Rubrum Oculus Aranea

by Mizerous

Summary

The spider lost one of its limbs, and yet their power will rise once more. The new leg is made by their own worst arch-enemy. Now an unknown future is met by Kurapika and Chrollo as their paths are bonded with each other. Chained to each other, and chained to a new future. Not for young readers on this site.

Notes

A story originally posted on fanfiction.net however I am now porting it over here in a shorter, and more improved format. I took in some details from other great HXH fanfics from Wild Hearts to Catch-66 and some of the other story Blood Pact. Both are from fanfiction.net if you were wondering. I also will make it modern hence the lack of a date for the birthdays. Some details are kind of hazy, this story won't get usual updates as it will mostly be one-shots with Kurapika's time with the other Spiders.
Act 1: The New Limb

Each day on earth new life is born and life also drifts away.

Sometimes it's the natural way of the world, but in other cases, a life might become stolen too soon. Humans would do anything to stay alive for as long as they can. The universe was not balanced realm so there were those born gifted with abilities that made them stronger or better than others. It could be considered knowledge, wisdom, power, or any kind of talent. This divided the race called mankind on the planet Earth. Many continents became filled with unique types of different cultures of the many populations, and the dark continents still unknown to the human world were different in their cultures.

The tribe blessed with the red eyes had become desired by many people who've known about the Kurta clan. From those who got to meet them felt they were very talented people feeling their tribe would last for a long time. They never expected the massacre that claimed all but one. That remaining boy would be chained to a cycle of revenge. He would seek out the eyes stolen from the corpses of his clan members. His other drive to murder the Spider for their role in the incident. The jail of his chains would claim each one of the bandits. He was not remembered by any of them however he would make sure they would know his name before they die Kurapika Kurta. The last surviving member of his clan now following a long road to seek his vengeance.

The head of the Spider was born in a normal way having nothing special happen in his life. It just so happened he was not born in a city rather a place far away from civilization. From the early days of his life, the man of the reverse cross was distant from his humanity. Growing up he realized that he could get so much more out of his life. Under the tutor of a famous thief, he learned the thrill of the hunt.

That book of his which contained the ability to snatch other powers from people. The life energy called Nen made such a skill possible. The Bandit's Secret which Chrollo desired to take for his own. His mentor raised him too well as he always explained to Chrollo must steal what he can, and wait to take what is more important later on. The greatest prize that he desired would come with enough time and patience.

It just so happened that his teacher's death would be Chrollo's time. His path leads him into a land of trash filled with people abandoned by society. The motto "We reject no one, so taking nothing from us." seemed like the law of the city. It was in that area he managed to recycle into a group of people into being remembered by the world for years to come.

- September 9th - Yorknew City

Their paths would eventually come into crossing as the years passed on. Their conflict would begin in a city full of wonder and horror. Both grew up as complete opposites as the blonde youth wanted to stay in his dim light, but the other enjoyed his life of faint darkness. One seeks out the death of the Troupe, but the other leads them to their ongoing crime wave. So it began to rain in Yorknew City. The special time of the year where auctions took place having valued priced goods on the black market.

Criminals both rich and poor came to visit this city wanting to buy whatever goods they can get their hands on. The area drew the main players in the story of Kurapika and Chrollo's meeting. The situation's tension increased with the latest development of Kurapika's comrades Gon, Killua, and
Leorio. While they might not have known the Troupe they have become important chess pieces in this game. Now the next move would be made as the standoff was on between both sides.

"Tell them and I'll kill him." The message left for the current second-in-command of the spiders to digest for herself. Her boss was now under the power of the "chain assassin" as he was leverage for the new hunter. She along with the other limbs already lost one limb to Kurapika's actions. If the head became undone the Spider would be no better in her mind anyway. Decisive action would be taken otherwise the prophecy would come true. Their fortunes told with the latest stolen ability in Chrollo's book of "acquired" Hatsu skills. The current details predicted the fall of half of the spiders, and with tonight's events, the fortune might indeed come true.

"I knew it these hostages have some worth after all! Wait for the one who kidnapped and killed Uvo it's gotta be that chain bastard!" Nobunaga was never the best person to control his temper, but with the loss of one of his best friends in the group, he was out of blood. While the swordsman got into another debate with his comrades Pakunoda began to consider her options.

'On a day of obscurity, where the light hardly passes, subdued to two choices, in your small room. Pride or treachery are the only two answers you will find the god of death comes to visit you'

She was not the brightest woman in the world, but it was clear a choice would be made that could mean her death or someone else's instead. Whoever the reaper might be from the chain assassin, the two boys being used as leverage, and or the 4th member of their gang the clown himself. Either way, it was clear there was no winning scenario to choose that would allow everyone to survive.

"The Boss will be alright I doubt this chain-user would just kill him without getting to us first." The blonde-haired memory reader agreed with Machi's line of thinking. The situation was in a deadlock until someone made the next move in their complicated situation. Until then no one could really harm the hostages without losing their bargaining chip. The phone rang forcing Pakunoda to look at the number. It was her leader's phone, but that's when the game began to change for all parties.

"Don't answer it!" To the surprise of everyone, Nobunaga took hold of her phone. Was he trying to start more trouble with the person he wanted to kill very badly now?

"Nobu what are you thinking? That's the leader trying to call us so let Paku answer the damn phone!" Phinks did not get into heated confrontations with the samurai-like this. Trying to take hold of that phone Nobunaga pulled out his sword which caused Machi, Pakunoda, and Feitan to retaliate. The standoff now including the Phantom Brigade fighting with each other.

"What makes you think this is the leader speaking? If the boss got kidnapped don't you think his kidnapper would be the one answering, and I'm not giving that bastard control of the situation."

"Don't be more stupid than you already are Nobu." The torture expert of the group's words was short, but to the point as usual. Nobu always hated being considered the idiot person out of everyone there however he knew that he was right on this point. He refused to allow the man who killed Uvogin to control the Spiders even if this put their leader in danger. While the debate continued on the phone had stopped ringing. Gon and Killua realized they could break out of this situation which was shortly stopped by Machi.

"I suggest you both don't make things harder for yourselves." The youngest people in the room tried to get out despite the danger each member of the Troupe represented. Nobunaga admired their bravery which is why felt like even now they were Phantom Troupe material. They were not as strong as Uvo however they were quite gutsy just like how he usually acted.

"We need text our leader back the chain-user might be pissed off about not answering his call thanks
to you Nobu." Phinks still was angry he decided to screw over the possible negotiation demands. The tension was quickly reaching a boiling point as suddenly Pakunoda broke through the shouting. Her voice was loud and thick as she finally realized something.

"We should wait on this. We can't possibly come to decisions about what to do if we are at each other's throats." The jaws of most of the men in the room almost dropped on the floor. They could not believe Pakunoda of all people was seeing things from the hot-blooded samurai. They rarely got on the same page during their stay in the Spider so for this to occur now was history being made.

"You can't seriously be siding with this idiot Paku! He's likely going to get the Boss killed for his own pride."

"Do you think I don't care about the leader Phinks! I know he would hate the fact we are sitting here unable to do anything about this."

Shizuku didn't seem to show concern about this entire debate. She usually was not the kind of person to form a plan of a plan, and she usually just accepted orders without question. She did pull out the choice tool to end arguments in the group. It was a pacifism weapon to keep infighting out among members.

"Don't we usually flip a coin to agree on something?" Showing off the proof of her membership to the others, the two sides of this gold coin would decide the winner or loser of any debate. The head side had the emblem of their group a spider insignia. The tails side was in the style of the web made by a spider. Pakunoda, Nobunaga, and Phinks knew that coin would decide who was right out of this ordeal. After all, it was a fair choice by 50/50 chance. Placing the coin in her hand she was ready to flip the coin up in the air.

"Heads" Pakunoda called out for the game.

"Tails" Feitan replied in return.

Suddenly the ring of a phone interrupted the event while the coin was in the air. Nobunaga looked at the phone not seeing it ring this time.

"Managed to break out of chains. Meet me at our hideout, and bring the hostages. From Chrollo!" The swordsman almost jumped for joy at this text sent to the phone. He knew things would work out for them as it seemed like they now hold all the cards. Feitan was quick to spoil the celebration.

"Do you really believe that's Chrollo?" While he was being blunt the monotone youth was not willing to believe that was their Boss making that message. That question brought doubt from everyone as they realized there was a good point made by Feitan. No one knew what to think about this as they wondered if the agreement was in fact trap. The chain-assassin would leave them helpless with their leader in his grip.

"Pakunoda you won the coin toss." Her eyes noticed the coin was showing the symbol of their group. Pakunoda and Nobunaga could decide how the group can move now. Once more the choice was laid down in front of her. The mental split path appearing in her mind would either lead to the return of their leader or certain death. She knew that there was no turning back once she made her choice, and there was no way you can talk her out of it.

"I-I...I believe in the Boss. We should go to the meeting spot." Feitan could be correct in that whole ordeal being a trap however she believed in him being wrong. Nobunaga agreed with her decision wanting to face the person responsible for their current problems. He could not wait to get his blood to stain his sword for Uvogin's revenge. Gon and Killua did not know what to think about this. Their
lives were on the line, and now they would once more return to the Spider's lair.

To say the ride over to their hideout was awkward was an understatement. Everyone was unusually silent as they knew everything would rely on if things went down the way they hoped it would for their leader's sake. Pakunoda was also in deep thought processing all the possible outcomes of this showdown.

'If the boss is not there we've been fooled.'

'If he is there we could become lured into a trap.'

'He could already be dead and our work has all been for nothing.'

'If he really did manage to escape what happened to the chain-user?'

Unlike her boss, she was not really much of a strategist when it comes to these moments. If things ended up going south she did not know how to respond to failure. Looking at the two hostages sitting next to her she wondered if they felt scared about this as well. The sky was just as gloomy as it was when it began to rain. She was always nervous when the weather was like this, and she felt that it could be an omen for what could be coming next. The drive came to an end with the base now just a few feet away.

"Don't try anything funny if you value your lives." Machi had the strings holding the boys on tightly to feel certain they don't pull a trick. Pakunoda knew she would need to meet whoever was in the building all by herself. The others also disagreed with that idea, but she wanted to face this choice on her own. The others would stay where they were until she called for them. If this ended in failure she wanted to pay the price for her life, not theirs.

The building was fairly dark as she tried to find her way into the main area where the spiders lie in wait. She began to experience fear, panic, worry, concern, and gloom about this moment. Each step echoed through the empty hallways, and the pitch-black area did not house anything that can ease her mood. Finally, she arrived at the center of their base looking outwards into the void of darkness. Two figures could be seen however she did not know which one was her comrade. Then the voice of a silhouette spoke to her.

"I was wondering if you would come to get me Paku."

"Boss..."

- September 9th - One Hour Ago

The clouds were still gray and lifeless with the rain pouring down on the car holding the three remaining parts of this picture. The man of the reverse cross was being held inside the tight grip of Chain Jail. Kurapika the youthful avenger was trying to keep his composure while his friend Leorio was driving the car to meet with one of the spiders.

Currently in his "feminine" disguise so the gang could not recognize him during the meeting. Well, that was the plan for the Kurta however when the call did not get a response from them he became very angry. His control over his emotions felt tested with Uvogin, but now his fury was close to breaking loose.

"What the hell is going on? Why didn't your Spiders answer back!" He suddenly grabbed hold of Chrollo near his neck area. The older criminal was powerful under the Nen chains trapping his body. Leorio could not stop the car as he was the driver yet he knew he needed to calm his friend down. He decided to park the car in an empty area off the road. Thankfully Kurapika was so in thought
with Chrollo he didn't notice his change in the course until the car was in the parking position.

"Why did we stop? We are not near the Spider's yet Leorio!"

"You need to calm down. Don't let this obsession consume you!"

"You underestimate me! I'm perfectly fine, but I won't let this man get away freely after everything he's done! My destiny is to get my revenge for the clan that died by the hand of these bastards"

"Listen to yourself just relax for a minute you have the Spider head, and even if they won't comply they still need him back."

Kurapika's eyes blinked realized he brought up a good point. Even if it seemed like they were refusing to negotiate he still had their leader. He can simply keep him away from them, and eventually, they would crack under the weight of losing their boss. He still could destroy the Spider once and for all. The sudden quietness of the car made the two friends uneasy. That's when Chrollo had a small laugh suddenly breaking the mood.

"What the hell do you find so amusing about this?" He was ready to give the black-haired thief another punch to his face if he didn't like the response given to him.

"Destiny truly is a funny thing some believe their lives are not determined by what is already determined for them. Others live to follow the rules of a religion to gain favor with their deity of choice. Personally, I'm not a man of any real faith despite what some believe my last name to actually mean. I found it amusing you speak about predetermination when I got a fortune told about my future. I believe the girl's name was Neon Nostrade." Kurapika's eyes got big when he heard that name being mentioned. She was the very reason he became involved in this year's auction.

"How the hell did she get your fortune bastard! Wait don't tell me you manipulated her into giving you that information!" Kurapika took hold of Chrollo's head giving him another hard punch to bruise his face more. Leorio was about to call his friend to stand down, but Chrollo still had on his face.

"If you want I can give you both a fortune-telling, but I can't do that with these chains on my body." He actually could use her power was the first thought in the chain user's mind. He knew the man could steal many things, but to actually snatch that kind of power to use for his own. The blonde looked ready to squeeze the life out of Chrollo when Leorio grabbed his arm to make him stop.

"That's enough you're letting him get to you Kurapika!" The young teen suddenly glared at his friend trying to remove his grip on his arm. He was very close to killing this man even if he could not take down the other spiders. Chrollo even with the chance of being killed now still didn't seem all that phased by what is happening. Leorio thought the man might not have the heart to stab with such a lack of emotion.

"The offer still is on the table Kurapika. Believe me, I have no intention of lying to you now." Leorio knew he was just finding an excuse to break free and get to his allies. That's not what Kurapika seemed to have in mind as he no longer seemed bloodthirsty, a calm expression appearing on his face that was different from how he was just moments ago. He suddenly moved his hand down hiding those eyes of his from view.

"Let's say you could predict my future what do you get out of it? You can't run away while you're in those chains so you must want me to remove them to escape from your bind." The fruit of temptation was dangling in front of the Kurta, however, he was not going to bite the apple just yet. Despite what the boy might say his interest became peaked thinking about what his possible future could be even if it was foretold by his worst enemy.
"Do these chains per chance prevent someone from lying?" Kurapika was just wanting the car to start again, but Leorio was having some trouble getting it to work.

"Damn it! How the hell did this thing work just a few minutes ago, but now it's refusing to even get going!" The problems just continued to mount and the pressure was getting to the avenger of his tribe of brothers and sisters. As the woes got worse for their night he decided to exit the car for a moment to gather himself. How could things get this bad when he thought capturing the head would give him the advantage.

"Gon, Leorio, and Killua my friends.I know you three are in dire places at the moment. Perhaps I need to consider my future now instead of later..." He was slowly running out of both time and options to keep his friends alive. If the Spiders didn't get their head back they could take their revenge on innocent people. His friends had nothing to do with the incident that changed his life.

Looking back in the car Kurapika looked into those black eyes that were the window into Chrollo's soul. He could become a problem yet he might be the only way he would make sure his friends will be okay. Without the help of the Spiders in finding their place they likely would be doomed. Now was the time for a decision even if it might end up costing him later on. He opened the door looking right at the wanted killer's face.

"How can you predict fortunes?"

The deal became made despite Leorio's concern as Kurapika decided to let Chrollo out of his chains. He did make sure Leorio had something keeping the man from breaking free with rope keeping his hands and legs tightly held in place. He can also use his abilities now so he could project his power into using Neon's stolen power. Kurapika was holding out his chains for when he tried something. The offer was in exchange for letting Kurapika see his future the man would speak with the other Spiders to arrange a meeting.

Chrollo took out two pieces of paper needed for the information on both Kurapika and Leorio's details. While his body was still under restraints he could begin writing the information while sitting in the car's seat more easily. The required information was given as suddenly Chrollo became possessed into written something down on both notes. Before he explained the details about this stolen ability he suddenly began to write something on the third piece of paper.

"This is the prediction Neon gave to me. I can't explain the details about my fortune or your own but I thought you should understand this by example." Chrollo felt some irony he had the power of the future; and yet he was not a fortune-teller like Neon was before she lost her ability.

'The calendar loses a precious component. The remaining months gather to mourn. The mourners play a melody, while the eleventh moon quietly rises. The chrysanthemum withers and falls, to lie on the ground beside blood Scarlet Eyes. But you remain supreme, even after losing half your limbs. Enjoys the interlude. Search out new allies. East is the direction to go. You will find one who awaits you.'

