loves you." Kira stared at his back as it tensed, "He never told you that, did he?" A tremble, he was sure of it, "My fault I suppose. There was always a part of him that wondered if his attraction to you was because of me, because I wanted you to come to care about me." He didn't need to see his face. The sudden worry on Near's was all he needed.

"I never thought it would work this-"

A punch across his face interrupted his words.

"Don't lie about that." L rubbed his fist, his eyes filled with a cold fury.

"So you can lie to yourself?" Kira chuckled. He could handle pain, better than Light, "You know as well as I do that lies don't last forever." He shook his head to move his hair back into place.

"Where is the notebook?" L demanded again.

"Is that all you want to ask me?" The god raised an eyebrow.

"It is all that you are good for, Kira," The detective replied.

"And what are you good for, L?" He asked, "You think you're saving Light but you'll only end up ruining him." He smirked, "There's a reason you were alone before him."

That would have earned him another punch, but Mello caught his arm, "As much as I'd like to see you punch him, this isn't working, L."

He wondered if they would give up.

There would never be an instance where he wouldn't overpower Light. Light wanted them to be punished, and the only way that would happen was if Kira was in control. He was even alright with their afterlife punishment. If he hurried, he was certain that he would be able to get his place as a Shinigami in the deaths he'd caused so far. He wouldn't oppose the king, but he wouldn't ever be nothing.

L muttered something to the boy, who nodded and departed the room with Near and Matsuda.

Kira watched them go, "What are you planning, L?"
"Why would I tell you that?" The detective crossed his arms.

"Why wouldn't you tell Light that?" He narrowed his eyes, "You were confident Light would maintain control. You never brought up a backup plan." His enemy shifted, "Unless you aren't sure this plan will work." He chuckled, "Are you that desperate not to hurt your love?"

"Is there nothing you love, Kira?" L asked.

"Monsters like us can't love," He replied easily.

"I thought that true about myself until I met Light." The detective watched him.

He met his gaze, unrepentant, "You aren't going to get anywhere with that."

"Mogi, Aizawa, Chief, if you would please leave the room." There was hesitation in the NPA officers, but they left. L grabbed his hair, his grip tight enough to hurt, "I am going to give you some time to consider telling me where the second location of the Death Note is while I prepare the backup plan." He let go, "I hope you reconsider."

"I won't," He said confidently, "Do your worst, L."

The detective walked out, and he wondered what was going to happen to him. He could try to move his hand and throw the notebook to the side…no, Light wouldn't beg, he wouldn't make it as heartwrenching. They didn't have time to isolate him, and he doubted Souichiro could look him in the eyes to tug on that severed heartstring. He forced his body to relax.

Anything that broke him would break Light more and in turn, his greatest opposition.

Which was a victory for him.

*********************************************************

Sayu was cleaning the dishes after dinner when her phone rang. She frowned at it as she grabbed a dishcloth to dry her hands. She checked the caller ID and smiled, answering it immediately, "Light! It's been forever since you've called!"

She still couldn't believe Mom and Dad let him go on a trip for so long, especially since he was taking time away from school for it, and time away from Misa since she was currently filming a movie with Hideki Ryuga! She'd been waiting for him to come home so she could demand to get onto that set and meet her idol, but alas, he seemed happy to be who knows where doing who knows what.

"Um…" A voice that was definitely not her brother's responded, "Is this Sayu Yagami?"

"Yes." She frowned, "Why do you have my brother's phone?"

"My name's Mello." The voice seemed to gain confidence, "I'm an…acquaintance of your brother."

"Never heard of you." She moved out of the kitchen, "And that doesn't answer my question."

"Look, something's happened to your brother. I'll explain more in person," Mello, and what a weird name that was, said, "I was just calling to let you know we'll be at your house in five minutes."

She sat down, "What happened to Light? He's in Japan?"

"Believe me, it's better if I tell you in person."
She bit her lip, debating whether or not to trust him. Her brother was meticulous, he wouldn't have just lost his phone. If something had happened to him, why would she be the first one to know about it? She was pretty sure if Mom and Dad knew they would be the ones on the phone…maybe it wasn't anything serious. Maybe this was a sibling secret.

"Is there anything you can tell me?" She asked impatiently, used to the evasive answers when her father was on a case.

"Are all Yagamis this sarcastic?" Mello wondered.

"All Yagamis?" She echoed, "How many of us do you know?"

He had to be a really good friend if he thought Light was sarcastic. Her brother was careful to be polite with everyone. He only got sarcastic with her, and maybe Yamamoto or a few of his other friends from when he was younger. But not someone she wouldn't have heard about…unless her brother really liked him or really disliked him.

"Your father and your brother." Mello sounded young, she decided, but people tended to sound weird over the phone.

"Weird," She noted aloud, "So…should I call Mom?"

"Please don't," Another voice said, this one even younger, "We're here. Please open the door."

She hung up and prepared the number for the cops if she needed it. Something about them sounded…desperate. She jumped at the knock on the door, but peered through the lookout. It was a strange site. She was pretty sure she'd met the older guy before, but the two kids with him didn't look any older than her. One was blond with blue eyes, and the other had white hair and grey eyes. Foreigners?

She opened the door a little bit, and the man smiled, "Hey, Sayu. I'm Matsuda, I work with your father."

She'd probably seen him before at some work event, that's why he looked familiar. She smiled, "Yeah! You're the one Dad's always talking about. Come in." She'd probably get in trouble for letting two strangers in, but if they were with Matsuda they couldn't be too bad. She bowed slightly to them, "Sayu Yagami, but you probably already knew that."

"Mello." The blond awkwardly returned the gesture. So she'd been right about the foreign status.

"Near," The white haired kid offered. She noted she was taller than him.

"So what's wrong with Light?" She asked, "I didn't know he was near Tokyo."

"He hasn't left." Matsuda rubbed the back of his head, "He's been working the Kira case with your father for the last few months."

"What?" That wasn't that surprising, but why keep it a secret? And why suddenly tell her now? "Is he…?"

"No, he's alive," The NPA detective assured her quickly, "We just need your help."

"You need my help?" She repeated. How could she help fight Kira?

"It's complicated." Mello sighed, and she found he couldn't quite look her in the eyes, "Your
brother is Kira." She stepped back in surprise. Her brother could not be Kira. There was no way he would have become a killer, no way he would break the law.

Except…he'd been different before he left. He spent a lot more time in his room and barely went out. She'd also been worried he was depressed in his last year of high school. He always looked bored, always looked alone. It really wasn't until Kira came around he seemed to have any ambition. It felt like he was trying to do something. She thought he'd finally decided to start dating.

She slowly frowned, "Are you sure?"

"He's not always Kira," Near explained, "When L was getting too close, he was forced to give up his memories of being Kira, as well as his power." She frowned, because how was that possible? "We've regained one of Kira's weapons, but we've run into problems with the second."

They told her a story so ridiculous it had to be true. A Death Note was dropped in front of her brother. He'd been unable to resist its power. Apparently, no one did once they used it once. The power warped his mind, destroyed his morals, and he became Kira. Without the memories, he was still her brother, but with them…he was a stone hearted murderer.

They apparently were shown the future? She wasn't so sure about that, but she decided to listen until they actually made a request.

In the future, there were only two people Kira hesitated to kill. Their father and herself, but the only one where he'd been put at a disadvantage because of that reluctance to kill was when he should have killed her.

They hoped she could convince Kira to give up.

"Do you really think it'll work?" She asked, shivering at the thought of looking into her brother's eyes and knowing there was a murderer's mind behind them.

Near and Mello exchanged glances, "Maybe," The blond answered, "L hasn't really been able to get through to him…"

"Why would…?" She sighed, honestly too confused with the situation, "Whatever. You need me to get my brother to tell me where this murdering journal is? My brother, who I didn't even notice was killing people? And I know where he hides his porn." She wouldn't say she knew everything about her brother, but she knew more than anyone else, "Otherwise you'll have to…?"

Torture him? Or his body, since Kira's mind wasn't really her brother.

"I'll do it." She decided before they could confirm her summary. The details didn't matter much anyways. She was no good at keeping them straight in her head.

"Are you sure?" Mello asked, "We don't want to force you into this."

"I want to help," Sayu said more confidently.

So they got in the car. Mello pointedly looked out the window, while Near sat next to her fiddling with his hair. They were giving her space to digest what they told her, but she couldn't really make a plan. She didn't want to think about it. The longer they didn't look at her, the worse she felt.

"Are you guys not looking at me cause I'm Kira's sister?" She asked.

Two sets of eyes snapped to her, "No," They said in unison, one angrily, the other in a firm
She met Mello's gaze, and he averted it after five seconds. She crossed her arms and huffed, "Then why can't you look me in the eye?"

"In the future, I kidnapped you to use you as leverage against your father," He revealed tightly, as if that meant anything to her or she should be angry with him for something that didn't happen.

"But you're not planning to now." She rolled her eyes, "So we can be friends, right?"

"...friends?" The blond looked at her.

"Why not?" If they weren't enemies or strangers, then that just left friends.

"I don't have many friends," Near muttered.

"Light's dating their mentor so you should be friends," Matsuda informed her of what was probably the second most important piece of information.

She turned to look at the boys, "Light's dating someone else? What happened to Misa?"

"They broke up last Friday," Near told her, while Mello rubbed at his ears.

"What?!" She demanded, "And he's already moved on?"

"Um..." Mello hesitated again, "Our mentor's a guy?"

Whoa, she missed a lot, but good on her brother to come out. It wasn't entirely unexpected. She'd seen him with the Director's son at that party, but she always figured gender didn't matter to him as long as he found the other interesting, "What's he look like? Is he cute?"

"He looks like Near but with black hair," The blond answered, "He's twenty-four."

"Twenty-four?" That was about the same age difference as some of her friend's parents. She scrutinized Near's face, before deciding, "He must be pretty cute then." The white haired kid looked at her in surprise, and she shrugged, "What? I'm just being honest." He blushed a little, which was weird, but then she refocused, "How much money does he have?"

"Does that matter?" Mello wondered.

"I mean, he's twenty-four so he should have a job." Sayu rolled her eyes, "He can't be mentoring you in something unless he is something."

"He's L," Near told her.

"L? As in the detective?" They nodded. She nearly vibrated in excitement, because this was the stuff of dramas, "Oh my god, Light seduced the detective investigating him? And I thought Misa was an impressive catch."

"Shouldn't you be more concerned about facing Kira?" The blond frowned.

"You want me to reach the part of him that's still Light?" She smiled back, "I need to know what's going on with Light. So, is he rich? Does L get paid?"

"He had a skyscraper built in under a year," Matsuda told her, "He's insanely rich."
"See?" Sayu looked at the two her age, "Mr. Matsuda's being way more helpful than you guys."

They stared at her in disbelief.

"So he's rich, attractive, super smart, and foreign?" They nodded, still stunned, "And Dad approves of him?" Matsuda made a noise of affirmation, "But since he's L, Kira hates him and he can't get through to him." Her brother got really irritated with people who told him he was wrong, "That must suck. Does he like hugs? I'll give my future brother-in-law a hug."

They didn't talk much before they arrived at the tower. There was a slight issue with the security of the building, but then they brought her to a room with what she assumed had a one-way mirror. The notebook was in her brother's hand, but that was not her brother. It was his face, sure, but he never wore such a sinister expression. She walked closer to it with a small gasp.

"Sayu." Her father looked like he'd aged the five years they were shown of the future, "You didn't have to agree to do this."

"He's my brother," She replied, turning to look at the rest of them.

There was a man who was only watching her brother. He wasn't textbook handsome, but she could tell nothing mattered more than the young man in the room. That had to be L. She broke away from her father and ran up to him, wrapping her arms around him, "Thank you," She said as his arms tentatively hugged her back, "For wanting to save Light."

"He's going to be so mad I brought you here," Her future brother-in-law replied.

"I'll convince him to forgive you." She decided he could use some practice with hugs, "After I get the location of the other journal."

"Notebook," Near corrected.

"Same difference," She chattered because otherwise she would lose her nerve, "Can I go in now?"

"We should have a plan," Mello worried, "Do you know what you're going to say?"

"No." She drew out of the hug, "But if you guys give me a script, he'll figure it out and get angry. I'm the only one here Kira doesn't see as an enemy, right?"

"You can't get through this on luck." The blond shook his head.

Sayu looked at the greatest detective in the world, "I can do this."

L met her gaze, and then nodded, "Whatever you think best. He's your brother."

"That doesn't mean anything," Near said dismissively.

"It means everything," They said together. She liked who her brother chose.

He looked like he believed in her, so she believed in herself.

"I'm ready now," Sayu said, walking towards the door. She took a deep breath, then entered the room with one of the biggest mass murderers in recent history. The door closed automatically behind her. She approached, trying to find a glimmer of anything familiar in those brown eyes. He was surprised to see her, but slowly he filled with an unfamiliar rage.

No, not unfamiliar. One time some boys were messing with her and her brother defended her. That
was the only other time she'd seen him angry.

Her brother was in there.

"You shouldn't be here." He glared at the glass, "L should not have brought you here."

She sat in front of him, looking up, "Aren't you happy to see me?"

He strained against the chains, "Did they force you to come here?"