"Precious component? Then the poem is referring to Uvogin." The person he had to kill in battle. The person all the spiders considered their strongest member. Kurapika did not know what to believe about the rest of the poem. Would the Spider really lose half of its power? Chrollo's eyes narrowed at the man who took that limb from his group. He performed a requiem of blood in his name so the fact he was performing this deed for that same avenger was hard to swallow. Nodding his head he gave the fortunes to both of the participants.

Kurapika began to read his fortune however he suddenly felt very weak as he continued to learn what fate has in store for him. Suddenly he began to grip the paper in anger, Leorio suddenly walked
over to see what the blonde was angry about which caused him to hide the paper.

"It's a trick nothing but lies, and so you can't believe what he wrote to you!" His friend didn't understand what he was so upset about so he decided to check out his own future written by the Lovely Ghostwriter's power.

'A piece of the valuable Stone will come undone. The remaining corners will seek its missing part. The loss of the November Moon has stirred the Spider, and they look for an equal return. Your efforts to seek out salvation will bring about a forbidden fruit. The corner-stone with red eyes will make sure your safety, but you shall remove your bonds to it. The Stone and Spider shall stay alive while changing in shape and destiny.'

Leorio's eyes widen as he tried to understand what this could all mean. Obvious the red eyes line was referring to Kurapika while the other details could speak about Gon and Killua being this stone. The rest was stuff he did not understand yet he knew Chrollo must know how this works.

"What the hell is this Chrollo? Why is my fortune being with you and my friends? Is this a trick you pulled on us!" The black-haired man shook his head knowing they would be skeptical about their fortunes he was also judgemental about Neon's prediction.

"The previous owner of this Hatsu Neon Nostrade managed to write a prediction that included Uvogin despite never meeting him. I'm unsure of these fates will come true, but I'm not one to deny religion despite my looks." Leorio turned his attention back to his friend who was ready to rip the paper apart. If he was acting like this then whatever Chrollo had written must have gotten to him.

"Kurapika what does your paper say?" His voice was low as he tried to avoid making the blonde even more upset. He still refused to speak when he suddenly grabbed Chrollo's shirt looking angry.

"I'm not going to become a Spider damn you! I don't know how you did this, but you won't win you bastard!" Leorio gasped when he heard the comment spoken hinting about his fortune. While his attention was on the criminal he let the paper drop to the ground, and curiosity got the best of him.

'During a night of infamy, the 11th month has come undone by your hand. The remaining months gather to seek atonement. The Stone you are part of will become undone, but you alone can prevent the destruction. Should you save your other pieces, the color black will stain you. The Spider and Stone will survive, but you shall attach yourself to the Spider and become its new leg.'

"This is not real..." Was this the future of his friend Kurapika? To join the group of savage killer's he vowed to stop with his power. Looking at the boy it seemed like he refused to allow that to happen. Suddenly he his red eyes glowed in the dark of the night. His chains created a haunting sound as the blonde was getting ready to commit another sin

"I won't let my destiny come true. Even if I have to claim another life the Spider will die here!" NO! Leorio didn't have time to plan or think as he quickly charged behind Kurapika to stop him from killing the man. There could still be another option that didn't have to involve killing. The blonde quickly began to shake Leorio trying to get him off his back. Their moment of fighting with each other only gave Chrollo the moment he needed to gain the upper hand.

"I suppose you will get that phone call from me after all Kurapika." With the aid of the sharp edge of the car, he was able to remove the ropes binding him, and it did not take long for the Spider head to knock out the both of them while they fought with each other. He was considering returning the favor and taking the avenger's life for that stunt, but he remembered the poem about his possible future. He could not just let him die like this after all despite his actions the leader of the troupe became impressed with the teenager.
"He managed to capture me and kill one of my own men. Uvogin I wonder what you must have thought when you battled him?" That man was prideful of his power and strength only cementing the shocking fact this young Kutra managed to not only survive but actually beat Uvogin was no easy task. His Nen abilities also seemed very rare which the criminal wanted as his own. Still, there was so much to learn about his powers, and the fact he was nearly captured by them made Chrollo question if added them to his book was a good idea.

For now, his goal was to reunite with the other Spiders and bringing along the both of his would-be kidnappers as insurance. With Gon, Killua, and Leorio in his pocket, the last survivor of his clan would have no way of fighting back. It seemed his friends were his biggest weakness just like the Spiders are to Chrollo Lucilfer. It did not take long for the wanted fugitive to seek out a means of transportation with the both of his treasures so to speak knocked out behind him. The drive felt long for Chrollo as the mastermind of the Phantom Brigade thought about his next move.

-September 9th- One Hour Later

The head of the spiders was wishing he was given Uvogin's strength as he was having trouble carrying both of his hostages into the center of their current hideout. While he could not explain over the phone what would be happening the text message would send his comrades here in no time. The area did not creep out the leader as he enjoyed the privacy it provides for his meetings. The place reminded him of when he first met the founding members of the Phantom Troupe.

Where is all started for the master thief was here, and now would continue as Leorio and Kurapika's hands got wrapped up just like he was a short time ago tonight due to Chrollo Lucilfer. The blonde was no longer in his outfit hiding his real identity. Hearing the clicks of feet walking let Chrollo know who was coming to him first.

"Boss..." His trusted second-in-command the most devoted of his group. While most of the other members cared about their leader she was the only one who would take a bullet to save his life. The oldest female of the gang quickly noticed the shapes of his two prisoners and wanted to know what's going on.

"Relax they are not going to become a problem. I plan to end our troubles with the chain-assassin once and for all tonight." She never thought the text was actually from Chrollo or expected this kind of sight. The cause of so much of the Spider's worry now wrapped up and very much helpless. Her decision to commit treachery would up saving the man she cared about more than everyone else in the group.

"I didn't call you that was the decision I made. I could have let you die by his hands I'm sorry..."

"Don't be I believe you took your own destiny instead of allowing fate to run its course. It must have been difficult to not answer that cell phone." Chrollo didn't feel angry or betrayed by her choice, in fact, he was happy. While he appreciated her willingness to obey he did want Pakunoda to act for herself once in a while. She might have taken advice from Nobu, but at the end of the day, she decided to let chance find the outcome of this night. It just so happened luck was on her side and his as well.

"I suppose I should get the others in here now." Her tears were quickly removed from her face allowing Chrollo to gaze at the beautiful woman he trusted to follow his actions most of all. She quickly turned around having her steps echo through the empty room as Kurapika's body had started to move around. Naturally, all hell would break loose once the others arrive so the Spider head quickly brought up his weapon to keep him at bay. The blonde teen's eyes open to see the mostly dark room filled with lit candles giving a small amount of light.
He tried to get up however his hands and legs were now tied up by rope. He was now the prey helpless in the spider's web.

"Don't move or your friend will not wake up." The Ben's knife was held right under Leorio's neck. He could easily slice the throat killing the man yet the poison in the blade might do the trick just as well. On sheer instinct, the blond's chains came out, but he realized by the time he broke free and used them his friend would likely be dead. The boiling rage inside him was close to bursting yet that would cost the lives of three people who were not involved in the slaughter.

"Don't worry I have no intention to spill more blood, but you have to agree with my demands Kurta."

"Like I would agree to anything you offer murderous bastard!"

"We will see about that in time." Holding his weapon the standoff continued from last time as the red eyes glowed in the darkness of the room. He looked into those familiar eyes of the people he and his group got hired into killing during the massacre of the Kurta clan. Each one begged for him to spare the youngest, but he could not agree with the request. No, they also had to die it was what they wanted...

The shadows grew as the rest of the Spider's limbs came into the room along with their prisoners. Gon and Killua could not move as their wrapped limbs in Machi's strings made it unable for them both to escape. Chrollo could have sworn today was Christmas so many gifts before him now. The children that managed to become involved with all this, Kurapika's other comrade who could be considered his voice of reason, and finally the topic of the Troupe's problems lately.

"Hey, Boss! What are those two freeloaders doing in our hideaway?" The swordsman quickly drew out his weapon ready to battle the strangers near his leader. Feitan also seemed like he wanted to kill them having an itch to kill. Chrollo quickly moved Leorio up still having the knife near his neck to keep Kurapika from trying to attack him. He needed to choose his next words carefully. He did not wish to piss off any of his allies enough into attacking his captive.

"Everyone, I have managed to capture the chain-assassin Kurapika Kurta." Gasps came out from everyone as they took a good look at the blonde captive which turned out to their source of issues. The survivor wanted nothing more than to kill each one of them, but he could not risk the lives of the only people he cares about in his life now. He was struggling to keep his anger under control.

"That's him the last of the Kurta tribe?" Machi's tone was quite despite the shock she had in her facial expression.

"He's the one that the fortunes spoke about." Franklin figured the red eyes were speaking about him with the revelation given by his boss.

"Well that's perfect, and now we can finish the job." The torture expert could not wait to make the hunter's life hell before his death.

"Wait! I believe we should not kill him just yet there is too much left unexplained." The leader was thinking about learning more from this man.

"There is nothing to explain I'm going to kill each one of you monsters!" Kurapika's rage was boiling as he looked ready to break out, but then a voice that Kurapika hadn't heard for a while stopped his movements.

"Wait Kurapika don't throw your life away!" Gon the young hunter who desired to meet his father
once more yelled out despite his current situation. Killua knew Gon cared about his friend's safety more than even his own right now. Their days spent with him during the auction brought them closer to the last of his deceased clan. His red eyes looked at the worried Gon's face and his rage began to cool down. The both of them were helpless, and his selfishness to get revenge could not matter more than his comrade's lives.

Once more he decided to act selflessly and calmed his rising aura down.

"Pakunoda gather his memories I want to know more about him before coming to a decision." Chrollo's order caused the older female of the group to walk over to her leader. Kurapika could not do anything to stop him as Leorio was glaring at the blonde subordinate of the bandit as she made her way near him. For a moment Kurapika could see himself stabbing her heart with his Judgement Chain and beginning his rampage. Instead, his head moved down as her hand came down on his shoulder.

"Why do you hate the Phantom Troupe?" Her calm tone brought out Kurapika's frustration again. She along with the other killers should know his reason by now.

"You bastards took away my friends, family, and everything I've ever known! More than anything I've sworn to myself that I would make you pay for your actions!" His teeth were close to biting that hand on his body however it would all be in vain. She slowly gathered images and memories of his life. All the secrets would be known to his worst enemies yet he was unable to stop them.

"Kurapika..." Killua's voice whispered out as himself and Gon never saw their friend like this before. Vulnerable and without any kind of defense for himself. Finally, after what seemed like ages she released her grip on his shoulder and pulled out her personal gun. The bullets were not actually lethal instead they appeared out of thin air. The ammo crafted from the memories she would take from a person's mind, and the Memory Bomb went into the chamber ready for release as Chrollo's head moved back taking in the memories. Leorio noticed this and looked ready to knock Chrollo back to save his friend. The click of a gun showed Pakunoda was ready for that.

"Don't move." Unlike her other weapon, one bullet would be enough to wound or kill this man. Another window of chance became shut as the spider head open his eyes with the new information given to him. All the details about Neon's bodyguard were inside of his mind now. He also had learned about Kurapika's personal details about his life, from the Hunter Exams to his family, and finally his close friends in this building with him.

"I think we can come to an understanding Kurapika. There is a way you can grant your allies their lives for another day." Chrollo suddenly walked over to the center of everyone's attention now looking right into his now dim eyes. Their red glow was gone for the moment, however, Chrollo knew they might light up again.

"You friends will go free from this place in one piece, and in return, you will stay here. Uvogin was a dear friend of mine who killed with those chains of you. How fitting then you will become chained here with us."

"If you want to kill me don't draw it out if you do I will bring you all down with me."

"Who said anything about that. For now, I simply want you to project your chains." Chrollo removed the ropes holding Kurapika, but the shorter teenager could not choke the man in front of him now. No way out for the Conjurer his chains became known to all the Troupe. His targets for his power watched the chains appear on his right hand. Chrollo moved his hands up in the air and he had a smile on his face.
"Now use your Judgement Chain on me." Kurapika gasped when he was listening to the phantom thief's demand. Out of all the things, he could suggest was he actually placing a command on himself. No this could not be happening, but if he didn't agree would Leorio and the others be killed. Closing his eyes and giving a moment to breathe he quickly entered his Specialist state. The Stake of Retribution quickly moved into Chrollo's chest. The chains wrapped themselves around his heart, and Chrollo almost fell over from the pain.

"Good now I can give you conditions and..."

"Now impale yourself with that stake Kurapika." His eyes narrowed in realized what the man was planning. To bind the both of them into a set of conditions. That's why he allowed himself to get stabbed first lifting his worries so he can manipulate his feelings.

"Don't listen to him!" Gon's disapproval ended by Machi's strings as Killua struggled to break free. Leorio wanted to speak yet the gun pointed between his eyes prevented him. With no other choice, Kurapika stabbed himself with the stake as well to submit to Chrollo's demands.

"I will give three requests for you to accept, and should I disobey or you decide to break them one of us will die. The first order is you will become a member of the Phantom Troupe. The second order is not to kill any of the spiders or take your own life. Finally, you can leave the group of your own will once both of our goals succeed."

"There is no way I'm going to agree to any of those terms!"

"Do you want your precious comrades to die here? Besides I can make a promise that you will get something out of this deal. I along with the other spiders would not harm any of them, you can keep an eye on our activity, and we can help you take back the Scarlet Eyes. Speaking of which Kortopi how long until those fakes disappear?" A small person with lots of hair covering his face spoke up to his boss.

"It should only be a few more hours from now." Kurapika did not believe what he just heard. They managed to fool people with fake eyes. He suddenly remembered when he thought the Troupe had been considered dead, but Hisoka revealed the truth. Suddenly it made sense Kortopi had the power to make fake items that lasted for a short amount of time. He must have been an invaluable member of a group of criminals.

"We've been known to steal many things so I believe gathering the eyes of your clan will be no issue for us. Still, you will need to earn it as you work in the Phantom Brigade." Kurapika's chains were still inside the hearts of its user and the man he swore to remove from this world.

Revenge, anger, hate, suffering, pain, surrender, submission, and finally defeat. There was so much the black-listed hunter could do, but in truth, he knew there was only one option he really had to pick. Looking over at his three friends he made during the Hunter Exams this would make sure they live to see another day.

"...Very well." His voice was completely blank and without a sign of life. The chains made their contract between the both of them, and the conditions became set for the both of them. All of the Spiders along with the prisoners looked on shocked by this turn of events.

"You aren't serious right! How dare you let that bastard into our group! He killed Uvo!" Nobunaga drew his blade to attack them regardless of his leader's command.

"He should just kill him now!" Feitan moved to slice off the heads of all the enemies in the room. Chrollo lost control of himself as he reigned in his subordinates.
"Enough both of you! Uvogin died protecting us, and now I'm protecting you all! We can kill these people, but what would that do in the end! You know the fortunes that predicted our possible futures, and it's now that I realized how much I have to deny my fate. To save all of your lives I will accept the risks. If you ever believed in me I'm begging you all to trust me now..." The silence that followed that speech was defined considering no one spoke a word for a while afterward.

He knew trust was not going to come easily however he knew this would be an interesting challenge. Kurapika's unknown potential was worth the gamble of putting his life on the line. It might end up being a mistake Chrollo admits to himself even so the boy was something he wanted to keep to himself. Unlike most of the other treasures, he took this person was something that was different in both value and beauty.

"Machi, Pakunoda, knock the boys out." Leorio, Gon, and Killua didn't have time to blink as each of them got put to sleep by the quick physical chops from the female troupe members. They would wake up in a few hours long after they were out of the web of the spiders.

"Boss why don't you invite those two into the group instead?" Shizuku asked usually never questioning the wisdom of her leader's actions. Chrollo knew that was a good thing to ask him since Nobunaga was very invested in having Gon or Killua join up instead. His reason might not appeal to them, but in the long run, it would work out better.

"They would be wonderful comrades, but tell me do you believe they have what it takes to become like we are? Unlike Kurapika they have not sworn themselves into a life of bloodshed. While Killua might come from a family of killers he seems to have changed. Gon while very interesting likely does not want to harm anyone, and naturally, Leorio is Kurapika's friend. When you consider the kind of people we are, and what we do in our days do you really believe anyone else can become a spider beside the survivor of the clan we failed to destroy."

Yes even with so many bodies they had left one behind. This lone Kurta ended up becoming an important part of their lives.

"The next few months will become hard for us all, but for now I simply wish to enjoy being with my friends. Now then to send Kurapika's friends into safety as per terms of our arrangement. Nobu, Phinks, and Feitan didn't like this decision along with Franklin, Shalnark seemed interested, the girls besides Pakunoda looked bored, and Kortopi along with Bonolenov simply followed the request made by the leader.

Kurapika bit his teeth knowing he was unable to take back his actions to stop this. While the Troupe would not harm his comrades now he became their slave. Who knows the horrors he would deal with once the next night started. Would some of the spiders attempt killing him very likely? Still, perhaps not all of this was bad if Chrollo was able to create fake eyes then perhaps he knows where the rest are in the world. His secondary goal might come true but at the price of betraying himself. Who or what Kurapika would turn into be as his descent into darkness begins...
Chapter Summary

One of the former limbs confronts his old group hoping to claim more treasured "jewels" for his collection unaware he was about to encounter a new possession in Chrollo's hold.

Act 2: Eyes X Dolls

They had entered an abandoned hotel for the night after dropping off Kurapika's friends as part of the deal made by Chrollo. Kurapika meanwhile got treated like a princess as Nobunaga put it having a place to rest, but the young man was unable to find sleep.

For a moment time seemed to rewind for the young Kurtla clansmen. In the blink of an eye, he suddenly went back to his early life, and the area no longer was gray in color with the depressing rain pouring outside. His surroundings were back in a bright-light area with other members of his clan still alive and well. There was no fire, the smell of death in the air, several corpses lying motionless, and finally, the youth's eyes were not crimson in rage. No, he was able to have peace even for just a fleeting moment.

"Hey, Kurapika why the long face!"

"Do you want some food?"

"Why don't you come over and play with me!"

"Oh honey, you are special to me as my child."

His eyes moved back and forth looking at the gallery of his fantasy, and for a moment he wished it was the reality he could live in. He also considered the possibility he was already dead so this was just his afterlife. That's when he remembered how he got into this situation. Yes, he realized the death of Uvogin regardless of the way it happened should not allow him true happiness. If there truly was such a world beyond life then he doubted that it would welcome him there.

"This is not really happening...none of this is real, but I wish it was damn it!" His forehead was now covered in sweat, walking in a crowd of the fake Kurtla clan surrounding him. The history he learned about his clan's legacy, the time he spent with the young and the old, having a wonderful childhood with his black-haired father Akuro, and then his blonde mother Pika. The both of them wearing the traditional wardrobe of their clan, the memories of their days spent in the Lusko Province rushed back to him.

"Take me back this is not happening this is nothing but a horrible nightmare!" He didn't know who he was shouting at right now; each member of the near-extinct tribe was looking right at him with many gray eyes which soon turned gray. Everyone's faces were taunting him, who felt like he didn't belong with the ghosts of his past. He began to have the familiar smell of death and ash come into his nose.

"No, it's happening all over again." That night which ruined everything he knew, hell this moment
defined what his life would become an avenger of his fallen clan, his dead parents, and the lives of everyone who suffered at the hands of the Troupe. Everything just kept spinning, and spinning, and spinning, and spinning, and spinning...

Kurapika began to hear some many voices flow into his skull, and he knew that all of them belonged to his dead clan. His past was once more brought out in front of him, but now it was in front of the very people who killed him as his tirade was taking place before them all. The youthful teen finally opened his eyes finding a few of the spiders looking at him surprised by his outbursts.

"Won't you shut up already, Kurapika? That screaming of yours won't let me get any sleep." Feitan's yawn following shortly afterward to his remark on their newest "ally" of the Troupe. He was beginning to wonder if killing him would have saved them all this trouble, and the other member in the room would agree with that. Nobunaga clearly just wanted any kind of excuse to slice off the blonde's head from his shoulders.

"Heh with just one swing of this blade, and girl here will be sleeping forever just like his pathetic tribe." The sword-wielding samurai moved his fingers towards the hilt of his weapon. Kurapika knew what was coming, and facing his sworn enemies the scarlet eyes of the Kurta glowed red in the darkness of the room. He might die now, but he would two limbs of the spider with him.

"Because of you all my parents, my clan, and everything I've ever known is gone!" Rage boiling over he produced his chains to strike the targets of his trained skills. Ever since he became a hunter this was the only thing he lived for, and nen levels rose up in the room as Feitan and Nobu looked ready for the fight.

The battle would have to wait as the leader managed to feel the upcoming battle not to mention the shouting reach his ears.

He was thankful that no one threw the first strike so nothing would actually happen, walking in to disperse the tension Chrollo saw the glares from all the boys in the room. Sure enough, if he says anything to antagonize anyone in this room there will be blood in this place tonight.

"Just in time Boss! I'm gonna have revenge for Uvo!" Nobu expected his leader to support his decision to end the man responsible for #11's death. Feitan also expected Chrollo to give the blessing of slaughtering the surviving Kurta member.

"Nobu, Feitan you need to stand down." Their faces looked surprised at this notion. Even Kurapika was not expecting that intending to protect the source of their recent troubles was the last thing all the occupants of the room thought would happen. Nobu and Feitan quickly voiced their defiance in keeping him alive regardless of the deal made, Chrollo's eyes closed as he knew this was going to happen. He figured they would doubt the wisdom in their leader's reason, but perhaps he can still try explaining why he is sparing his life.

"I know you cared about Uvogin, and hell I would have allowed you to rip out his eyes once his corpse was cold," Chrollo spoke to ease the pain in Nobunaga's heart.

"Well, actually Boss I don't really care if he killed Uvogin I just want to break the chain-assassin apart," Feitan admitted have little care about their fallen ally. Nobu cursed out the torture expert of the group before returning his shouting towards Chrollo.

"What the hell are you thinking? Like we can really trust this brat to act as one of the Spider? What if he tries killing us one-by-one, or maybe he attempts suicide what then boss?" That was certainly a possibility one of the most notorious criminals in the world considered for the future. Kurapika quickly realized Nobunaga slipped out a chance to escape from his "contract" with Chrollo, as the
tension quickly increased when the head bandit walked over to the blonde hunter.

"You must think that being with us is not worth keeping your life. That could not be further from the truth, in fact, this might be the best solution for every party involved here." Kurapika titled his head downwards not wanting to look into the black eyes of the man responsible for his situation.

"I find that impossible to believe, but if you think that forcing me to obey your orders is great well you are just as crazy as your subordinates!" The man of the reversed cross admitted these circumstances were very strange to believe in, and yet Chrollo looked pleased by this outcome.

"Do you know what symbiosis is Kurapika? The long-term interaction between two different species, such as the relationship of a clownfish and sea anemone. The fish devours on the invertebrates harmful to the anemone, and in return, the nutrients of a clownfish's well bowel movements are good for the anemone."

"Don't you mean piss and shit Boss?"

"I was hoping to avoid such a typical response Nobunaga. As I was saying the sea anemone provides the clownfish protecting from any predators due to its stinging cells. The clownfish in return can emit a sound, which deters butterfly fish from eating the anemone. The Spider has very similar ideals as the citizens of Meteor City can prove to you Kurapika." The place where the Troupe was born in fact. All of the founders of the group met there at the beginning, apparently, some people were not aware the group of criminals got created in such a lawless place.

"Are you done with the lecture? It does not how you dress it up, using the deaths of innocent people including my clan to justify your actions is unforgivable!" His eyes were quickly changing from dull gray into their more vibrant red color. Kurapika was still baffled at Chrollo's idea of him joining his gang of monsters. Even worse, would the leader of the troupe consider forcing him on one of their nights-of-slaughtering people?

"You're the second person to call me out on my philosophy just like that other boy..." Chrollo remembered the words Gon gave to him while they had been captives. He never really considered his reasoning for killing and stealing objects. He just considered it something he needed to do, but they could be a real purpose hidden in the mind of the Phantom Brigade's ring-leader. Turning his attention to the stalemate in the room he could hear the footsteps of other spiders arriving in the room.

"Boss, what's going on here?" Shalnark, the computer-genius of the organization wondered if there was a fight taking place. Pakunoda being the second-in-command hoped her beloved boss was able to calm the situation down sensing the lowered nen levels in the area. Machi's face continued a small amount of surprise from her usual apathy around the others of the group.

"We have to end this now! I'm telling you keeping this boy alive is a bad idea." Chrollo had two choices before him due to Nobunaga and Kurapika's venom towards each other: go along with his companion's idea of ending the avenger for good, or allow the unknown potential the Kurta has to thrive under his supervision. A smile creeps across his lips as out of his pockets came the solution.

"Heads or tails Nobu, Feitan, and Kurapika?" The golden two-faced coin was one of the ways Troupe members would settle disputes. Besides arm-wrestling, the abilities are stolen by Chrollo, and if needed a sit-down in the corner this would usually defuse infighting which could lead to the fall of their group.

"What the hell is this?" Both Kurapika and Nobunaga looked surprised by this action. Chrollo just suggested a coin-flip decide the way they would happen the chain user's life, and the young blonde was not happy about this. It was bad enough he gave up his freedom to save his friends, but he
refused to place his own life on the line.

"It's a simple choice, a 50/50 chance for Kurapika to live or die however there is a catch to all of this of course. I figure should he die then I follow him into death as well how does that sound?" If the eyes of the other spiders could fly out of their sockets now they would have fallen to the floor. "You're not serious are you?" All the troupe in the room spoke this line including Kurapika.

"It's only fair Kurapika gets something should he lose the toss, and so I will ask once more heads or tails?" He showed the heads side being the symbol of a spider, showing the other side's web design for the tails option. Before anyone could protest Kurapika had made up his mind.

"Heads, I choose heads!" He said holding his shoulder to keep it from shaking with venom. The voices and sounds came to a halt with the assassin's declaration accept Chrollo's offer. The leader turned his attention to the other spiders who didn't even look him in the eyes.

"We can't accept this offer boss! Your life is not worth it to send this brat to the ground six feet under!" The head of the spider smiled at the loyalty they had for him. Still, he could not let this moment go to waste so he decided to flip the coin in the air, and suddenly time grew slow as everyone observed the shiny object move around ready to fall back down. It got snatched in the air not by Chrollo rather by Kurapika who jumped to grab it glaring up at the man who started this.

"That's enough! I know you're just manipulating your men into letting me live so this whole ordeal is pointless, but you're not wrong in assuming I won't get my revenge later. Today you're all lucky to live, and yet I have many other days to fulfill my promise. The vow that I swore into by the elder which was to not claim all of your lives!" Chrollo quickly took hold of the boy's hand which made Nobu happy.

"Yeah! Now you're going to get what's coming to you for Uvo!" His disappointment came when he was just looking to get the coin open to see which side it landed on in the hand. The golden object was upset with the spider facing his eyes causing Kurapika to gasp.

"It's as I told you 50/50 chance, the same amount I had to die when you held me as a prisoner. Although in this circumstance you will have plenty of room to enjoy your days in our relationship." Despite how sincere Chrollo said that no one believes that was going to become the case. Everyone else looked at their leader for any other shocking announcement, before that would happen Kurapika just growled and decided to get out of the room.

"Hey, you need to give the boss his coin back you thief!" His face turned around looking at Nobu loving the irony here, and of all people, he was the one being called a thief from a group of criminals.

"It's fine Nobu he can keep that one," Chrollo gave the newest "ally" of the Spider a smile. "After all, he is a spider so he's entitled to our stuff." The head of the group just found amusement at Kurapika's reaction of storming off after hearing that comment. He can deny it for as long as he wants, but down the line, he will understand why Chrollo chose him. His skills while talented needed some refinement to become truly deadly.

"So you're serious about this?" Pakunoda asked knowing the abilities Kurapika possessed through the memories she gained from him. While the other spiders gained some wisdom through a Memory Bomb she learned most of the entire history of his life, his talents with his chains, and the friendship he had with the other hunters from the exams.

"I've made a pact with him, and that is something I can't just take lightly. In order to secure a future for all of us this was the only way." Even if the fortunes ended up different for all parties involved he knew Kurapika could seek them out again if he was free. Now being supervised by the same
organization of killers who ruined his life he would not be a problem for a while. Of course, there was still a wildcard, leaving the group suddenly was Hisoka. Chrollo began to wonder if this was all due to Hisoka's want to battle him.

"Any word on where Hisoka went?" Paku and Machi shook their heads unsure what the clown was planning as usual. The fact he managed to wriggle away with no one knowing his whereabouts was troubling. Still, at least he did not have to worry about the creepy magician trying to kill him during a fight like this.

"That bastard I bet he's the traitor how else would Kurapika get the drop on us like that!" Sadly the leader's earlier remarks about a lack of a mole ended up being incorrect. Then again Hisoka would be the kind of person to leak info just to get someone to fight against. For now, he can relax, and worry about that gum-user when the time comes in the future. Now then he can hopefully get some sleep even if the others felt concerned the Kurta would kill some of the spiders in their sleep, and so he decided to take watch over him.

"Seriously? Do you really think I would risk my friends just to kill your allies when they are sleeping? Do you take me for a fool?" Kurapika was looking right at the reason he could not sleep tonight, besides the dreams, he was having about his dead clan and being threatened by Chrollo's followers. His fingers were playing with the coin, the "gift" offered to him almost like a membership card into a pack of morally screwed people.

"After that stand-off, I can't afford to take any chances tonight. Besides you can rest easy with someone like me watching over you." The comment only made the blonde hiss and roll over on the other side of his made-up bed for the night. Chrollo could not help but chuckle at the sight, and despite what he's put the Phantom Brigade through he found the young man quite interesting.

-September 10th-

The sun finally rose up leading to the end of the rainy weather plaguing this city and bringing in a new dawn.

Chrollo managed to fall asleep with no troubles as he woke up to find Kurapika also getting well-needed rest. So with a new day would come goals, crimes, and hopefully the start of building trust with their latest member. There was one loose end to deal with before they could break-up heading separate ways, and that was any connections Kurapika has in this town. While Gon, Killua, and Leorio would try finding them those assistants of his might also begin a search.

"You're still here what did you do to me during the night you bastard?" The hiss came with the twist of his hand ready to fight him should anything be "out-of-place".

"Besides fluff your pillows nothing at all your highness! Anything you might need before you arise for the day, my lord?" The teasing only got a pillow in his face along with a sulking Kutra. The mornings when most of the spider became assembled would be rather chaotic, despite warning him last night Kurapika was going to have quite a shock with today's early morning routine. Chrollo got the smell of something cooking very badly quickly guessing who did it.

"Ahh, the smell of burned omelets meant it was Nobunaga's turn at cooking." The samurai was not exactly the most talented chef, but he refused to let anyone else help him to save the meal for the day. The boss admired the pride Nobu had in managing to create a good meal sadly today would not be the day. Naturally, he was getting it bad from Machi and Pakunoda upset they would have to eat light now.
"Seriously Nobu? You need to get banned from the kitchen considering the number of dishes you fuck up." Machi's cold tone added to the insult given to his cooking abilities. Pakunoda had to agree with the string medic's thoughts about today's meal. Franklin was just looking for some beer to drink while Shizuku smelled the food.

"I don't mind having one Nobu." The absent-minded girl in glasses didn't really care if the food might be darker than your usual omelet, and her stomach's growling agreed with her sentiments. Feitan was really impressed by her lack of good tastes in food thinking she was also a vacuum like Blinky.

"Well, even if that breakfast was not ruined it's not like you would leave any for us Shizuku." Feitan also wondered how she was able to stay so fit perhaps she trained when no one was around leaving herself in well-looking condition. No one from Troupe doubts her looks and figure make her appealing.

"What's with that look Kurapika?" Chrollo took notice of the mouth opening stare he gave all the spiders in the room. The young avenger knew they were not a bunch of evil monsters, and yet here they were acting like a normal group of people early in the day. The same group that slaughtered all of his clan were just arguing with each other with not a care in the world.

"I'm actually surprised Nobunaga. You managed to do well with the bacon they smell very tasty." Nobu got flustered by the praise from his boss.

"Ahh well this is not my usual kind of meal, but thank you for that boss!" Franklin just belched as the liquid began to affect his systems, Shizuku began to eat some of the burned egg omelets, Machi just drank the milk stolen from the store to make this meal, and Shalnark was waving at Chrollo and Kurapika.

"Boss, Kurapika here I saved you some of the meal and it's the good stuff!" So the situation turned awkward as Kurapika sat down now looking across at his sworn enemies eating their food ignoring the fact he was trying to kill them all. Nobu was now sitting down to eat as once again his eyes came into contact with Uvogin's killer. He tried to take his mind off this as he bit into his sausages.

"So Kurapika? How are you considering your first day in the Troupe?" That sentence lit up Kurapika's anger as he glared right at the computer-wizard not letting him look away from his fury.

"Let's get this straight now! You've managed to force me here, and for the sake of my friends I will stay, but you will never call me a spider got it?!" There was no way he could live with himself, face his parents in the afterlife, and meet his friends again if he truly considered himself part of their gang.