"No. They asked and I said yes." She kept smiling.

"And they think you can convince me to give up just because you're my little sister?" He chuckled. She forced herself not to be scared. She was safer if she left the room, so he was trying to get her to leave.

This was her brother. He wouldn't actually hurt her. Nothing could undo a lifetime of protecting her, not even a diary from a death god.

This was the first time he needed her help. She would help him.

"I don't think Mello or Near really believe in me." She pouted, "Pretty sure they think I'm an idiot."

"You're normal," Light/Kira assured her, his instinctual response to her criticizing herself, "And that's fine."

"Then why isn't it fine for you to be normal?" Sayu asked.

"Those are completely different circumstances." He sighed.

"Not really." She tilted her head, "You started this because you wanted to make a better world, right?" He nodded, "Well, you don't need a deadly journal to do that. You can make the world a better place just being yourself." She smiled, "The world doesn't need Kira."

"Sayu..." His eyes softened, and then he shook his head, "You don't understand."

"Then explain it to me," She demanded petulantly, "It's not like you're going anywhere anytime soon."

His eyes closed, and he let out a deep breath. She was used to that. She waited patiently for him to gather his thoughts and open his eyes. He stared at her, "None of that matters now. I've lost."

"Admit defeat then." Sayu leaned forward, "No shame in losing."

"Kira wasn't supposed to lose." He tensed.

"Everyone loses."

"I'm not like everyone else."

"You're human Light."She said gently, hoping she was reaching him.

"Kira's the god of the new world." He didn't look away from her.

"You can't be a god and my big brother," She pleaded. He looked in pain. She hoped that was a good sign. She hesitantly got on her knees, reaching out to touch his hand, "Please. The world
doesn't need Kira, but I need you. Can't you keep being my hero?"

The pain increased. She tried not to wince at how tightly he was holding her hand. He let out a
gasping breath, before chuckling, "I'll always be your hero."

Did that mean they had Light back all the way? She beamed, "Then tell me where the other
notebook is, and we can go home."

There was another pain filled silence, before he told her.

She grabbed the notebook and tossed it to the side of the room. Without it, his memories of being
Kira should be forgotten. He closed his eyes again, taking a few shuddering breaths. He didn't look
at her as he bowed his head, "Did I…Did I scare you?"

"A little." She frowned at the chains, wondering when L would come in to unlock him, "But that's
okay as long as you get Misa to introduce me to Hideki Ryuga. And Mr. Matsuda told me your
new boyfriend is really rich so I expect something really nice from him." The door opened, and L
showed up with the key.

He was making eyes at her brother so she ducked out to give them a little privacy. There was
another kid when she got into the other room, this one a brunette with nice blue eyes. Mello
stopped talking to him to look at her, "I can't believe that worked."

"Why not?" She frowned.

"Why should his little sister mean more than everything else?" The blond grumbled.

She shrugged. Why did siblings care about each other anyways? She and Light were nothing alike.
They didn't even look alike. She knew people like her brother, well, not exactly, but the aloof
handsome genius type. The ones who didn't have to try to be perfect. And she avoided them
because she was never able to be friends with them.

None of Light's friends were anything like her either.

If they were strangers who met at school or at the mall or something, they wouldn't have been
friends. There was something about them simply being related that made them automatically more
special in each others' eyes. She didn't know why it worked that way, it just did. But her brother
was someone who would be with her for most of her life…

"You're thinking out loud," The third kid her age told her.

"Whoops." She shrugged, not caring.

So what if she wasn't a genius?

She was enough, and that's all she wanted to be.

There was nothing wrong with normal.

Chapter End Notes

Edit 2/06/2020- My family has always been close, and I wrote this story when I was
the furthest from them I'd ever been. I missed them and I can't imagine my life without
them. That isn't true for all 'families', and a recent comment made me want to address
this.

Never change who you are to fit your family's ideal. Don't force yourself to be
someone else you think your family will love. Family should love you
unconditionally, if they don't, they're not family. At least, not in my view of things.

When my cousin came out, we told the homophobes to shape up or shut up. Similarly
when another cousin started transitioning. My grandma and great-uncles reach out
when they don't understand, so never let age be an excuse for ignorance.

I'm a firm believer that family is a bond and that bond doesn't have to be through
blood. My brother used to be a friend, similarly with many of my aunts, uncles, and
cousins.

That being said, everyone can decide how much or how little they are willing to put up
with for those that gave birth to them and were raised with them. My family certainly
isn't perfect and there are times where we've let certain behaviors slide for no other
reason than 'they're family'.

Just remember that you can always find people who will love all of you and that
loyalty is earned, not owed. If you're able to love those that hurt you, then you're a
better person than me.
Souichiro walked down the path next to Ryuzaki, the directions Sayu got for them on a sheet of paper. He hadn't known the detective intended to bring his other child into the investigation, but it worked. She saved her brother in the process. He was proud of his daughter. She did so much more than he ever thought her capable of.

He really should stop underestimating his children.

"Light tells me my timing is terrible." The great detective broke the silence, "Would now be a good time to discuss my intentions towards your son?"

"I was partially joking." The Chief chuckled.

"But you were in part serious." Ryuzaki stopped and turned to face him completely.

"I was," He affirmed, "I suppose now wouldn't be the worst time."

"I want us to work, but I'm sure everyone in a relationship wants it to work." He shifted in an almost nervous manner, "I do not believe I will ever lose interest in Light."

"But life is unpredictable." The father of two crossed his arms, "I don't have an issue with you, Ryuzaki." Not anymore, "I know you will give my son a far better life than I ever could..." He took in a deep breath, but Kira, as insane as he was, had a point, "But you could also break him beyond repair. If it were simply a friendship, or a partnership, I wouldn't be so hesitant..."

"It's a risk," Ryuzaki agreed.

"It's always a risk." Souichiro smiled, "I know both of you will try your hardest to make this work, but..."

"But?"

"I would like some reassurance that even if you break up, it won't be the end," The Chief decided, "That you won't include him in your life, let him work as L, and then take it all away." He was sure his son could survive without the romance, but to give him the ability to be more, to give him that purpose and then deprive him of it would kill him. Nothing would challenge him...

"He may use the title of L, and all its resources, however he wants," The great detective allowed, "Anything he should gain during our relationship will still be his if it ends. I promise you that."

The Chief thought it over. Even if their relationship ended terribly, he was sure the heirs would ensure their mentor kept his end of the deal. All three were capable of keeping Light in their lives without the help of the world's greatest detective. And this was all on the possibility that they broke up. He was probably just being overprotective.

"Then my only other issue is travel." A much easier issue to work around, "I presume he's going to live in England with you and the others?"