"You control me for now, but sooner or later I will get my revenge along with the scarlet eyes of the Kurta!" The determination matched the gleam in his eyes. Chrollo knew he was bold yet foolish for seeing them out by himself.

"Yes, but do you know where to look for them? We sold them to a lot of dealers in the black market, and some people who desired them like Neon Nostrade."

"Damn you all..." He knew thanks to the criminals finding what belonged to him would be that much harder. For a moment he considered finding Hisoka to help him get out of this contract. His blood was starting to boil hearing these details unless the conversation's subject changed he might just lunge after the leader out of rage.

"Now then I believe we have one more matter to settle before making our leave from this city. There will be one more raid tonight in a huge mafia area." Chrollo announced knowing everyone would be
shocked at his statement.

"Umm boss? Aren't we don't with the mob that's why we faked our deaths in the first place."

Shalnark was questioning the wisdom in going after other criminals again when they did so much to get them off their backs in the first place.

"Yes, and that's why after this heist we will need to split ourselves in half. We likely can regroup in Meteor City away from the officials here." Kurapika realized he would possibly be taken away from his friends, and forced to stick around in the hometown of the spiders. Somehow he needed to get into contact with his friends before it was too late to reach them, had the others not been in the room he might have shed a tear of remorse. It was thanks to his hunt for these guys they ended up going through so much pain.

"Kurapika? I know you're not fond of killing people so you will have the simple task of intel for us, and I know about your Dowsing abilities from Pakunoda so don't lie." Yes, Kurapika's skills which seemed perfect to hunt down Chrollo's followers will benefit them instead. While Uvogin was a great loss Chrollo believed he would have wanted them to move on finding new allies and continue their work even without him.

'Hmm Kurapika Kurta, the 11th Spider taking Uvogin's place and number.' Could that future be closer than Chrollo was expecting? For now, he would focus on the present in dealing with tonight's robbery of the mafia.

"Do you think Hisoka might show up tonight?" Machi knew the clown better than most of the other members, and she knew he was liable to arrive during the worst possible moments. The fact he managed to sneak away from them as they were dealing with Kurapika alone proves that.

"It's very likely, but for now we have to focus our efforts on this operation. The other treasures in the vault have to get taken for Kurapika's sake." The blonde's eyes perked up hearing his name being spoken. Chrollo's lips curved into a smirk knowing he would not have pretty words after this.

"The items of the Kurta clan need to return to their owner after all."

As time passed one with the blonde cursing, screaming, throwing stuff around, and finally going in a room to calm down once he learned that the mafia gained more than just the eyes. Over the years certain groups obtained the following items from the Kurta Clan: the scarlet eyes, their tribal clothing, treasured items, and in some disturbing cases their bodies to study them. Of course, the survivor lost his lunch over the memories he got from Pakunoda's gun containing part of Chrollo's memories.

"I...need some time alone." Kurapika wanted some time to understand what he's seen in Chrollo's room before tonight's mayhem would start. While the spider head knew the room had no windows or any other way to sneak away he stood by the door waiting until it was time.

'I know you want to see them again they are your friends after all Kurapika. Don't think that you're the only person who hates being away from those he cares about.' So the spider-head pondered would he do to protect those friends, knowing the mind of the chain-assassin perhaps something criminal in action.

Phinks had completed his ritual with the Egyptian-headdress, Nobu cleaned up his blade, Bonolenov winded up his gloves, Kortopi was ready for his part in the operation, the other founders knew tonight would bring out some blood, and the leader was awaiting their newest limb to make his exit from the safety of the stolen room. The samurai felt like he was being a diva taking so long, but finally, he opened the door looking at the other spiders waiting for him to make their move.
"Wooo! What's with those fancy duds of yours "Pika"?" As Phinks observed the new Kurapika the blonde had changed up his appearance per the request of his new conspirator in crime. The last thing he wanted the news to get word of is him joining the most infamous gang of thieves in the world. His eyes were hidden under black shades, and his traditional wardrobe was now a black suit nearly matching the outfit of a typical mobster. Kurapika didn't care so long as the outfit kept his identity a secret, but a few of the spiders were now eyeballing him.

The blonde decided to give them all a piece of his mind instead of remaining quiet.

"What the hell are you all waiting for a pizza? Let's just get this done already!" It was not a surprise that he wanted to hurry yet the fact he was ordering around the spiders for a change was very ironic in their minds. So the spider began their move through the city moving in-between the buildings hiding from prying eyes. Most of the time raids on treasure hives usually took place during the night which made sense for criminals Kurapika thought to himself.

"Alright let's go over the plan here, so if anything goes wrong we can simply adjust to problems quickly. Tonight we can't afford mistakes with our target not just being jenny." Pakunoda Nobunaga, Shalnark, Machi, and Chrollo discussed how they would approach the stronghold. From what Kurapika was hearing Paku, Shizuku, and Kortopi were the ones with abilities that would be vital in securing the valuable items as would Kurapika with his Dowsing Chains.

Meanwhile, Nobunaga would lead the attack force with Phinks, Bonolenov, Feitan, Franklin, and Machi taking out the guards with anyone else who could bring trouble during the heist. Uvogin had that place of leadership, but well thanks to their new "comrade" Nobu got a promotion in the group's structure.

"Now then I believe you should all know something." Chrollo knew he should have explained this new development to them earlier, but he felt like this news should come during their raid allowing them to stay ready for tonight.

"The intel given to me about these guys is Omokage's been here creating some new dolls."

"You mean the former #4 before Hisoka?" Machi never thought she would hear that name again. Kurapika was unaware of the previous members of the group that came along before he arrived here.

"Yes, and from what I've been told he's been trying to avoid encountering us. Also, he's made a deal with the mafia to help in capturing us before we faked out deaths." Chrollo knew that like Hisoka the "doll maker of the gods" had traitorous actions which could harm the group.

"What could that bastard be planning?" Nobu didn't like him just like he was not fond of Hisoka the first day he met that magician-murderer. Still, he was starting to get bad vibes about this operation his boss was planning. Even Feitan wondered what this could mean for the events about to happen in a short while.

"Kurapika, I'm certain you will have no trouble looking for our target for this night." Kurapika tilted his head confused by the confident look in Chrollo's eyes. In order to start looking for someone, there was one condition of knowing the person the chains would be seeking out. In truth, both Chrollo and Kurapika have already met the person they are looking for during the auctions.

"Neon Nostrade and I know for sure why it is vital to keep her alive and well." The gray-colored eyes quickly grew crimson with hatred as the blonde knew exactly where they were in Yorknew City. The very person who was the main reason Kurapika and Chrollo's paths ended up joining together, and with the fortunes told now their destinations in life were unknown. Kurapika knew he likely wanted to keep her alive to hold that her power.
"Let's get the party started!" Shalnark knew it was cliche, but they all had their own quirks to them so why not have some fun in the ensuing chaos. Once the spiders shook their heads they began their campaign of destruction on the hideout of the mafia. Shalnark got to work disabling any security system in place, and Pakunoda took a disguise from an unconscious waitress to get a scope on the number of men guarding the rooms.

"I'm not going to kill anyone Chrollo, and I expect your gang of thugs to do the same!" Kurapika made it clear he was not going to compromise his morals despite being tied to Chrollo in their pact.

"You forget Pika that we're the "bad" guys. Killing is what we do best." Feitan spoke that line as if this was their usual job from 9-5 pm. They had adjusted into slaughtering so often that it became second nature, and Kurapika could not accept such a vile mortality no matter what. If he turned his back on what made him become he might as well be dead anyway. He looked ready to fight them on this matter, but the final decision lied with the leader.

"Kurapika's right tonight we can't just slaughter whoever we want. I want this operation to go ahead as cleanly as possible even if some unfortunate people will likely die." Nobu and Feitan were starting to wonder why Chrollo was so eager to please the blonde like this. Was it just to get him on their side or could their leader be undergoing some change in methods they pondered to themselves?

"I'm never going to accept this kid in place of Uvo Boss..."

"I'm not asking you to do that Nobu, all you need to do is work alongside him, and do you really think Uvo would want us to stay in the past never moving forward. Now then Shizuku will move in to remove any bodies that we leave during this raid, and so Kurapika you can begin looking for Neon." Despite the glare, the unwilling participant had the chains moved up beginning to glow and move around.

"I might have some trouble finding her."

Kurapika knew the girl they were speaking about yes; without a personal item she had in her possession, however, seeking her out would be difficult to carry out. Nobunaga didn't think Kurapika was all that interesting so hearing about such limitations only made his distaste for him stronger.

"Nobu, Feitan, and Franklin move out to get rid of any unfriendly company, but try avoiding killing them if you can I'll stay with Kurapika." Despite their momentary hesitance they obeyed moving into the building through the pathway Shalnark discovered.

Speaking of that person Chrollo heard his cell-phone ring as that computer expert had more info on the place.

"You're not going to believe this boss. but Omokage's coming here tonight with something he procured for the mob." Naturally, Chrollo's plans were now derailed with this sudden information of their former spider actually coming here during their heist. Could he become someone they would have to fight, what exactly does that man have in store for the mafia, and will they get caught having the world know of their survival.

"Well, that will make things very interesting. We shall continue as planned any word from Pakunoda?" He knew she was putting herself in danger by taking on a disguise for the sake of the operation.

"Nothing much so far, but she did tell me there were some storage rooms here so it's likely those rooms could contain the stolen Kurta items."
"I doubt it will be that easy continue your hacking of the security network. We're making our way to Neon's room now." With that Kurapika continued his "assignment" of locating the girl while trying to avoid being detected. Chrollo being an expert of stealth missions suggested he find dark corners waiting until someone walks away from a pathway. The few guards on the floor had not seen them press through the halls.

"It's getting faster in movement..." The whisper from the blonde noticing his chains indicating they were getting closer to the Nostrade's collector of fleshy items. The sounds of yelling broke up their attention forcing them to look down the hall finding the source of the noise.

"Damn it! Why couldn't they just let me take a leak in the bathroom." Nobunaga walked out of the bathroom having a fresh blood stain his blade. The poor unfortunate bodyguards making use of the toilets didn't stand a chance against the veteran samurai. Smelling the air of death was making the young Kurta's blood boil over in fury. Despite his protests, lives were already being stolen by this group of monsters in human skin.

"Do you believe we deserve retribution for our actions Kurapika? Do you know this man enough to say he was completely innocent?" Chrollo knew the answer however he wanted to see that wrath the newest member of the brigade. Instead, the blonde said nothing just focusing on finding Neon Nostrade with the Dowsing Chains. Nobunaga smirked at the gesture thinking Chrollo had beaten him into submission with mere words.

The operation was going along smoothly for Pakunoda as she managed to hear about the stolen goods being in a locked safe room. The security was going to have major defenses in place, but she now knew where they needed to go as she picked up her phone, but someone had managed to see through her disguise.

"I'd thought you would be dead by now Pakunoda." Holding the tip of a knife at her neck was the former silver-haired member of the Troupe. She narrowed her eyes knowing she would have to tread carefully here. He was no push-over considered he was one of the spiders chosen by Chrollo.

"Omokage, what are you doing here working with the mafia?" She would need to stall for time, and if he was not being smart text her leader about what's going with her. He seemed to fall into her trap as he began to explain himself with a smirk at the maid-in-disguise.

"Let's just say I'm going to put on such a great show tonight! I know if you're here the rest of the gang is not far which is perfect for me. It would not be that exciting if there were only a few audience members." That was the big flaw with the goth-styled criminal he wanted to show off much like his replacement. She knew he was getting lost in his monologuing, and she punched him the gut allowing her time to write about her situation sending out the text for a few members.

"Good work Paku, and I'm glad you told those friends of yours to come find you I needed them all before showtime!" Her eyes widen before she received a punch in the face going unconscious moments later. In the other side of the building Machi strings up some of the mafia trying to ambush Shalnark who's finishing his work on the security systems in place. He usually would have no defense in place to protect him, and so the usually silent girl offered to back him up.

"I enjoy making easy work out of these systems. You would think people would upgrade their tech this browser is out of date not to mention the internet speed is slow." Shalnark was just amusing himself over the internet while the data unloaded as he bypassed the firewalls in place.

"That's unimportant we just need to shut down the security so we can get the loot and get out in one piece." Machi looked bored at Shalnark enjoying his favorite activity during a heist. She could not wait to get back to their hideout for some rest for the rest of the night.
"So what do you think about the new recruit? Personally, I'm hoping he can appreciate the pleasures a custom laptop or desktop can offer to a person." She was not expecting some comments about Kurapika being in the Troupe. Her personal feelings were not often revealed to the other members.

"Don't care if he obeys the boss then he's fine by me." She didn't have much of a reason to dislike him, unlike Nobunaga and Feitan. She also knew Chrollo well enough to usually agree with his decisions for the group.

"I suppose, but he did kill Uvogin so he's already got a few enemies even if I think we might get along down the line." Shalnark might have felt bad about Uvo's death yet the spider does move on. In order to continue their life of crime and destruction, they would need to adapt to Kurapika being around them. Shalnark took notice of his phone ringing as he also gotten a text from Pakunoda making his eyes widen in fear.

"We gotta find the other fast! Paku is in serious trouble!"

- Neon's room -

Moving through the different paths the chains grew stronger and stronger until finally, they pointed towards a pair of doors in front of Kurapika and Chrollo. The guards in the path behind them did not have to suffer death by their hands which made the last-remaining Kutra's inner voice somewhat happy. Opening the door Neon was nowhere in sight, but her clothing was on the bed. She likely had left recently.

"Well, that was a letdown. At least she looks fine from the last time I saw her." Chrollo really only cared if she would live to continue providing her power to him through his book. Some might consider the leader saving the girl's life a kind gesture, and yet to someone like Kurapika he saw through the façade knowing he needs to keep his victims protected even after he takes their special talents for his own.

"Does she have any more of the eyes?" He was aware of her wish for the eyes of his clan so he had second thoughts about how to feel about Neon. Then again she might not know all the details of the massacre just wanting the eyes to keep and see. He wondered if everything about his clan will be forgotten once he was gone from this world. No, he refused to let history erase all the things he cared about in his life, and so he will make his tribe proud no matter what.

"No," Chrollo replied, as they had gotten the eyes from the auction earlier so that was unlikely. "The only other items from your clan are the clothing and relics, but if the rumors are true then..." The phone of the leader's phone started to ring which alerted some guards to their place.

"Intruders!" They were given to order to shoot on sight unaware of the talents of both them. Kurapika made the first move using his chains to deflect the bullets heading in their direction. The movements of the nen-projected steel kept the bullets from puncturing either of their bodies. In his Specialist state, Chrollo was able to see the unique potential the blonde had on both offense and defense. Without the guns, the hired thugs were unable to deal with Kurapika's punches. Chrollo joined in not wanting to engage the morals of Kurapika by killing any of the guards.

"It's refreshing not having a lot of corpses lie on the ground during these operations." The red eyes sparkled under the shades of the disguised Kurta still having difficulty putting his feelings aside to associate with this man. While the unwilling accomplice was thinking about Neon again Chrollo's mood had changed becoming more serious. The stoic expression grew into anger which caught his partner by surprise.
"We have a meeting with a former spider..." His hands nearly crushed the phone which Shalnark would be shocked if, but there were more pressing issues to deal with now. The reunion would take place in the main hall of the building, and the show of life and death will begin for the Phantom Troupe and Kurapika. Omokage had the surprises ready in the room while Pakunoda lay motionless in chains being the bait to lure the bugs into his trap. He could not believe his luck as tonight the mafia and spider would be his tools to play with tonight.

"Yes, it's about time for the show to begin."

Early on during the first days of the Troupe Pakunoda felt like the mother of the group. Being the oldest much like a parent she cared about the safety of her husband, and the well-being of the children. Some of the spiders looked up to the mind-reader as a role model like they did with their leader. She tended to have some amount of humanity in here feeding any stray cats she would come across during her days. When she took over during the times Chrollo was busy no one questioned her decisions as the second-in-command.

It was only natural Omokage would take the first crack at getting at Pakunoda in more ways that one. While many of the spiders tried hitting on the girls they knew it was mostly not taken seriously. The 4th limb, however, saw things very different and quickly made it clear he had an interest in her. That "interest" involved taking both her shape and eyes to create another doll of his collection. That was, in fact, the only reason he joined up with the Troupe, but recently his plans have come to a sudden halt.

"You mean she's become a hostage?" Kurapika realized this could have been one trap to lure them all into this hotel. Why else would the guys be so thin, and combine that with no sight of Neon in her personal room? The blonde didn't mind since it would likely mean fewer spiders to deal with in the future, but naturally, their leader was very concerned. His emotions were very difficult to keep in check at the moment dealing with so many factors, and there was the matter of convincing their "comrade" into helping him save her life.