"That would be easiest." Ryuzaki seemed to relax now that they moved on, "Of course, it is his
decision if he wants to come to the Wammy house."

"What will he be doing there?" There had to be more than just detective work.

"Watari told me he thought Light would be perfect to take over the institute when he decides to retire." The young man smiled, "That will, of course, be a cover for his detective work with me. He would fit well to replace Watari, but he could always be by my side on cases. I also take some time every once in a while to teach a class at the orphanage. I presume that was what Matt was thinking earlier-

"He's got options," Souichiro summed up, "And his degree?"

"He can still get one if he desires it," Ryuzaki assured him, "Anything he wants I will try to make available for him."

He nodded, then started walking up the path, "Don't let Sayu hear you say that or you'll be bankrupt."

His son's boyfriend scratched at the back of his head, "She apparently already expects something, and of course I should have something when I meet your wife…"

He chuckled again, "Good luck."

Light would tell him what to do, but he remembered meeting his mother-in-law for the first time. The scrutiny he was put under made him feel like every move was the wrong one. Ryuzaki was lucky he had gotten to know him without knowing he was going to be a permanent fixture in his life because his father-in-law looked close to murdering him for a year.

It turned out his father-in-law was just impressed, but he still wanted to intimidate him just in case he intended his daughter any harm.

It was natural for parents to act like that.

They soon got to the clearing described to them. He took the shovel they'd brought and moved to the spot. It was hard to tell, but he could see signs the ground had been disturbed. Enough time had past from when he originally buried it he couldn't be sure. Considering the Misa in the show hadn't appeared to have any tools, they didn't dig long before they found it.

"How much money can I spend on Sayu's gift before you consider it spoiling her?" Ryuzaki asked as he removed his gloves, touching the notebook. The same note that was read in the show fell out. When Ryuk came down they would be one step closer to finishing this.

"I believe a family vacation would work, to celebrate the end of the Kira case." Assuming Ryuk was as easy to entertain as he appeared, they would be fine. The afterlife…they could worry about later if his death was no longer pending. He reached out to touch the page, "I'm sure she'll have some ideas."

"Indeed." Ryuzaki smiled.

It was a smile of a man in love.

He looked up the quotes Kira and Ryuzaki exchanged. They quoted Shakespeare at each other, and from the way that he'd reacted he was certain his son did the same with the detective. He was never a fan of reading books, much less plays, but he knew those plays were divided between comedies
and tragedies.

Their story wasn't a comedy.

It wouldn't be a tragedy if he had any say in it.

Ryuk shifted nervously in front of the king.

"Quite a human you've found," The higher being said, "What he would have accomplished on his own…"

"Why'd you interfere then?" The troublemaker inquired.

"Do you know why our realm is like this?" The king gestured out, "Rotting…decaying…"

"There's a reason?" Ryuk didn't consider himself smart, but he was pretty sure if the king could change it, he would.

"Of course," The king scoffed, "And Kira could bring our realm to greatness."

He didn't consider himself the smartest Shinigami around, but he didn't see why he would stop Kira if he could make their realm better. He stared at his king, who had always been a lax ruler. He didn't even get mad when that video of his showed he'd lied when he stole Sidoh's notebook. Sidoh was probably looking for him now, but no one else was allowed into the human world at the moment.

"That doesn't make any sense," Ryuk complained.

"That's because few remember how connected our realm is to the human realm," The king drawled, "There is a balance that should be maintained."

"Doesn't look very balanced to me," He muttered.

"It is how it should be," The king replied, "There was a time before my rule where the king wanted our realm to prosper, and humanity suffered. You remember how…active the king before me encouraged the others to be."

"Oh yeah." Those had been the days. Their realm was actually able to grow apples for a time, "You're saying that's connected?"

"Life is a delicate balance. The human realm is flourishing. There are more of them alive than ever before." He drifted to his own private window to the human realm, currently focused on that detective guy and Light's father. They had Sidoh's notebook he was currently connected to. He could go down any time even with the order in place, "But ours must be dying for theirs to grow."

"Why do you care if their realm grow?" Ryuk wondered.

His superior shrugged, "Every time we've tipped the balance in our favor, killed more than necessary, we've failed to take advantage of it. No matter how prosperous our realm is, we don't change." The image flickered to show other humans, nothing all that special to him, "Humans though…they change if given the chance to. They grow, they feel…it's fascinating, no?"

"…I guess," He agreed, not really seeing his point. Well, he got the new information. Human life didn't just extend their own existences, but it would replenish their world, "So if we all killed more
humans this place would change?"

"It would." The king nodded, "I won't stop you from telling the others."

Ryuk thought about it, then shook his head, "Nah. Sounds like too much work."

It wouldn't be for Kira. He was pretty sure Kira figured out what the king just told him in the future. Now, if Kira asked him to kill to make their realm better he might have been convinced. So would a lot of his fellow death gods. There was something about him that would entice them all. Not anymore, but apparently that wouldn't have lasted either.

Watching history repeat itself was boring.

"Will it be too much work to continue keeping an eye on Yagami now that he isn't continuing his killings?" The king inquired.

It was never his killings that interested him. It was the games he played, the situations he set up to ensure his victory. It was the way his mind worked, constantly calculating and surprising him. Plenty of other humans would have bored him even if they did have the Death Note. He was sure Light would find a way to entertain him without it.

In fact, he was looking forward to it.

But he wasn't just going to go down and say that. That wouldn't be any fun.

He chuckled, "I haven't decided yet."

"Well if you decide to keep him alive…"

"Oh?" Ryuk unfurled his wings, digesting the information, "That's interesting."

He descended into the human world in the direction of the world's greatest detective, wondering if he would share what he learned. He'd been hoping he could speak to L eventually. He never got the opportunity in the future the king showed them. He liked the young man, even if he made Light almost scarily angry.

How many people passed off their real name as their fake name?

"Ryuk." The detective stared at him with only a little fear.

"L." He kept chuckling, then looked at Light's father. Oh, his lifespan changed, though a few had been in flux since the notebook began affecting the human realm, "I see you've found my notebook."

"Sidoh's notebook," He corrected.

Ryuk shrugged, "He'll come find you eventually to get it back."

"Will you stay here after that?" The Chief inquired.

"I'll stick around until I kill Light." It was entertaining to see them tense, as if he would write his name down right now when he hadn't seen where this would lead. He grinned, "Now when that'll be depends on you guys."
"What can I do?" L asked, his face a mask of determination.

"I'm a simple Shinigami." Ryuk landed on the ground, spreading his arms wide, "I don't need much. A couple of apples a day, someone to talk to, a means of entertainment..."

"And you won't kill Light?" The detective's stare was kinda intimidating. He knew there wasn't anything the human could do to hurt him, but his gaze promised pain if he hurt the college student, and he believed him.