"Omokage enjoys putting on a show much like Hisoka, not that they are both the same but this likely means she is somewhere that is easy to see and find. We need to regroup with the others."

"I don't see the issue if Pakunoda dies, and you said it yourself the spider head is more important than its limbs." Chrollo realized his own beliefs was coming back to haunt him at the moment. Indeed his philosophy for the spider was to keep it alive, and yet he did care for some of the members not wishing for them to die like this. Kurapika was using his own words against him.

"I must say for someone who despises us you certainly know how to speak like a spider." This brought the Kurta back into his hateful state red eyes and all coming at Chrollo's direction. Even with the comment, the leader knew he had to convince him to help out somehow, but that would not be so easy with Kurapika's vendetta. He would sooner die than even consider saving one of Chrollo's pals.

"If you can make sure Pakunoda will survive I will explain to you things you don't know about the massacre of your tribe." Yes, there were details about that night not even he likely knew about from the reason the Troupe learned about their clan, why the eyes became so desired, and most of all why he was the only one who survived. All of those questions answered if he can just help save his friend's life.

"What makes you think I can't just force the answers out of you?" He could not help laughing at that threat from the chain-assassin, every time he heard such intimidating words he usually killed the one delivering them.

"Trust me the images in my head would be difficult to believe even if I told you." Indeed the leader
of the gang has come across many things, some of which could break the mind of a normal person, other details possibly could even make someone commit suicide due to the graphic details, but in the case of Chrollo Lucilfer, it was just part of his normal life.

"I know you want nothing more than to kill us all, but I don't believe your life will improve once that gets accomplished. Sure you will likely regain all the stolen items along with the eyes, but can you honestly tell me that will make this world a better place?" Yes, the reason many consider themselves "heroes" is to fight against injustice. They might wear costumes in their battles, but Chrollo knew their dreams were that of the children they inspire.

"Hunters will always exist, criminals like me will steal what's valuable in this world, and in the end, the world continues to spin like nothing has changed."

"No one thing will change the men responsible for the tragedy of my clan's demise will be gone. I'm sure the world won't miss any of you..." Kurapika continued his verbal war against his captor matching his gaze with a glare.

"That's not true besides I'm certain your friends would miss you should anything happen to me." Kurapika's eyes blinked realized that could also be a possibility. So long as the chain remains he could not even try killing him without dying in the process. A realization came into Kurapika's head once the talking stopped for the moment.

"Why should a former spider get to kill these guys?" After all, he made it his personal mission and so letting someone else take that would be an insult to his pride, honor, and vendetta. There was also the fact Omokage was formerly one of the brigade members, and so he could have gotten involved in the killing of his clan as well, then he realized Neon was not in her room which could mean she was also in danger. Even if she desired the eyes of his clan she did not deserve to die for her nature...

"So what now "boss" I'm assuming you have a plan for these kinds of circumstances." For a fleeting moment, Chrollo imagined Kurapika was truly a spider with his sarcastic line towards his "leader" and it made something inside his cold body warm up just a little.

"Well, it's not like we don't run into a night where we need to save one of our own from captivity." Indeed just like with Uvogin, they would formulate a plan to rescue a fellow spider since they did not leave any of their allies behind like other criminals. That was just not the way of the spider.

"The first thing we must do is find the others, Kurapika is it possible for you to find Neon's current location in this building?" Kurapika nodded since they knew where this trail ended up it would not be difficult to find where she really is, but that depends on if she is still in the building or not. While the Kurta still loathed having to work with such a person in these conditions he could not accept someone getting involved who had nothing to do with the loss of his family.

"Let's go we can't stay here..." For a moment he ignored the orders of Chrollo as the blonde looked back at the room's content. He shook his head before following Chrollo's lead in regroup with the others. Meanwhile, the Phantom Troupe's attack force continued its assault on the helpless guards. Nobunaga never really fought with the full strength of his nen simply relying on En to dispatch his prey, and combining that with Gyo in his eyes he was truly a dangerous samurai.

"Hey Nobu, you've got some dripping from your nose. That leak needs to get cleaned out!" Phinks loved to take any chance to insult his partner in the gang of thieves even using a runny nose. Franklin just sighed giving the fuming swordsman some tissue for his problem. A few of the mobsters tried to demand the trio into surrender, but their bullets paled in comparison to Franklin's finger guns. Easily dispatching the guards as their necks got twisted Phinks went back to get some more exercise for his arms.
"I wonder what the Boss is up to with the kid." The giant wondered as they had no idea if they were in of a serious conversation or worse. Like Paku the man with the modified-ears cared about the safety of his leader being one of the founders. It also was his duty much like Chrollo and Pakunoda to reel in Nobunaga, but now that would be more difficult with Uvogin's death.

"Ugh don't remind me, Franklin, if that brat is giving the Boss trouble I'll teach him a lesson in respect." Truthfully he dreamed of Chrollo giving him the order to kill him yet that would also end the life of his leader. From his attitude, posturing about honor and justice, and those scarlet eyes Nobu considered Kurapika his greatest nemesis even more so than Hisoka.

"Heh, I actually think that kid is interesting to watch with those fancy chains. Yeah, his moral standards are too high, but he's still a newborn compared to this world around him. I can't wait to see him finally crack when he see how things really are in life." Phinks was one of the first members to admit the new recruit was unique in style, ability, and personality. In a way, he felt reminded of a younger version of himself.

"Damn you all...none of you are going to get away with this." A foolish comment from one of the hired-guns still holding up his weapon despite his wounds. He would not get anywhere as the tightened fist of Phinks came down on the man's skull cracking it open. The brain matter was still inside the flesh of the man's head so the corpse could be presented in an open casket.

"How many times have I've heard that line?" No matter who said it they would usually end up dead shortly afterward. Nobu agreed with Phinks that line has become a cliche for the criminals. Now they were just looking for Shizuku to clean up the bodies, and or Chrollo to give them the next orders for their raid. Instead of either of them, Shalnark and Machi arrived looking at their violent comrades.

"Ahh, I knew you guys were here but did you guys really need to make all these corpses?" The cheerful technical expert of the organization could not stand the smell of dead bodies. Machi didn't seem bothered by the stench of the soon-to-decay bodies having adjusted to such things over time, and much like the rest of the group such actions of violence were something they got used to doing these days.

"Pfft like it matters no one will miss these people. They are faceless pawns made to become a sacrifice when they believe they can gain a reward for this line of work, which probably won't amount to a lot of money anyways." Feitan knew the kind of payment thugs like the ones dead on the ground usually make.

Unlike the mafia when the Troupe comes across cash they usually give it away. This got made an unofficial rule for the group.

"Speaking of which how much do you think we can rack up tonight? I'd bet the payload would be lots of jenny." Shalnark knew Uvogin would have wanted to get just a piece of the cash for some beer or a decent meal. Usually the spider would not buy expensive items, so naturally, they would get basic needs for clothing, food, and someplace to stay for a night.

"That's not the reason we've come here tonight, which you likely forgot Shalnark is to remove all traces connecting the mafia to us." The cold reply matched her eye color shining in the focus of the other members. Sometimes she imagined the computer sucking out some of his brain cells.

"Yeah I know Machi so where is the Boss then and his new friend." Phinks knew Nobu was grinding his teeth at that line.

"Oh crap! I completely forgot about her situation, and Machi why didn't you remind me?!!" Shalnark suddenly remembered that important text given to him about Paku. She just shrugged her shoulders
not bothering to reply as she confirmed to herself those digital highways stole his intelligence. So they gave the explanation to them happy most of the group was now connected, and they needed to find the others before confronting Omokage.

"Shizuku, Bono, and Korti are likely going after the safe now. Chrollo and Kurapika are near us so we need to think of a way to find Pakunoda." Shalnark quickly offered a plan of his own however the gang just ignored him.

"We wait for the Boss to come back." Nobu made it clear he would not make a move without the approval of his leader. He trusted his decisions over the other members even some of the other founders. He also stuck with Chrollo's orders of avoiding unnecessary killing just the unfortunate idiots, and he might question his choices of a new recruit, however, he still was loyal to him.

"Nobu, are you seriously refusing to do anything until he comes back here." Feitan knew the samurai was somewhat stupid at times, but he did not think he was actually going to wait for Chrollo. Usually, things would get tense during a heist yet tonight the feeling of dread was very high in all of their minds.

All of the eyes soon directed at two new sources of nen which belonged to the people they were looking for Chrollo and Kurapika.

"Hmm, I'm guessing the others are still looting the defenseless goods." The mastermind knew they might need to find them if they didn't come back soon. The robbery has become about saving the woman Chrollo knew the most besides Machi.

"Damn it! I know this was too good to actually be true. Just getting some stuff and leaving here in one piece, and now poor Paku's in this crappy situation."

"Why if I didn't know better I would say you really care about her Nobu in a certain way." Nobu threatened to swing his sheathed blade on Feitan's head who got amusement by the empty threat. Still, the mood reverts to a grim one as even Kurapika began to worry about what could happen in the next few hours. If they could give away most of the money to save her life all the troupe would do so in a heartbeat.

"So what's our next move Boss?" The spiders looked at their leader for how to go ahead with the rescue operation. Machi knew if any of the other spiders formulated the plan Paku's chances of dying would become greater. She didn't want to admit it, but no one else could lead an operation besides Chrollo. Feitan was no dummy, and she knew Nobunaga had real talent inside however they did not have the spider head's mindset.

"Yeah, I'm sure you know how to get her out of this mess!"

"I...do not know."

The silence in the room was defining after Chrollo's admission of being unsure of how to move forward. He knew they had to save Pakunoda along with Neon, kill Omokage, and get out of here before the police arrived. It's just how to carry out all that was evading his brain. The possible scenarios being simulated could all lead to the same conclusion the death of Neon and Paku.

"Tch, you can't figure out anyone to save your comrade she likely will die when you finally decide to help her." Kurapika didn't bother hiding his annoyance with the group he's forced to comply with due to the Judgement Chain. He didn't care that each of the spiders glared at him clearly pissed off with his attitude during this moment.
"Are you suggesting we simply rush in with no kind of plan should anything go wrong?"

"No! I don't need to save her life you do I'll go along to keep you alive Chrollo, but don't expect me to risk myself for her sake." Kurapika made it clear to everyone in the room as this was the fact of the matter about their relationship with him. The air became very think as everyone looks ready for a battle to start now.

"Ugh, you boys always love to get into a fight over pointless crap." Machi could not believe these men in front of her were about to brawl. Eventually cooler heads prevailed as they went back to thinking about what their next step tonight. They were thankfully when Shizuku and the others came back with her vacuum filled with the goods mainly the Kurta treasures.

"Boss? Are you about to have an arm-wrestling contest?" Her mind did not get the fact everyone was close to fighting with fists and not a simple game to calm spiders down. Shalnark merely planted his hand over his face at Shizuku's comment. Machi was grateful her absent thoughts could change the subject back to saving Pakunoda in her own weird way.

"We should go as a team and teach our traitor a lesson!"

"No, we should sneak in there and get the hostage out."

"What about the rest of the guards?"

"There is not a lot of time left..."

The discussion continued on while Chrollo still did not know how to calculate the best solution for this problem that won't result in death. Kurapika knew this was just ending up in a circle, and so he decided on the plan for everyone else regardless of how they feel about him.

"I'll face him alone." His resolve was firm as his eyes were completely red as he made this announcement. He figured since no one else really had a plan why not just walk into the show instead of buying time for a plan that could fail. Naturally, everyone from the spiders refused to even give that idea any serious thought dismissing Kurapika's suggestion to end this.

"Why you out of everyone here? Hell, what makes you think we trust you not to get Pakunoda killed by Omokage? I bet you're tricking us, the infamous Phantom Brigade relying on its enemy to help them what a joke!" The samurai wanted to laugh at this irony. Many of the other spiders went along with Nobunaga's thinking refusing to accept this blonde's idea to help out their comrade. He glared at their laughter noticing a few were not mocking his offer. Chrollo stepped forward abruptly ending the giggling echoing through the hall.

"Will you be able to use your abilities on him?"

The leader knew the fact he was no longer part of the Troupe might hinder the chains that Kurapika wields. His allies were speechless that has not only supporting him Chrollo was actually wondering about the blacklist hunter's power.

"That will not become a problem once a spider...always a spider in my eyes." Kurapika would not let the fact he betrayed them dimmer his hatred for the man. For as much, he despised their way of life or the actions they commit, and the lives were stolen by them, in the end, he could not change them. They likely will never move on from this life of thievery if Chrollo continues to live.

"It's settled then..."
20 Minutes Later

To say Neon Nostade was not expecting her life to end up hanging by a thread would be an understatement. When she heard about Omokage's profession in eyes she thought he was the answer to her problems. Ever since she got the first set of Kurta's eyes she could not help loving their beauty, and yet she wanted more of them. Like with Chrollo she was not aware he was a spider, and the fact he was creating living dolls out of several people.

"Neon...is that you?"

The blue hair over her face was covering up the blonde female asking about her condition. Like Pakunoda Neon got held up on a metal pillar unable to escape from her bonds made by Omokage. She also took notice of her dress that is much different from her usual clothing. It's like Neon was going to become part of a big show with the shiny blue outfit on her, and she hoped no male changed her when she was out.

"Relax I didn't harm you, believe me, I'm not that twisted...well most of the time." Omokage could not help enjoying seeing the now nen-less girl look at him in fear, and Pakunoda giving him a hateful look. Unlike the worthless guards, these two girls deserved to have the center stage in the eyes of the dollmaker. He remembered how Chrollo would seek other women with unique abilities, killing the ones who tried to destroy his gang, stealing the powers of the ones he found useful, but in the case of Paku, Machi, and Shizuku they were the only ones he might honestly care about.

"It's really sad Chrollo never truly cares about the ones he harvests for more power. I suppose keeping you alive is a way to feel better about snatching Nen-abilities, but you know that better than everyone right Pakunoda?" She looked away refusing to give the traitor delight in her suffering. He forced her to face him by taking hold of her hair.

"Don't be like that Pakunoda! I'm sure the others will be coming shortly then you can die with all of your "friends" really it's a good thing for you dear." The blonde knew he would just play with her more, and with nothing to lose she spat right on his cheek. He punched her in the face a few times while Neon shrieked from her spot unable to stop him.

"You bitch I didn't know you had this kind of behavior...let me teach you some manners!" He gave her some more punishment landing more hits to her stomach watching her head move back and forth in pain. She was grunting in pain still refusing to give her captor the look of seeing her face.

"Why don't you leave her alone? You think that you're tough hitting someone who can't fight back!"

Omokage could not believe Neon was actually defending the abused woman he was attacking. Despite the fact she lost her powers she was actually supporting the actions of the people who took away her power.

"You aren't serious Neon. Don't you know this woman is working with the Phantom Troupe? Right now they are taking your treasures, and just like with your fortune-telling it will be gone once they leave here. That is the modus operandi of their group take and leave, but never give back in return truly a bunch of heartless monsters..."

"That you were a part of yourself!" Pakunoda knew he was trying to break Neon down with the knowledge of Chrollo Lucilfer's true self however she could not let him off the hook.

"Quite true however my reasons for joining were simple. Yes, I might have killed people before with the others yet I had a good reason. It's all been leading up to this night, first I assisted the mafia to use to draw in the spiders, next I took you two for insurance should something go wrong, and finally
perfecting my recent dolls will bring the last act on the brigade!"

Neither of the girls looked impressed with the speech thinking he was overacting about this plan to destroy the spiders.

"Oh, whatever you two don't need to approve my performance, after all, you both seem like the perfect damsel in distress for this play." With no more need for their mouths, he taped them up, but not before getting bit by them both giving them hard enough punches to knock them both out. He didn't want their talking getting in the way of the opening act, and speaking of that a few figures began to walk in front of the stage Omokage created from the area.

"Yes I know you all believe I'm too presumptuous; yet I know tonight I will bring down my former leader. With his death, my technique shall become complete, and then I can move on to a bigger stage." All for sake of making her perfect tonight would be vital of proving that to the world. Everyone who doubted him will be wrong as he looked at his finest creation Retz. Dolls truly were better than humans in his mind.

From the shadows Chrollo and the other spiders watched Kurapika walk out to face their traitor by himself. While some of the members still had doubts about this plan Chrollo knew this was the perfect test for Kurapika, first to see the skills of a former member in action while facing one of the people behind the death of his clan, next to study his abilities in combat which would become necessary for his survival, and finally to see if his resolve and morals can stand firm against someone like Omokage.

"In a way, I must show my gratitude for our old friend did this even if he's trying to kill us."

The blonde had gotten to know most of the Troupe from what Chrollo explained to him, and their interactions during the previous day, but it was Hisoka and Omokage who were unknown to him. While he made a deal with Hisoka to make sure they both get what they want he still was unsure what exactly was going on in the mind of that clown. As he got his first look at the goth-themed older man he could tell something was off about him.