"He's interesting." The Shinigami shrugged, "I thought you'd agree with me about that."

The eyes narrowed, then he nodded, "Then we're agreed." He reached into his bag and produced an apple, tossing it to him.

"Hm." He ate it quickly, "We're agreed."

"Is there anything we can do about his punishment?" The Chief inquired.

"You sure you want to do something about it?" Ryuk asked as he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, "I'd consider it a pretty fitting punishment."

"I refuse to believe a deal can't be made." L stepped closer, watching him for a reaction.

He chuckled again, "Are you willing to take his place?"

"More than willing." Now that surprised him. From what he'd seen, love seemed to have limits for humans. There was only so much the other person could hurt them before they stopped loving them. Sure, there were those willing to die for those they loved, but not many willing to suffer, "Is that a possibility?"

"No." He got serious again.

"Then what can I do?" L demanded.

"Nothing you can do." Ryuk shrugged.

The Chief's expression crumbled, "Then Light..."

The detective narrowed his eyes at him, "What can Light do?"

"Oh, so you picked up on that?" The god of death wondered if he should reveal what the king told him. It wasn't like he was ordered either way, and he was pretty sure he was told this so he could pass it on to the unlucky mortal...well, it would get boring if they all kept angsting over Light's eventual punishment.

L glared, obviously displeased by his lack of answer.

"I was talking to the king before I came down here," He drawled, thoroughly enjoying his annoyance. What was with these humans? No respect, even though he could kill them any time and not face any consequences, "He was telling me all about the balance between life and death..." The glare darkened so he sped up, "If Light saves lives, those'll be taken off his punishment."

It was much harder to save lives than it was to take them.

Almost everyone who'd picked up the Death Note never repented. They died miserable, believing the deaths they caused were justified.
L suddenly smiled, "Then we are in the right line of work."

Near liked games, but not video games. At least, not multiplayer video games. He could play tetris by himself for hours, and the computer was sometimes a more challenging opponent than anyone he could get to play him. Granted, he also never had enough friends to play video games with. Considering how the first game they'd tried ended in disaster, he wasn't so sure he was going to grow to like them.

"How'd you die that time, Mels?" Matt asked incredulously.

"Fuck off," Mello grumbled as he regenerated, only to get hit by Sayu's character, "Fuck you."

"Aren't you supposed to be a genius?" The girl asked.

The first rank still didn't know what to think about her. He hadn't expected anything from Matsuda, and the man saved his life in the future. He questioned L's decision to have Sayu brought in to help the minute the girl said Matsuda was more helpful in informing her of the situation than them...and he'd been wrong again. It hadn't taken her long at all to get the location.

She didn't need to try. She didn't need to act. It'd just worked.

Perhaps he spent too much time around geniuses he forgot the world continued to function filled with normal people. She extended the offer of friendship and he wasn't going to turn that down.

"You're basically cheating, Sayu," Light muttered as his attack failed to make her fall off the stage.

"You should have picked a character that could fly," His little sister responded.

"Kirby's a cheat character," Matt agreed with the older brother.

Near figured out how to attack and defend, but he still wasn't certain what all the little items did. He picked one up only for it to explode and kill his character. They were playing Super Smash Bros with infinite lives and a time limit. The only person he successfully killed so far was Mello, who failed exceptionally at this. Which still didn't make sense to him.

He thought Matt would teach him, but that was obviously not the case.

"Then why didn't you let me be Kirby?" Mello demanded as he failed to move in time with the stage and exploded.

"Nothing would help you," Matt replied.

They were playing to distract the college student. They hadn't yet heard from L or his father regarding the second notebook beyond that they'd recovered it. He knew they were likely talking to Ryuk. If that didn't go well then Light could die at any moment. He was doing a good job at tying with Matt, but he could tell he was a little worried about his possible death.

"Are you trying to hide, Near?" Sayu asked, and he refocused.

L was adamant there was a solution for the afterlife issue, but Rem hadn't had an answer so he personally doubted Ryuk would. Misa apparently wouldn't face the same punishment in the afterlife. It was reserved for the first person to pick up a Death Note dropped by a Shinigami. Misa's was given, and without Gelus to write her name she would go where regular people went.
Misa was in her room, packing for her release.

"No." He shielded as the girl attacked him.

"You can't win if you don't attack," She teased, attacking until the shield shrunk into nothing.

"I won't lose," He responded, narrowing his eyes as he was eaten and her character took on some of his character's attributes.

They were both blown up by an attack from Light. He wasn't sure how that happened.

This was still better than the cooking game. Near was glad he sat that one out. The four of them were supposed to work together and make soup, but no, somehow the kitchen caught on fire and Mello didn't know how to use the fire extinguisher, nor did he know how to set it down so someone else could put out the fires. And they couldn't cook with the kitchen on fire.

That had been their one attempt at a nonviolent video game.

It nearly turned violent in real life.

This…honestly wasn't much better.

"Stop killing me!" Mello shouted as Matt chased him with a flamethrowing…flower?

He decided to try another item. A mushroom. It made his character grow in size, which he failed to see the advantage of. It was already difficult enough not to die from what the stage was throwing at them. He ended up falling and let out a sigh. That put him in the negatives. He glanced at the clock, before sighing again and going after Sayu.

She was a chaotic player. She didn't seem to care for what she was actually doing. It was starting to bother him that she was beating him. He smiled slightly as he got a strong enough attack to push her off the stage, and then grabbed a gun to make sure she fell.

This was fun.

"Near!" Sayu complained.

He grinned, "You can't win if you don't attack."

Maybe he could be friends with normal people too.

"I meant attack Matt or Light." She pouted as the time ran out, "They keep winning."

"He's only beating me because he keeps killing Mello." Light rolled his eyes.

"I'm not even getting credit for those kills because he keeps falling," Matt argued.

"It's not a fall if he's pushed," Sayu said in support of her brother.

There was an alert on the screen of a nearby computer.

"They're on their way back," Light said.

"That means he talked to Ryuk, right?" The girl worried.

"Or Sidoh showed up to reclaim it." The college student rose. He wanted to go with the task force
to secure the notebook, but they all agreed out of sight was out of mind. A confrontation between Light and Ryuk was dangerous. That left all of them with Watari, who was still in conference with the ICPO about how to handle Higuchi’s trial. It was going smoothly, but slowly.

"Stop being a downer," Sayu chided.

"Yeah," Matt agreed, "Lighten up."

They spent the time before the others' arrivals playing a stock round. He managed to last longer than Mello and Sayu, but was quickly teamed up on by Matt and Light since they both wanted to battle just each other. He set down his control at his final explosion, relishing in the domesticity of this moment.