"Hmm, what are you doing here boy?" The silver-haired puppet master didn't expect to see Kurapika of all people to arrive. He was not even sure who the blonde was at first, but then his red eyes reminded him of that night when he got his first and last look at the Kurta clan.

"My this is a surprise I knew Neon hired someone, but for the bodyguard to actually be the surviving Kurta is very interesting. Let me guess you're after the stolen items of your clan along with the eyes."

The blonde nodded which brought a smile on the former spider's lips.

"Perfect Kurta, now I know that we can work together to meet both of our goals in life now first we-
"

"Did you take part in the massacre?" Quick and to the point the young avenger was about Omokage's history. The older gentleman was speechless for a moment by the question however he was not surprised it got asked by the blonde. He would need to think carefully about his next choice of words.

"Yes that is correct, and yet I felt rather sad about helping kill such wonderful eyes such as the ones you have in your skull. They shine rather beautifully in the light, the power residing in them is also wonderful, and most of all keeping them for their value or making a profit which is why you came here isn't that right?"

His fists were shaking as the ensnared hunter of the Troupe was trying to keep control of himself. He
might have understood why people were taking the scarlet eyes however it still brought out his inner
anger according to his lessons of self-control, that only got harder to do in the recent days. More and
more the tension building inside of himself was close to leaking out.

"No there is more than just that...I'm out to gain revenge for the deaths of the members of my clan!"

"Such a pity. Here I was hoping we could become friends." With the snap of his fingers, he brought
out the first of his attack dolls made from Hisoka and Illumi Zoldyck ambushing Kurapika with ease.
While they were not the real versions of their incarnations they still were quite strong in battle.
Kurapika moved back as the Bungee Gum combination with Illumi's needle manipulation were very
dangerous.

"Funny here I am being a traitor of the Phantom Troupe, and I'm using the form of another traitor to
perfect my abilities. I guess Chrollo would consider this my thirty pieces of silver then hehe." Chrollo
felt impressed that Omokage was considering himself their own Judas, but in a way, he understood
the metaphor. Like Hisoka, he decided to sell them out for his own reasons that were harmful to the
Troupe.

"That god-damned bastard throwing us under the Boss like this!" Nobunaga actually hated Omokage
more than Kurapika for the moment.

"Even for a fake that copy of Hisoka is just toying with him." Machi knew that clown was an
unknown in true potential, though his raw power alone might be enough for Omokage.

"This is too much we need to help him out!" Shalnark was the first to offer help for Kurapika who
had to stay on defense just to survive against such odds. He was going to need help the kind of help
only the spiders can offer deadly violence.

"I think Kurapika can hang on for a little while longer." Franklin knew while the kid could not win
this fight however that wasn't the goal as the gang was dealing with one of their own formerly.
Chrollo hoped he could buy them enough time so they could act without any mistakes.

"We only need just a little while longer to move on the rest is all on Kurapika..."

'I can remember some of Hisoka's tricks so I can avoid a few of his attacks, but I don't know much
about Illumi. Perhaps I should go after Omokage when I get an opening.' The blonde knew that
would be difficult as even if he could avoid the golden needles Hisoka's playing cards still managed
to inflict a few scars on his arms. He knew a prolonged fight would end badly for him so he needed
to end this one shortly.

"How entertaining stranger, considering you are able to do so well against two highly skilled dolls no
wonder you are from the Kurta clan. I can't wait to make a doll from you..." Omokage watched from
his stage area amused by Kurapika's Conjuring in action. Despite getting overwhelmed the dollmaker
was becoming mesmerized by the red streak of light moving in such a quick motion, and the blonde's
physical condition was also rather attractive to the eye.

'To think I first thought I was looking at a girl when he came into the room.' Omokage thought on a
whim as Kurapika felt the injury caused by the sharp cards used by the fake Hisoka. Now his arm
was dripping with blood showing the first major wound of the battle. The maestro of this show could
not help his hands as they clapped, and yet this was only the beginning for the blonde.

"As much as I've become obsessed with you this can't really last against such foes. After all, you are
merely the first act for the rest of my show, and sadly you don't have a part in this play so please
surrender yourself so I may grant you a respectable death." Kurapika would never let this narcissist
get that enjoyment so easily, he slowly rose up covering his arm with some of his clothing to stop the bleeding and decided to go on the offense.

'Alright, I can use these guy against each other, use my chains to rope them up, and then go after Omokage so first I should-' Then he felt something puncture the back of his body. The smell of gunpowder came into his nose as he saw the image of another Pakunoda standing behind him. Her eyes were completely black much like the other dolls, and that image would haunt Kurapika as he lurched over in pain from the bullet in his body.

"Hahaha! I told you to give up, but I guess the Kurta were too prideful for their own damn good. Still, I can take those wonderful eyes out of those sockets for many useful things in the future. As for you avenger of the Kurta tribe, you will just be a mere footnote in my legacy!" That stench of blood once more filled Kurapika's scenes, stirring all the painful memories of his past.

'I can't die here...not until I can get my revenge.'

That was on the mind of the fallen hunter, but his body was struggling just to get back up with the wound in his back adding to his pain. Still, he did have a few tricks of his own to match the performer in front of him. While in his Specialist state he can produce another kind of chain ability through an Enhancement cross which manifested in front of Kurapika. First, he used his chains to find and remove the bullet still lodged in his back.

While the blood from the wound began seeping out the enhancement-powered cross moved toward the most serious injury in his back healing it within seconds. Of course, this kind of power would come at a price his body would likely need rest after tonight is over with, but Omokage and Chrollo were both amazed by this skill.

"Now that is special to think such a young Kurta like yourself can fix that kind of wound is remarkable. Perhaps I'll play with you a little, but I have don't have a lot of time to spare so...please subdue the boy dear sister." Before Kurapika could react he felt a blade move on his back revealing the most prized doll in Omokage's possession Retz. Her eyes looked lifeless as she gazed at the other blonde as blue colors gazed into red colors. For a moment Kurapika thought she was a boy considering the tomboyish outfit she was in plus the cap on her head.

"Another doll how many did you make, monster?!" He hissed at the former brigade thief wondering if he was trying to play God with so many fake lives in these shells standing near him. The female doll took a look at his red eyes before remembering something she learned about a few days ago.

"Red eyes, and blonde hair. You are that Kurapika right?" Omokage and Kurapika gasped by this unaware of how she knew his name. She tilted her head at their reactions explaining herself.

"That's what they told me about you. Gon, Leorio, and Killua explained that they were looking for you Kurapika." Suddenly the Kurta's dim lights grew bright with some hope. The fact his friends were trying to find him even after his sacrifice almost brought a few tears to his eyes. He did not want them to get hurt, but he would be lying to himself if he did not want to see them again.

"You saw them how were they?" He spoke in a quiet voice despite the blood still pouring down from his injured arm. The pain in his body was nothing compared to the suffering of not knowing how his friends were doing now. Retz realized how much he cared about his comrades, and part of herself wanted to have that same kind of feeling of love and friendship.

"Ahh, who cares about those punks they are still just a bunch of children compared the brutal men I've seen in the underworld of criminals." Hearing those words brought out a renewed amount of strength in Kurapika's body granting him the strength to break out of Retz's grasp.
'Even if he no longer considers himself a Spider he's proven enough to allow me to hate him, and besides he was there during the massacre that is more than enough for my Chain Jail to take hold of him.' His line of thought looked at Omokage as his arms pushed forward with the chains ready to ensnare him, but that's when he took hold of Neon's head now threatening the safety of his hostage.

"Are you sure you want to use those chains on me now boy?"

Kurapika knew even if his chains would not work on the girl he could kill her for using his chains so he stopped himself for a moment.

He knew Omokage was going to send his dolls after him, and he realized that no matter what he could not get out of this situation.

'Damn it I can't buy any more time...'

He saw the gun barrel of the fake Pakunoda aimed right at his head ready to fire, the injury would likely puncture his skull killing him instantly.

Instead of that, another projectile came in the form of Franklin's finger bullets. Machi quickly moved in ensnaring Pakunoda's copy in several different strings; but now his vision took in the sight of Feitan, Nobunaga, Franklin, Machi, and Chrollo all standing in front of him.

"What on earth? Chrollo and the other spiders saved you, boy? That can't mean he's indoctrinated you into the Troupe as well?!!" The dollmaker's voice was beginning to show venom and hatred by the turn of events.

"No way in hell I'm going to have the name Spider you bastard!" Kurapika still refused to accept himself in their group no matter what.

Omokage called back his dolls to the front of the stage unaware of Bonolenov waiting to nail him with his boxing glove.

Omokage looked shocked to see him backing away from Neon and Pakunoda only to end up getting punched right in the cheek by Phinks.

"That's what you get for using girls as your human shields, you fuck-face!"

He ordered his dolls to attack them, but this opening allowed Shalnark and Shizuku to get Paku and Neon out of the ropes into safety. Without his hostages, he could only rely on his dolls now to fight back against the Phantom Troupe.

"Good work stalling him Kurapika not bad for your second night in the spider!" Shalnark teased his blonde counterpart with a hand wave.

"Well, it seems that your thirty pieces won't have much worth after all." Chrollo's lips curved into a smile enjoying the man's plan fall apart before his eyes.

Quickly Omokage began to laugh trying to regain his composure he was still pulling the strings here.

"This is nothing simply killing you all with helpless tools would be rather boring, and so why not make things entertaining! Now with the arrival of the major actors, the show can finally begin!"

"Hmm, you consider this a play of action how funny. If for argument's sake, you were going to part in a story with yourself in the lead role, it would be such a tragedy."
"Tragic for you actually Chrollo considering you will be dead once it's over."

"Hmm haven't you ever heard of a twist ending Omokage?"

The smiles on both men hid the lust for blood, carnage, death, and destruction that would now take place in this room. Kurapika would stand in the middle of such a violent encounter.
Act 3: Twelve Disciples

Chapter Summary

Eliminating one of the former spiders brought some amount of peace, but will a sudden call with his friends bring about unexpected chain effects in Chrollo’s masterplan?

Act 3: Twelve Disciples
- Several Years Ago - Meteor City

It was during the early days of the Troupe that many of its members wanted a place to belong in this city of recycled trash. They all clung to the words of their new leader because it was the only person who actually cared about their own well-being in the land they had to live in. Chrollo was aware the beginning would likely be the most difficult days for the newly established gang, but in the end, the work should pay off for everyone involved. The young up-and-coming puppeteer, in particular, hoped everything would change for the better.

Omokage had come from a bad area in the world, and there was not much that was able to lift his spirits. It was only when he came to understand the art of using puppet his life began to look up. He began to learn how to perfect using his dolls from his Specialization skills. His first dolls were real toys looking nothing like the human-shaped creations he would love to make in the future.

"Why don't you grow up and stop playing with baby stuff!" The 4th member ignored those remarks, but each day it got harder to not punch his fellow spiders in the face.

The comments usually made by the samurai and torture expert of the group. While most of the group didn’t think much about his hobby Chrollo enjoyed his talent. The head spider felt his opinions on humans and dolls having much in common won over the new member quickly. Omokage proved to have some value beyond simple puppet making as he knew a few locations with items of major wealth.

"Is there someone special you're making out of these different creations?" Chrollo was able to guess that Omokage was trying to make a unique doll with so many ones being crafted, and he could not deny his leader's assumption.

"Yes, but you can't let those jackasses in on what I'm trying to do here. They don't understand what I've tried to make so why should they know about the life I wish to create with my own hands." The mastermind kept his lips sealed when Omokage explained his life before the Troupe. He lived with someone named Retz, they both lived in poor areas struggling to survive, and they both found a hobby to get through such difficult times.

"She was happy to play with these kinds of things even when we didn't know if there would be food, water, or even a roof over our heads. Just as long as she could play with a doll she was content with life." It was only fitting that her life got cut short because of those very same puppets. It was a simple accident playing in the street with her "friends" when a car began going down the dark street. Omokage could not step in until it was too late to save her, and the last image he saw was her bloody corpse laying on the street. The cold blood pouring out from her wounds as the image became etched into his skull for years.
"People are careless..." Were the thoughts in his mind.

The drunk driver was not even aware he was speeding in his car, Omokage was trying to kill him by the time police arrived, and everyone was full of tears as the girl went to the hospital only for the inevitable time of her passing. The doll she had in her possession looked very similar to the shape of him having similar hair, face, and body. The last time he saw Retz was under a white cloth in the hospital. No one else came to visit her besides Chrollo in disguise.

"So this is Retz I take it...I'm sorry that we could not meet under better circumstances Omokage." The head of the spider saw the broken man trying to piece himself together after such a loss as this, but Chrollo didn't know what to think about people dying that were not spiders. For some reason, he could not bring himself to express pity or sadness about it. Sure he could say the right things to comfort someone, but his heart was not in those words.

"Do you wish for revenge against the driver?"

Omokage shook his head not concerned about having retribution at the moment. No, he gained something from this death a new purpose for his abilities. So much wasted time on pointless moments of happiness with Retz. He could do so much more with his powers now.

"It's okay I can just rebuild her like she is brand new. As a puppet she will never grow old, have to age or change, and she will never break apart..."

The head of the brigade knew this was only the logical outcome for Omokage, and he knew that the puppeteer would try to break the laws of life and death to revive her in that kind of form. Chrollo didn't think he would take his obsession so far sending events in motions leading to this moment. Still, for a moment, Chrollo could get an understanding of human behavior letting the man grieve alone. The door closed on many things, but it would open new opportunities.

- Present Time - Yorknew City

Despite being another puppet of Omokage's work Retz had something different about herself from the others. She could understand, think, react, remember, and feel almost like a normal human. Her conversations with Gon and Killua began to make her see more of herself than just being another doll. She wondered if it was possible to become a living human, not to stay in such a hollow state of being was her current dream.

"Get back over here Retz," Omokage demanded she comes back to his side to deal with his former comrades in their battle. She walked over towards the other weapons of the former spider who was hiding all of his fears behind a smile, and yet part of him was looking forward to this.

"I don't want to throw away time with more pre-battle taunting, but there is one thing I wish to know. Chrollo, and Kurapika how do you two end up teaming up like this?" Despite everything that's happened over the years seeing the last surviving Kurta and the man who caused their demise standing side-by-side was hard to swallow. He figured there could be some alliance between them for the moment, but he did not know the life or death circumstances involved in their "partnership" with each other.

"It's none of your business spiders! Each one of you should feel concerned with is the remaining moments of your lives!" Kurapika drew his chains out even with his wounds from before still affecting him. Chrollo knew his hatred of the spiders gave him such willpower, but what would happen as the days spent with their superior pass by for them both. Can those chains still remain as powerful as they were now?
"It's simply a deal between us for both of our desires to become granted. I wish that we could go
over the details, but alas I don't think it will happen considering your little show must go on." Chrollo
revealed his personal weapon in the form of a red book. The white hand-print on the cover revealed
all the stolen abilities the master thief took for his own sake over the years, and within those powers
lie the keys to pulling off several heists with little trouble. The skills combined with the aid of his
limbs made Chrollo nearly unstoppable.

"Indeed you're right so why not make things interesting. You leave your pals out and I'll pick one
doll for you to face off against. No tricks on your end, no tricks on mine, and it will just be mano a
mano how about that?" Omokage rubbed his hands together getting to have the opportunity to use
"Hisoka" to kill Chrollo. The head of the troupe smiled at the request agreeing to that idea, but he
chose a different opponent instead.

"I know you made a copy of me so why not let me fight myself instead?" The silver-haired man was
not expecting that response, but he did know Chrollo feared to battle Hisoka out of the rest of the
spider members. The clown did seem like an unknown threat that he could not prepare for like most
opponents. There was also the chance to learn how to overcome his own weaknesses and strengths
in a fight, and so for that Chrollo was thankful.

"Very well this is how you want to die after all." Every member of the spider along with the dolls
retreated back a few spaces giving Chrollo and his duplicate some room. The black eyes were the
only feature that showed which one was the fake out of the both of them. Even the way the second
Chrollo projected its own Skull Hunter looked just like the original.

'In order to overcome, I must try something new that Omokage has not seen from my tactics. He
likely knows about my Ben's knife, and yet if I can use it in a way he does not expect I can remove
this doll from play and weaken the power on his side.' His thoughts began to formulate different
ways to carry out his goal while Omokage simply ordered his puppet into kill mode.

'The first attack will likely be...ahh how predictable.'

Chrollo guessed correctly the puppet would use Emission and Manipulation in the form of Indoor
Fish. Should any of the fish ensnare their target each fish would devour the flesh and bones of the
poor soul torturing them into a cruel, but unusual death. Chrollo knew he had to avoid the jaws and
tails to plan out a way to remove them from play.

"Come on Boss you can't lose to that poor imitation!" Nobu cheered on his superior while Machi got
to work fixing up Kurapika's less serious injury on his arm. The blonde did not ask for this, but she
explained that it was part of the payment for saving Neon and Pakunoda. He would have to pay her
1000 Jenny when they got out of this mess through which made him frown.

"Hey be grateful I could have charged you more." The nen-strings doubled as stitches ensuring the
wound can't leak out any more blood. While Kurapika was "somewhat" grateful about Machi's help
he still felt uneasy about everything that was happening. Seeing the criminal mastermind take on his
own copy was surprising, but he could tell there was more going on in this battle than just that.

'Just a little closer...'

Chrollo decided it was time to bring out his counter in the form of Conjuration. The former ability of
the Shadow Beast Owl, the Fun Fun Cloth appeared in front of the attacking fish. Much like the
color red draws fury in the animal known as a bull each fish got lured into the cloth until it covered
them both shrinking in size. The fake Chrollo quickly dismissed the trapped fish into his book as
Omokage knew he was dealing with a dangerous opponent.
"Not bad Chrollo you were my superior for a reason, but this is life or death so forgive me if this
seems like cheating." The order to Hisoka was simply to attack the real Chrollo, and that was
something the #0 of the Phantom Troupe was not surprised about seeing. Still, he had another idea
come to mind as the second attack doll went after the real Chrollo trying to extend Bungee Gum on
his body.

"I see why you're so afraid of him now! This one will be over shortly..." Chrollo knew his double
was just backing up Hisoka and if either one of them took him this fight would be finished. He took
advantage of the copy's book trying to manipulate Hisoka into sticking the gum on the cover which
bought him some time to map out his next move. He was not aware of the copy bringing out his own
Ben's Knife dipped in poison, and he nearly cut open by it cutting close to his chest only managing
to slice his clothing.

'I really am lucky that did not contact my skin otherwise I would likely be dead right now.' Chrollo
knew how to stop this battle and he would take some damage from the false Hisoka, but it would
remove both of the dolls from play if he did it just right.

"Damn it Chrollo what are you thinking..." The Kurta knew this was such a risky move by Chrollo
that could end up killing the both of them in the process. Several members of the spiders also had this
opinion questioning the pride of their leader fighting in their place at the moment.

"Enough you've stolen so many things Chrollo Lucilfer, and so it's fitting that I take away everything
you have including those eyes of yours! Reminds you of that night doesn't it Boss?!" With a smirk,
he gave the command to finish it, but Chrollo didn't bother moving out of his place just remaining
calm in the face of certain death. The fake Chrollo drew his knife and Hisoka had those sharp
playing cards ready to rush and puncture his body, but Chrollo knew exactly how close they were to
him.

'Forgotten about this ability didn't you Omokage?' It was too late for the puppet master to realize this
was a trick as Chrollo used Teleportation on both of the dolls at the proper moment, and moving out
of harm's way causing the dolls to hurt each other instead of their real target. Hisoka's cards sliced up
the fake Chrollo's neck meanwhile the second Ben's knife punctured Hisoka's chest.

"Son of a fucking bitch! How could I forget about that ability?!!" Omokage was furious he didn't
prepare for that which allowed Chrollo to end up beating him. Chrollo wasted no time in drawing out
his cloth to suck up the dolls, but he was suddenly under fire by the finger bullets of the copy
Franklin. The fury came out of Omokage as he ordered each one of his dolls except for Retz to
strike. It was then Nobunaga and Feitan took up the charge running in and cutting off the heads of
the fake Hisoka and Chrollo while everyone became distracted.

"What?!"

Omokage was not expecting the other spiders to now move in that fast. Pakunoda was still trapped in
Machi's string web, and now thanks to the more ruthless killers in the spider Hisoka and Chrollo's
copies were also now useless. Kurapika also stepped into the fight no longer okay with standing by
as this shame of a "show" continued on.

"Alright Kurapika you're going to stick by me, Nobu and Feitan work off each other, but if you
encounter your doll copies don't fight them switch out with each other. While these copies are just as
strong as we are they can't predict how to fight against new moves or unique attack plans. My fight
with my doll gave me a good amount of detail on these puppets." His mind had the honor of being
one of the best in the criminal underworld even during combat, and that's why no one else wanted to
claim the rank of the boss of the Troupe.
"What about Omokage he has to get taken out so he can't just leave when his toys get broken."
Feitan knew the man was no fool during his stint with the group, and likely would just run away from the situation got too difficult to handle for him. Tonight would become the night he gets dealt with otherwise it might haunt them all in the future. Kurapika, however, wanted to do something else with Omokage.

"Don't kill him...yet. I need to talk with him so don't hurt him too badly."
Kurapika demanded not even caring if they refused to comply with such a request. Nobu and Feitan could not believe what Machi did for him this "freshmen shithead" as they put it would still give them orders like this, but Chrollo saw things much differently than his followers. Before they could discuss matters further the clones of Feitan and Nobunaga barged in ready to rip out their eyes or just kill their original bodies.

"Now this is entertainment!" Omokage cheered on as the small battles started as the spiders took in the advice of their leader in trying to avoid directly fighting their counterparts. The only ones not taking part in the battle was Shalnark and Shizuku who needed to get Neon and Pakunoda out of the way for their safety. There were still some guards around who might kill them while they were helpless.

'Illumi and the remaining dolls will not go down so easily.' Chrollo knew they would need to remove them from play, but destroying them was still escaping his train of thought. He took notice of the bright lights of the room and suddenly got inspiration. Taking out his phone he decided to give orders to Shalnark; so he can take advantage of the room to help remove the rest of the enemy forces.

In the meantime, Bonolenov tested his might against the wrapped-up clone of his body. He did not mind if this mirror matched his own power he just wanted to fight this doll blow for blow. The gloves on each person connected with the limbs of one another.

"Hah this is great I can see how strong I really am!" Nobu looked ready to fight his mirror self just to see if he could defeat his own strength, but Feitan pulled him back to focus on the copy Franklin trying to shoot at them.

"Idiot! Didn't the Boss tell you not to do such a thing? Although this is a rare chance to get to harm other members of the spider without getting into trouble"
His umbrella weapon was able to deflect the nen-bullets being fired at them. It also doubled as the storage for certain weapons that he liked to use in torture, and surprise, surprise he wanted to draw things out by just using the sword for now. The dual swords moved into acting trying to slice off the hands of the puppet Franklin and thus removing his main form of attack.

"Do you happen to know any weaknesses that Nobunaga and Feitan have Chrollo?" Kurapika asked since the leader knew that Nobu was dangerous if you're near the 4-meter radius for his En, but the smaller doll seemed like the real threat out of the two of them. Even without his armor technique, Feitan's double was more deadly so he decided to rely on Kurapika's chains to work.

The steel tried wrapping itself around Feitan's body, however, the copy Nobunaga was able to deflect them with his blade. Chrollo split them apart with a few ball pins he keeps around using them as projectiles. They could not really harm the dolls, but it gave Chrollo and Kurapika an opening to devise a new tactic.

"Kurapika, the tables we can use to stick their weapons into the wood." Chrollo knew while these tables could easily be cut by steel swords they could also force such swords into being stuck in the wood. The blonde understood what his partner meant and followed his lead at the fake spiders. They
began hacking at the tables, but Chrollo and Kurapika did not give up putting up their defense.

'To think all of this happened because of a damn fortune, using my skills and talents to help about my sworn enemies.' The Kurta wondered if this was going to become his future. Fighting to stay alive, performing acts of crime, and having to stand to be around a group of remorseless, sociopathic, and violent killers. Kurapika then realized the worse-case being he ends up becoming like the other spiders.

"Kurapika!"

His thoughts returned to the current predicament as their opponents were still trying to cut them into pieces like with the other brawls going on in the room, but finally, Shalnark managed to do his part for Chrollo's plan. The power keeping the lights on went off for the moment making it difficult to see what was going on. A confident smirk came on Chrollo's face knowing things were now turning in their favor.

Chrollo and Kurapika took advantage sticking the tables on the swords using them as shields to knock their opponents backward and stuck together by Kurapika's Chain Jail. Feitan and Nobunaga were able to remove both of the double Franklin's hands removing his threat. Bonolenov managed to outmatch his own double slamming him into a wall. Omokage could see things were now going badly for him so he ordered Illumi to his side, and absorbed him to gain his abilities.

"Now bad I'd forgotten about your potential as a group spiders however you forget about mine; imagine my power combined with the Manipulation abilities of Illumi Zoldyck!" Omokage was merely bluffing about that, it was just a ruse as he simply intended to disguise himself and escape from the room. He still could take hold of Neon, Pakunoda, and or their leader to still gain revenge against the spiders.

Golden needles provided cover fire as the silver-haired traitor began to leave with Retz following, but she did not want to abandon the room just yet like her "master" desired. She decided to stand up for her newly realized thoughts

"Wait a minute! I...wish to speak with Kurapika."

"Damn it we don't have time. Now keep your voice down so we can get out of here."

"Just for one more moment, I want to learn more about him and-"

"Will you shut up already!" Omokage did not think about his emotions affecting his actions until it was too late. Like with Paku and Neon he decided to make the voice bothering him become silent with violence. His punch was just as hard, but he quickly regretting harming his doll who looked at him with empty eyes despite the bruise on her cheek.

"Retz? Retz, please answer me? Retz..." The realized sunk in as the lights came back on for the puppet master, and all the strings got cut. All of his puppets suddenly became unable to continue in their current state, his wish for revenge crushed with this development, and his more precious doll was starting to disobey him.

"Damn you bastards, all of this is because of each one of you. Everything I've worked for is left in ruin. Well if you're going to break my toys I deserve to break all of you." Omokage was ready for such an occasion like this, and even if it would take his life it would still be revenge. The C4 planted in the building would crush these bugs and at the very least end the "show" in a grand finale.

All he needs to do is press one button, and then everything that's made him suffer will die a painful,
violent, and horrible death. His eyes looked down at the trigger which would take away the pain he
was feeling in his heart, and it would only take a single push of the button. The other spiders would
try to stop him, running in his direction he used the golden needles once more to keep them at bay.

"No!"

His hand was suddenly wrapped up in Retz's arms refusing to let him destroy the building with his
explosives. She couldn't let things end like this, the ones she still wanted to see again Kurapika's
friends were counting on her to live. Never did Omokage think one of his own creations would
betray him in such a way.

"Retz! Let go I have to kill them tonight if I don't no one else can stop them!"

"You can't! I have to see them again before I die...it's what I promised to Gon, Killua, and Leorio."

"Damn it you, stupid girl! You are not a living person, the reality is you're just a hollow puppet that
I'm using nothing more."

His words managed to sting Retz despite knowing he was being honest about her being a doll that
was not alive. Omokage was not sure how to respond to this, but the other spiders realized what was
happening as Kurapika took hold of Retz who managed to wrestle the remote detonator from her
master's clutch. Nobu, Feitan, and Chrollo seized the moment to finally contain Omokage rendering
him unable to move without being harmed.

"I hate all of you! You can't even let me give one last ending of excitement, and now everything will
end with an anti-climax."

"Well, you had the warning about a twist ending Omokage before you get angry with us you should
feel upset about losing control of your favorite doll." Chrollo was not expecting that outcome rather
he wanted the lights coming off, and then back on so he could take hold of the puppet's controller
thus removing their threat completely. Nobu just wanted to slice through his neck ending this
quickly, Feitan was ready to give him horrible torture with his toys, but Kurapika knew what he
wanted to do with the man.

"I wish to question him...in my own way."

The scarlet eyes glowed brightly as Nobu and Feitan refused to accept his demands, but Chrollo's
order made them reluctantly let Omokage out of their grasp. He would not be free for long as he felt
the de-powering effects of Chain Jail. The Kurta was seething, ready to just squeeze this man to
death however he must interrogate him beforehand. Without Pakunoda being there to use her
memory-reading he would need to use Judgement Chain, but thankfully Omokage was powerless
while stuck under the effects of Kurapika's binding steel.

"The Stake of Retribution has entered your body, and if you don't want it to puncture your heart then
you will follow my conditions. The first one will simply don't lie to me about anything I ask you, but
the second request connects to your doll Retz. You will allow her to meet Gon and his comrades
before she can become free of your control along with the other dolls."

Omokage gave a glare that could kill if he had that kind of power, but the man knew he got
overpowered, out-smarted, and overwhelmed by the new strength of the spider. He regretting trying
to defeat them all by himself and knew if he relied on others he might have achieved his goal.

"What kind of punishment is that? He's killed people before, and that's the best you can do to him
brat!"
"Don't be so rash Nobu, being a dollmaker he would have no purpose without any dolls to create. Considering it's been the only thing he cares about this is the painful demand to accept for our former comrade."

Chrollo knew that he might have traded places with Omokage being rendered helpless under such a power, and perhaps lost the ability to communicate with his fellow spiders or being able to use the stolen abilities in Skill Hunter.

"Do you remember the night of the massacre of my clan?" His voice was slow, calm, and quiet as he knew angering the man would lead to a possible death should he refuse to answer his questions. Omokage looked away for a second, but the pain in his chest forced him to state at the red-eyes judge, jury, and possible executioner.

"...Yes, I was there with the other founding members." He could remember the bodies that got scattered around on the ground, the fire burning in the background leaving the smell of burning death and the bloody clothing of all the deceased Kurtas lying motionless before him.

"Did you see my parents during the killing? Akuro and Pika were their names." Kurapika wondered if just one of them spoke about him before they died. He just could not rely on the words of the Troupe even if Pakunoda stored their recollection of that night. Omokage looked down not responding to his question for a moment. He got sucked back into that night, and he knew exactly who Kurapika was talking about...

"I was the person who killed them."

The atmosphere took in a heavier feeling, the spiders mostly dressed in mafia-styled black outfits began to feel nervous about what was going to happen, the remaining dolls stood motionless waiting for the next orders from their master, and Kurapika moved his hands over his face. He could not tell a lie under the threat of the Judgement Chain, and so the young Kurta was looking at the killer of his parents.

"Why doesn't he just kill him now?" Nobunaga whispered realized he should not trigger the blonde's fury with any of his usual taunts. Even the samurai knew to respect the dead having some amount of honor in his morality.

"He's not done questioning him, but when he stops asking things..." Feitan honestly did not know what to expect when that happens. Machi's calm expression managed to hide her own fears about the fate of their former comrade knowing what he just admitted. She knew he took part in the slaughter, but the fact he was facing judgment from the son of the parents he murdered was shocking.

"What...did they say before they died?" This was something he must know before he would decide how to enforce the second command on Omokage's chains. Did they cry, beg, fight, and or accept death with ease. Until he never got the chance to know besides that message left for him to remember. Everyone grew silent as they knew these next words admitted by the imprisoned traitor were very important to hear. The silence in the room was now broken as the man spoke the final words of Kurapika's parents.

"Don't kill our son. You can take our lives, the people of our clan, even the scarlet eyes, but please don't hurt our child." His eyes were close to tearing up with regret and pain yet he remained calm. He could not show weakness while standing in front of his enemies. He can pour out his despair and suffering, later on, that subject now would come later as for now, he must deal with Omokage.

"If you don't mind Kurapika I would like a request to ask one question to our hostage."
Chrollo Lucilfer replied giving the blonde some minutes to absorb what he’s learned, but there was something bothering him ever since this fight took place. The fact he managed to manipulate the mafia was one thing, that was simply using a system of crime to his advantage. It was the fact he somehow knew about Neon’s involvement with him that made the leader worry about things. This could be one of his moments of paranoia, and yet he felt like he should know everything about Omokage's plan before leaving him in the last judgment of the spiders including Kurapika.

"Why should I-"

"If you didn't have us these puppets would have likely claimed your life, and since we are working together it's only fair we share the profits. In this case, I only wish to understand how Omokage knew about Neon and our recent actions nothing more." Kurapika knew this was the deal between them so he would need to honor it. Reluctantly he gave into Chrollo’s demand asking Omokage about how he gained such information.

"It was just rumored on the black market that I followed up on, but Hisoka told me about Neon Nostrade's recent history with men. I figured once I learned about her clairvoyant ways you would come knocking for them. I only wish that I got to ask Hisoka about teaming up before attempting to take your lives along with all of your eyes."

Nobunaga's blood was boiling at the mere thought of each double-crooker joining together against them. Now he wanted to find the scheming clown, and turn his smile upside down with a clean remove of his head with just one slice. For now, they would have to settle for making the dollmaker their plaything, but that was not the agenda of both Chrollo and Kurapika. That's when Chrollo brought out his trademark coin for decision-making.