The battle between the two was interrupted by the arrival of the task force and L.

Near could tell by his expression that it went well. From the way he decided to interrupt Light's questions with a kiss, it went really well. Sayu let out a little cheer, grabbing himself and Matt for a hug. A commanding look had Mello reluctantly joining them, and then she ran across the room.

L broke away to smile at her, "I've decided what your gift will be."

"Huh?" She tilted her head, "Oh, you don't have to get me anything."

"It isn't just for you." The great detective wrapped an arm around his boyfriend's waist, "But I think defeating Kira deserves a vacation, don't you?" Her eyes lit up as he paused, "Sadly, I don't know where we should take this vacation. Where do you want to go?"

This couldn't have been L's idea. From the smile on the Chief's face, it was his.

He felt a small smile grow on his face as he could finally think this was over.

This wasn't a hollow victory.

This wasn't an ending.

This was a beginning.

***********************************************

"Lawliet."

"Huh?"

"My real name." L smiled at him, "It's L Lawliet."

Light felt a flash of annoyance at having known his given name this entire time, but was too comfortable in his position to move. L's grip tightened around him as he waited for his reaction. There was so much he still didn't know about the detective lying underneath him, but for the first time since they started working together he didn't feel pressed for time.

Kira was gone. As were the last of his reservations.

He had a lot of work to do to redeem his soul, but anything felt possible.

"L Lawliet," He tested, feeling him shiver beneath him, "I love you."
L pulled him up higher so he could kiss him, but both of them were smiling too much for it to work.

"I love you too."

They had more time than he ever imagined.

"What are we going to do next?" He asked.

"Whatever we want."

Chapter End Notes

One last chapter after this and then this is done!

I hope you all enjoyed this! Leave a kudos if you did! It's been a pleasure to write!
The Way It Ends

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

No one meant for it to escalate like it did.

Matt thought it was fucking hilarious.

Light took to the Wammy house like a duck to water. With the support of the top three, he was instantly the center of attention. Though that wasn't what made him universally loved by the students. No, that was the way took credit for making L stick around the house. The easiest way to talk to L was to talk to his boyfriend, who was infinitely more approachable.

Once they got to know Light, he was accepted.

It was almost too easy for Light to get a degree in philosophy and start teaching. He was as good as he expected, and eventually he was convinced to start an almost acting class.

Now that was really fun. It was the most entertaining application of behavioral analysis he'd ever seen, even if he was still working to control his microexpressions like Light did.

He was as great a teacher as he was a detective. He wasn't too bad when it came to business either. He was charming and intelligent. When they finalized their new security plan it wasn't hard to sell it to businesses. He even came up with other inventions to add to Mr. Wammy's already large patents.

His personal favorite thing to come out of Light being in England was the fall play.

It started with something simple. L left Light a white chocolate rose for White Day (a holiday now celebrated as much as Valentine's Day at the orphanage) with a note on his desk. His students got to the note before him, and demanded to be told where the quote in it came from.

It was Shakespeare, because those two's relationship would give him diabetes before Mello got it from his chocolate obsession.

They sparked a school wide interest in the plays.

Which then led to them wanting to put on a performance for the great detective and their favorite teacher. It was a schoolwide effort. He was put in charge of all the stage tech. Linda led her squadron of artists to do the props and sets. Mello put himself in charge of costumes, while Near somehow ended up with the task of casting. He was the only one everyone agreed would be unbiased in his choices.

Mr. Wammy loved the idea.

He loved it so much that he emailed all the Wammy alumni to see if they wanted to come watch the first Wammy House Fall Play. The invitation had been almost unanimously accepted, and they'd ended up having to rent out a local theater.

None of them expected it to draw media attention, but those who got through Wammy's house were exceptional. A lot of them were business owners in their own right, or award winning scientists or writers. Still not the type to draw much attention, but then someone (read: Sayu) told Misa, who
convinced a pretty sizeable amount of international models and actors to come.

He always viewed them more as a school than an orphanage, but the world didn't. It was good press for celebrities to be seen supporting a good cause like the Wammy Institute.

So they put on another the next year, and then another the year after that.

By then, Light was firmly established as the face of the Wammy Institute. He kept the money flowing and expanded their presence around the world. The main institute was still in England, but they now had more houses for regular kids, and the Wammy Institute was involved in other humanitarian efforts.

That wasn't even mentioning the surge in cases L took on with all five of them working together.

It was pretty fucking amazing.

He wasn't sure if it was enough to save Light from the afterlife, but that wasn't why they were doing it. Light always wanted to change the world, but instead of using the power of the Death Note he had the power of L.

Back to the plays though. It was going to be their fifth consecutive fall play and they had something special planned for the afterparty.

Seriously, though, what kind of school play deserved an afterparty? He'd never understand rich people, even though the money he had access to would put him up there. They left the socializing to Light and Mr. Wammy.

He yawned as he made his way down the stairs. They normally lived somewhere else not too far from the institute, but he worked late making sure all the lights and mics were working. He ruffled the hair of some of the younger kids he passed by until he ran into Light.

He had one of the newest recruits in a sling so he could use both arms. She was from Thailand and he was pretty sure her name was Achara. She'd gotten rather attached to him during her interview. He heard from L she refused to let him out of her sight when she was upset. He hadn't seen her since he started swinging by more, but she was really tiny for seven.

"You missed breakfast." Light threw him a bagel.

"Someone messed with my switchboard." He ate it nonetheless, inclining his head towards Ryuk.

Ryuk loved that Light was a teacher. It was because of him most of the students thought he was psychic. He spent all of the class snitching on kids, and when they worked cases he just liked to listen to them bounce theories off each other.

"Is this little Achara?" He asked. The girl looked up at her name. He smiled and waved.

At a nod from Light, she waved back.

"Adorable." Came a voice from the door and he agreed, quickly taking a picture.

"Sayu." They both turned to see the college student. Light finally set down his paperwork, "What are you doing here?"

"What do you mean what am I doing here?" She asked with a roll of her eyes, "You invite us to see this every year."
"You've never accepted before." He shifted the sling so that Achara was on his back, able to peek over his shoulder. He pulled his little sister into a hug, "Did L fly you out here?"

"Me, Mom, and Dad." Matt's eyes widened in surprise, because he hadn't heard about that, "We thought we'd surprise you, since this is kinda an important year."

The Chief hadn't died, and neither had he. Their lifespans were changed, not that he'd been all that worried. Still, they were at a completely different place from what they'd been shown.

"Everyone's here?" Light looked into the hall.

"Yeah, I only came inside so we can go out to lunch." Sayu's hands twitched like she wanted to reach out and hold Achara, "You ready?"

Light sent him a Look, then glanced back to his constantly present paperwork, "I can't. Achara won't want to leave and there's some stuff I have to do before the play tonight."

"Light!" Sayu protested.

"He's always busy." Matt rolled his eyes and threw the bagel to the side, ed"But I missed breakfast so if there's a spot open I'll take it."

He wouldn't let anything disrupt the plan. Not after he worked so hard on it.

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Mello snorted as Matt made some bullshit excuse for why Light couldn't come to lunch. He told L trying to spring a surprise on Light today was not going to work, but his mentor did not believe him. Near sent him a questioning look, and he just rolled his eyes. He was happy he'd been consulted because L would mess it up on his own, but he'd been fucking right.

Now he just needed to figure out what Matt was covering up. Yagami-sensei taught him to lie better, but he'd never be good enough to lie to him.

"I understand." L held up a hand, probably not seeing the signs of a lie through his disappointment, "We can always have a family lunch tomorrow."

"As much as I wanted it to be today…" Sayu bounced in her seat, "Have you seen Light and that little girl? It was so cute!"

"Achara?" The great detective slowly smiled, "Yes."

"Matt got a picture." The college student looked at him, "Show them."

His friend handed over his phone with the picture.

As the family gushed over the adorable little girl, Mello leaned closer to Matt, "What's the real reason Light isn't here?"

"We have a plan." Matt grinned, "This wasn't part of it."

Of course Perfect Hair would have a plan for this day. He was such a control freak.

"It was supposed to be a surprise." Mello rolled his eyes.

"A surprise?" His best friend raised his eyebrows, "What's so special about the play?"
"Nothing." He sighed, but decided if they wanted to get back their plan on track they'd need Matt to get Light to deviate from his, "Look, only Sayu and I know this, but we helped L pick out a ring."

"No way." Matt set his menu down.

"So we'd appreciate your help." Mello expected his agreement.

His best friend just burst into laughter. That drew the attention of the rest of the group, and he didn't get to hear his response. The last thing he wanted was for Near to know and ruin the proposal with his aversion to romance. He was more personable after years of continued friendship, but the idea of a proposal was still beyond him. It was kind of unnecessary.

Except it was about damn time they got married.

Or, not married since that wasn't exactly legal yet in Japan but there were other countries, and he was sure Light would find someone to put in office to change that soon enough.

He was a gay icon. Handsome, rich, worked with orphans, father was the Deputy Director of the NPA, the list went on. To those who didn't know him, he was faultless. And he didn't take well to insults. He still had the video Matt sent him of Light absolutely destroying some homophobic asshole who accused him of child molestation because he was gay.

With him making friends with some of the alumni, he'd probably have power in a lot of governments soon. His ambition was contagious, he'd end up inspiring more politicians in his students. If he didn't end up essentially running the United Kingdom in thirty years he'd be surprised.

A better world wouldn't come by them just catching criminals. There were still things wrong outside of L's reach.

"How's Aizawa settling in as Chief?" Matt inquired, as if he didn't call the man once a week. He was the godfather to their third child after all, and he took that seriously.

"Well," The Deputy Director smiled, "But he could do without you offering to help every time they have a somewhat difficult case."

"Hey," The tech genius stirred his tea, "Near extends the same offer to the FBI and CIA."

"Not as obsessively as you," Near replied.

"Wow." Matt rolled his eyes as their lunch arrived, "All I'm trying to do is help."

Mello smiled. When he'd been younger he thought L's goal was to be victorious over criminals, to win. He wasn't sure when it had become to help but he preferred thinking of it that way. They helped people.

Lunch passed by quickly, without any serious discussion. They drove back to the house, and he adjusted the jacket of his suit. It would be a few more hours before they were expected at the theater, but the kids were running around. He was glad he was no longer involved in the costume design for it. He quit after Julius Caesar, because while togas looked easy they were a bitch to make.

Light was surrounded by children as he made his way out to greet them, "Sorry about lunch." He kissed L's cheek, "You really couldn't have picked a busier day."
He greeted his family and started introductions when L drew closer to his side, "What do you think he’d do if I asked him now?"

"Murder you," He said confidently, because a stressed out Light was scarier than Kira. They'd accidentally let him overwork himself in the second year he'd been with them. When he snapped, he snapped big time. It was still terrifying in retrospect, "You can't do that in front of all the kids."

It wasn't like Light would say no, but still. It was bad enough after the Valentine's Day Incident.

"Do you have time to give us a tour?" Mrs. Yagami inquired.

"Yagami-sensei." Timothy, who was going to be their little Romeo, protested.

"I'll take that as a no." The older woman hid a laugh behind her hand.

"I'm so sorry," The young man apologized, "You'll have seats in my box, and I'll try to make my way up there but I'll likely be needed backstage-"

"We get it, Light." Sayu held up a hand, "You're a really busy millionaire."

"I promise I don't have anything tomorrow." Light smiled.

"Breakfast?" His little sister asked.

"Breakfast." He agreed, "Besides, I have something important I want to announce then."

Matt sent him a look and he suddenly understood.

No.

Hell no.

This was not happening.

Light fucking Yagami could not be planning to propose too. How were they even that in sync? But no, they worked so damn hard for this to be a surprise. L and Near led the tour of the facilities. He grabbed his best friend and disappeared into the nearest room, barely checking it was empty first.

"When does he plan on asking?" He demanded.

"That depends," Matt smirked, "You want in?"

"I have been planning this for weeks." The blond glared, "Do you know how hard it was to get L through a tailor's appointment?"

"Do you know how much shit Light's put me through?" The brunet returned.

"Do you know how much shit Sayu's put me through?"

So much shit. He was one of the greatest detectives in the world and she treated him like an errand boy.

"Well if you aren't going to help me I'm not going to tell you anything." Matt shrugged.

"If you ruin my plan..." He trailed off threateningly.

"I'm not going to let you ruin my plan either."
He backed off with a frustrated groan, because if Matt wouldn't tell him when Light planned to propose he couldn't have L propose first. They were ready to go at any opportunity where Light and L were in the same room now that he missed the lunch where he should have proposed. Even if they managed to find a way to get him off schedule and somewhere near his mentor…

Neither himself or Near were involved in the play. Matt, however, was. He could come up with a bullshit emergency and drag Light away. He could contact one of the kids. He was sure some of them were in on it. Too bad he wasn't allowed to interrogate the brats, but they would come drag away Yagami-sensei. They were on his turf now.

He took a deep breath, calming himself. He thought over all the information. Light said he wanted to announce something, not ask something. That meant he expected to propose before they all had breakfast tomorrow. He doubted he'd do it before or immediately after, because the presence of a ring would draw attention away from the play…which left the afterparty.

They still had a chance.

Matt's grin faded, "Don't you dare."

He was already running.

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"Where do you think those two disappeared to?" Sayu asked as they went off in search of them.

Near shrugged, "Who knows? They were acting weird at lunch today."

"Those two are always acting weird lately." The young woman grinned.

The white haired genius knew that was supposed to mean something, but did not think too much on it. If Mello and Matt wanted to start a romantic relationship, he was the last person they would consult. He was forbidden from giving romantic advice after the Valentine's Day Incident three years ago. He still didn't understand the necessity of that holiday or what he did wrong.

He hadn't been uncomfortable working with Light and L. He doubted he'd be uncomfortable if Matt and Mello were to get together. He supposed he'd feel a little left out, but it wasn't like much would actually change.

They found Matt and Mello rather quickly.

Mainly because they were fighting in the hallway. Well, it was more the aftermath of a fight.

"Do I want to know?" He asked.

Matt was bleeding and nursing his left arm. Mello was on the floor, his wrists zip tied together behind his back. His ankles were likewise restrained, and Matt was holding that with his right arm as he dragged the blond…somewhere.

"No," They replied in unison as Sayu laughed.

"Do you need assistance?" He peered down at Mello.

"It's his fault for trying to run." The tech genius shrugged, then winced.

"Why were you running?" Sayu asked, crouching down to poke him.
"Matt's trying to mess up our plan."

Plan? What plan? He looked between the two of them. Normally Sayu told him everything, regardless of whether he wanted to hear it or not. To keep a secret, and with Mello out of all of them…

"What?" She narrowed her eyes at the former third rank.

"To be fair." Matt held up his hands, "You guys are trying to mess up my plan."

Her frown melted into a smile, "Really?" Then a frown again, "Light didn't tell me."

"Would you have told L?" The tech asked.

She opened her mouth, then shrugged, "Probably."

"What are you all talking about?" Near asked, thoroughly confused.

"L was planning to propose at lunch today," Mello informed him from the ground.

"Light's planning to propose at the afterparty." Matt crossed his arms.

"Neither of them know about the other." Sayu beamed, "And now they're fighting over who should get to propose."

"Does it matter?" He asked slowly.

From the three identical looks of disappointment, it did matter.

He sighed, wondering how geniuses of their caliber continued to run into these types of problems. He didn't even see the point of an engagement period. Everyone knew they were in love with each other, that was doubt since they got together. Marriage was just a formality, one they weren't allowed in many countries. What they had was good, why change it?

"Light's the one that asked him out." Oh, so they were actually going to debate this. He closed his eyes as Mello continued, "L should be the one to propose."

As the argument started, he let his attention drift. If Light and L were going to get married…who would be L's best man? Light would likely pick his sister or Matsuda, who was essentially his brother. This wasn't a fight that could be resolved by giving the job to all of them. He didn't exactly want to give a best man's speech…but his would be better than theirs.

Matt produced a knife to free Mello as the bickering continued.

By the end of it all, they just decided to see what would happen. Light was purposely avoiding his boyfriend because, according to Matt, he was scared he'd just blurt out the question. L, according to Mello, would basically ask as soon as he saw an opportunity to. Both of them seemed certain their person would ask first.

Near just wanted to see the play and then get back to work.

L didn't manage to propose before the play. Granted, Light was doing a good job of not being anywhere near them. It was like they were chasing his shadow. It wasn't until he was forced into a suit by Mello he even saw Light again. He was laughing amongst the elites, being his charming self, with L standing somewhat awkwardly by his side.
He kept fiddling with something in his pocket, but even Near knew if he did the proposal now they would never get away with a small wedding.

He downed his flute of champagne. If it wasn't a small wedding...he might have to miss it. He didn't like crowds.

"Take it easy there, Near," Sayu chided, grabbing his hand. "Matt says it's almost time."

"Is Light insane?"

He let himself be dragged to the security room. It was notably lacking in security guards. Matt was instead seated in a chair, pulling one room into focus. A few minutes passed before Light found his way inside, and another before L followed.

"It's starting." Ryuk snickered as he drifted into the room with them.

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Light had been preparing for this for a while. He bought the ring, cleared his schedule for the next few days, and told Matt his plan so he couldn't back out of it. His family coming was a surprise, but that just saved them a trip to Japan to tell them in person. The play went as well as always, though his favorite would always be the first, Hamlet.

If only for the sight of Mello as Fortinbras and Matt as Horatio.

His life had gone in a direction he never imagined. Every day presented a new challenge, but he knew he was slowly changing the world into a better place.

He was a better man.

And it was all thanks to the man he loved.

"Where's Ryuk?" L inquired.

"I asked him to give us some privacy." Which meant he should be bothering Matt at that point.

His boyfriend smiled, "We haven't been alone all day."

"My fault." He reached into his pocket to pull out the little box and swiftly knelt, "I wanted this to be at the right moment."

L's eyes widened. He'd surprised him.

"L," He didn't say his last name because he didn't trust Matt to not have set up cameras in this room, and also because he hoped it wouldn't be his last name for much longer, "You are the most incredible person I have ever met. You not only make my life better, but you make the world a better place. I can't imagine ever wanting to be apart from you." He opened the box to reveal the ring.

It wasn't anything fancy. A simple gold band with my happiness engraved in his native language.

"Come what sorrow can, it cannot countervail the exchange of joy that one short minute gives me in your sight." He smiled as he took L's hand, "Will you-"

"Yes," He interrupted, sinking to his knees as well.
Light chuckled, "You didn't let me finish."

His love fumbled for a second as he reached into his own jacket, pulling out a box of his own. It was his turn to be stunned, "They are but beggars that can count their worth." His dark eyes glimmered with joy, "But my true love is grown to such excess I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth." He took the ring out of the box to show him what was engraved on it.

My heart.

"Yes," He answered before the other could ask.

L tilted his head, "You didn't let me start."

He quickly slid the ring onto his finger, and he returned the favor. He admired the fit of it for all of two seconds before his attention was on his fiancé. Suddenly, the short distance between them was too much, and he closed it to kiss him. He barely spared a thought of apology to Matt, if he was watching, before he was thoroughly distracted by the man in front of him.

"Light Lawliet," L muttered.

"L Yagami," He countered.

No one had a perfect life, but even with their occasional fights, he was happy.

Only death could separate him from L.

He wasn't dying soon.

Chapter End Notes

Man, this turned out a lot longer than I thought it would. I'll probably write other stories in this AU, so if you have any suggestions leave them in the comments. Also, now that it's done does anyone have a better summary for this?

It's been fun writing this! Thank you for the support!

Edit: Almost 300 kudos! What the heck?

Edit 08/20/2020: Still don't understand how this has over 1300 kudos, but thank you all so much!

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