"I understand Kurapika wishes to honor Retz's wish however that does not mean our former ally can leave without our own form of punishment. So then I offer the choice to each of my comrades. Either we can leave this man to the authorities not harming him anymore, and or we can dish out the pain we've felt tonight most likely beating him within an inch of his life." The man of the reversed cross looked at the Retz doll for her reaction which was nothing at all.

"She's likely unable to move while her creator remains stuck in my chains. Since it renders the victim in a Zetsu-like state these puppets cannot do anything for the moment." Kurapika knew he could not keep up this state having exhausted himself over the course of the night. Of course, he can't show it hence they would take advantage of another "weakness" of the Kurta.

"I see well that works for us, and don't worry Kurapika if we deal out some pain he won't die from it." He would stay a man of his word until the day he dies and the chain around his heart disappears with his life.

"How comforting..." Kurapika refused to take part in such a vulgar action, but he would be lying if he didn't want this man to get the injuries of broken bones in his body. It's the least he deserves for slaughtering his parents after all. Still, he would not want to become like the spiders so he would try holding on for the sake of his morality as long as he could, but suddenly Omokage spoke again.

"Oh by the way Kurapika. Chrollo would not want me telling you this, but when they gave away the eyes and treasures of your clan I kept your parents eyes. They didn't make such good dolls when I played with them so they got discarded into the trash as they deserved."

It could be possible he was trying to commit suicide, the guilt of admitting so much overcame him for the moment, and he was just being stupid. Nevertheless, those words causing something in his body to snap, and for the next few minutes all he could see was red...red...red...red...red...red...
The control over his mental state went out as he walked over to Omokage staring him right in the face. For a moment the puppetmaster thought he was just going to walk away until the first punch came into contact with his body. Kurapika did not want to stop until this body in front of his was nothing but a beaten, broken, and battered lump of flesh. The next hits came to his chest taking a toll on his breathing. Then another jab to his jaw nearly shattering the bones.

"Whew! Look at the kid go can really pack a punch." Phinks grew to admire such power in a fist watching Kurapika turn the murderer of his parents into a training bag for his punches.

"Is he trying to get himself killed. Admitting such a thing in front of the child of those dead parent's is a death wish." Machi figured that was the case as for why else would Omokage choose that moment to reveal that bombshell. Looking over at her leader she knew this actually the truth from that night.

"I'd wish to explain that later when Kurapika was better adjusted to the Troupe. I guess it can't be helped how a human decides to behave under pressure." The scream of pain followed that comment as Kurapika took hold of Omokage's private section before kicking it violently. The male spiders knew that kind of cruelty was up Feitan's alley.

The blood spilled over Kurapika's black suit as just like on that night with Uvogin his inner-self was coming out from his chains binding him to the gentle side of Kurapika's soul, and under that red moon, the beast inside got to taste violence. Thanks to everything that's happened tonight once more he was hungry again. His fury was slowing being corrupted by sadism as he got some enjoyment, and it only got worse once he broke the shoulder of Omokage's body with his strength.

"So this is why you're interested in him Boss?" Franklin knew first-hand the pleasure a person can have through such violence as Hisoka raised that into a twisted form of art. Even so, he grew concerned about Kurapika's increasing level of hatred for the man he's trying to mutilate with his bare hands. His face was becoming badly scarred with the continual blows to the skin. Retz was unable to stop this barbaric assault however she didn't want Omokage to get hurt anymore.

His body tightened up for one more blow, and if it connected it would likely do serious damage to his skull. All of the punches so far did not threaten his life, Kurapika's hatred was boiling over as he seemed ready to possibly kill this man. The spiders did not believe he was seriously about to take his life but seeing his arm shake violently made them reconsider what was about to happen. Omokage closed his eyes accept his death no longer fighting his fate.

'No...we can't become like the Phantom Troupe!'

'Who cares he must die now!'

'What then? Retz's won't get to see our friends again.'

'NO! This man should bleed to death I want to break his skull!'

The inner voice got louder with each second Kurapika denied this desire for killing.

'I won't let you turn me into a monster! You're just one part of my conscience, and I won't let you define who I am.'

His fight in his mind was over for the moment, but Kurapika knew the longer he stayed in this life of criminal activity his malevolent nature would rise back to the surface. The willpower fought off his anger as he calmed down slowly, moving his head down to become relaxed, but he also still had the glow of his red eyes still needing to make his second command.

"You will grant Retz a meeting with Gon and the others. I want her to deliver a message to me that
I'm alive and well. Should you violate this request to kill any one of us the Judgement Chain will pierce your heart. Once this request gets finished your nen shall become sealed away." The order was given to Omokage, and suddenly the chains disappeared letting the man fall over to the ground writhing in pain. Despite his actions, Kurapika could not simply kill him that would not make his parents proud.

"Wait that's it? After all this build-up he's not going to have his revenge! I knew this brat was too soft for the Phantom Brigade." Nobunaga could not believe what heard from the blonde's match, and so Kurapika decided to face his taunting "comrade" with a glare directly at him.

"Good! I'm glad you don't think I'm not a heartless, immoral, and cutthroat sociopath like you and the rest of your gang. Make no mistake Omokage has paid for his actions, and so will the rest of you in the future." He quickly turned his attention to Chrollo now wanting some questions answered by his partner after what he just learned from Omokage.

"Retz...you are still beautiful I'm sorry that I dragged you into this, but now you can see them again. Gon and the other-"

"Forgive me Kurapika, Omokage, and Chrollo." The scissors she used quickly entered the chest of the puppetmaster, as the mortal injury came from his own puppet. She decided to remove the strings controlling her of her own free will.

"Huh? Why did you..." After what he just promised to his captor for her to simply do the act of killing instead. He wanted to know before he would leave this world with his life, and Retz cradled her master once most unable to shed the tears she wanted from her eyes.

"This had to end I know you would have just made more dolls to send after people, not even the vow you made would convince you to stop even if you could leave here. Despite the fact I won't see Gon and the others again you could not get away with your actions Omokage."

"...Heh, you know me better than anyone Retz. I suppose it's fitting you brought down the final curtain on my play and not some mere human." The doll turned her attention to Kurapika knowing what she can do for Gon, and she removed the cap that covered her head. It would serve as the symbol of her life and the promise of reuniting Kurapika with his friends one day.

"Give this to Gon when you can find him again. This is my decision that I've made up on my own. Gon would love to see you and not me..." The last breaths of Omokage came out as each of his dolls would soon fade away without their master. The spiders did not know how to respond to her actions as she did what they wanted to do against Omokage. Kurapika said nothing as he grasped the only item that let the world know about Retz existing. Everyone decided they should meet with the others so they could leave the place before the cops arrived.

- Neon's Room - 10 Minutes Later

The group managed to meet up with each other as they placed Neon on her bed waiting for her to recover. Even though they were short on time both Chrollo and Kurapika wanted her to wake up to begin a conversation with the girl. It was also a chance to rest up before they made their dash for a hideout until the sun rises in the morning. Some of the spiders observed the room pointing out the "girlish" tastes of the decorations, Shizuku explained what items and people she managed to suck into Blinky, and Shalnark wanted to know how the battle went against Omokage begging Machi to go over the details.

"It seems weird we're taking back everything that is the Kurta's when we stole their eyes in the first place." She was about to re-open her mouth when Neon began to stir out of unconsciousness.
"Ugh, where am I?" Neon was able to wake up from being knocked out by Omokage with the help of the spiders, and she opened her eyes to see them hanging out in her room. While she knew about Chrollo and Kurapika, the both of them being her bodyguards the other people she was unaware were all part of the same group. Naturally, she began to shriek while throwing her pillows at the strangers.

"You're...you're that guy with the book, and you're my bodyguard with the chains!"

"Yes, that is correct Neon. We've both entered a recent agreement with one another, but we had to come visit you before we went too far away from the city. Even with the power to predict the future, I did not expect your life to end up in danger."

Chrollo said with a smile ignoring the real possibility that anyone could have died tonight besides Omokage. Neon heard some of the truth from Pakunoda, even if she could not believe she heard about the man who stole her power. Now she wanted the truth directly from the horse's mouth looking upset about his betrayal.

"Tell me who are you Chrollo Lucilfer? What exactly is the Phantom Troupe?"

- Several Hours Ago - Yorknew City

While the arrival of the Phantom Troupe brought major attention to the city along with the annual actions taking place for the criminal underworld there was another party involved this year. The most famous family in the history of professional assassins, the Zoldyck Family made a name for itself over the years with the number of corpses they made for money. Even Killua a former hired killer was well-known in the ranks of his family members along with several others in the world. In the midst of such chaos Illumi, Silva, Zeno, and Kalluto arrived in the city for several reasons.

The following nights lead to chaos for everyone involved with the actions, and even the Zoldycks went into the madness taking place. Then again the entire family got used to living a life filled with death, destruction, and many other violent things that normal people would consider horrifying.

Kalluto wanted to find his brother in this huge city but heard things about the current targets of Silva and Zeno. He's become interested in finding the infamous gang of thieves if they might lead him to Killua. Meanwhile, Zeno and Silva took the charge in dealing with the leader of the Troupe, and even if they didn't kill him when they could have the job got completed. Illumi had his own reasons for being here, and Hisoka was grateful he made a friend out of the expert of deadly needles for his family. The clown needed the use of Illumi's shape-shifting in order to sneak away from Chrollo's watch. While the former 4th spider didn't get his match with Chrollo, after all, he still would make use of his friend and asked him to come to meet under a highway.

Hisoka decided to follow the example of his former group, but he still had some ties of his own to speak with before he went "off the grid" for a while. Illumi was expecting something more complicated from his accomplice, but to see Hisoka relaxing on a wall with a candy lollipop sticking out of his mouth was surprising. The dead bystanders who stumbled on the known criminal were right up his alley. Each person had one of the killer magician's signature playing cards in their skulls.

"You certainly picked a simple site for our meeting, and yet I know you well enough to understand you need my help for something." While he already helped him out already the fact Hisoka did not get his match with Chrollo likely means he will need to rely on the help of the Zoldyck again. Even so, Illumi had his own issues to worry about with both his family and brother getting in the middle of this mess.

"Well, are you expecting a punchline or something Illumi old friend. I have not been in a good mood
even with this smile masking my true feelings." His makeup always hides the real face of Hisoka Morow from the world around him. The performer from that small little circus from so far away in his bath, and that man who was reborn in a pool of pink gum.

"I wonder how your little brother has been lately being in the company of Gon and his other companions." Their pact seems to have lost some luster with the sudden loss of the Kurta he figured, and he knew Gon was going to look for him now.

"He seems to have adjusted well so far, but he is still unaware of that little "gift" in him." Throughout their journey, Illumi had to admit Killua's been able to adjust to being around the three people who made their small group.

Hisoka knew the man was very protective of his brother's safety, and he went through so much just to see how he's doing in the Hunter Exams. Some would consider his actions rather twisted, but Hisoka could not qualify as one of those people to judge him. He also remembered that limitation put on Killua's body to keep him under Illumi's control.

"In the end, it is unfortunate that he will never grow beyond the potential due to your limitations, but then again compared to Gon's untapped power he is nothing that special." The glare about the comment about his brother made Hisoka chuckle. Why not have some fun before getting down to business.

Yes all to set up a fight without dealing with the other spiders, but to carry out that goal Hisoka would need help, and the only people he could turn to for that is the Zoldyck Family. If Zeno and Silva could nearly kill Chrollo Lucilfer then having the rest of them would help remove the spider's limbs from play. Then he would finally have the battle he's been waiting to get with the group's mastermind. The only problem would be finding the right way to convince them of doing such a risky thing.

"If this is about the Phantom Troupe you won't have the money to talk my folks into fighting those thieves." The black-haired assassin knew Zeno was not about to risk his life for any stupid reason, but if the money was just right he might consider the job. Hell, it was because of the Mafia Dons several members of the family that was famous for killing ended up in this city in the first place. Even so, Illumi and the others decided to get the money even with the fact the Troupe was very much alive. As always their house would either be divided or united.

"It's not just for my sake I remember your talk with me about Kalluto's obsession with finding Killua, and I know he's desperate enough to join the brigade to have the smallest chance of running into him. Why don't we both get what we desire and you can use Kalluto as my inside man? He can help me get the drop on Chrollo, but if the other spiders find out then you will likely need to get the others to kill them all."

"I knew you were ruthless, but to plan on cutting all of your former comrades like that is pretty cold-blooded of you."

"They were never really my friends only business partners in criminal activity. Sure a few of them were interesting and their "new member" certain is entertaining to think about, but in the end, they all pose a threat to me so they must die like the bugs they are..." Indeed while Hisoka would feel some pity for knowing Machi would die as well, in the end, they were not important in the grand scheme of his plans in the future. He cut his ties with them as their former 4th limb of the spider.

"Well do you think I'm still your friend Hisoka?"

"No...yes...maybe?" The magician got some amusement from Illumi's glare at his clown accomplice.
"There is some irony in this situation thanks to the man we are having this conversation about, Chrollo; this person hired me and some others to manipulate the Dons to fool them with their fake deaths, but you now want to hire me to help you kill the leader of the Phantom Troupe." Illumi had a small smile on his lips knowing this world bred an endless cycle of betrayal, lies, manipulation, and death.

"Yes such a cruel world, and I love being taking part in it every day. We are both criminals in the eyes of the world, but that is the reason we do what we do to prove a point. Why don't we toast to our new deal here's to crime!"

Hisoka stuck out his candy now mostly just the gooey core of a red lollipop. Illumi just pulled out one of his needles considering what this could mean for their futures. While they did have a good relationship with each other this might end up blowing up in their face if Kalluto dived in too deep with those criminals.

"I do suppose this celebration is far early it seems like Greed Island will become my next traveling point." Even his partner looked shocked by this statement, even while Hisoka was plotting how to kill his former partners he actually was going to head there for some reason that only makes sense to him. Illumi also wondered if it's because Gon might head there as well.

"Do you think the Troupe will make headway for Greed Island as well?" Illumi figured if everyone was going to gather at that place why not introduce Kalluto to their unit. Hisoka was not certain that was in Chrollo's plans with Kurapika now involved with them, and if he walked up to them he would likely have to pay for his "treason" against them. For now, he would steer clear of them until the time was right.

"I can't say for certain that will be the case. He's likely started breaking down Kurapika's mortality slowly, and once he's more adjusted to the life of a rogue he will find his next big score."

"That does fit Chrollo's motive from what we learned from one of his earlier subordinates, but I wonder if Omokage will make his move against them. He does seem like the man of theatrics must like yourself Hisoka."

"No Illumi I'm afraid you're mistaken, and for the record, I find that dollmaker a rather boring person."

Hisoka didn't have his usual smile on for once remembering Omokage being a man obsessed with reviving the dead. His projects didn't really interest him, but Hisoka figured if he went up against the Troupe he was as good as dead. No instead he became focused on how to lure the spiders to that place. Then his twisted mind worked out something for Illumi once more having his usual smirk full of sadism.

"I think it's time we play a little game!"

"Oh, and what kind of game do you have in mind exactly?"

"One of my favorites! Hide and seek..."

- Neon's Room - Yorknew City

For someone like Neon Nostrade who's known criminal behavior for the most of her life the fact she was now in the same room as the entire Phantom Troupe was a shock to her systems. She knew the stories, tales, and crimes they committed, however, seeing them in person was certainly a unique experience. In a funny way, she was meeting celebrities of the underworld of crime. To the rest of
the world they were monsters in the skin of man, but in her eyes, she was looking at the people who saved her life.

'This is the infamous Phantom Brigade?'

She saw people arguing about getting some booze, trying to find a good place to sleep for the night, and most of them looked pretty normal besides the likes of Kortopi, Bonolenov, Feitan, and Franklin. She didn't believe these were the same men and women known for their brutal methods of robbery, and yet she knew there was something special about her second protector Chrollo Lucilfer.

"In short my small little organization has no ambition for such trivial matters like world domination, ending humanity, or even changing the world into a better place. Simply put we are a band of common criminals who just so happen to take special things located across the world."

Yes, he didn't have some grand plan in mind with the treasures he would take besides using them for profit or even keeping a few precious books to read. Even Kurapika did not believe this was really the case when he first heard about it, but Chrollo really never puts much thought into the reason his group exists to steal. She began to understand who Chrollo really was, and when she got a look at Kurapika sitting in a corner she was even more surprised.

"Is that why he's here then? I thought he was acting as my bodyguard..." Neon did not know about the arrangement pact between the leader of the spiders and the survivor of the scarlet-eyed clan. It was surreal seeing the man responsible for the collapse of the Kurta Clan, and that lone survivor standing in the same room, not at each other's throats.

"It's complicated..."

Indeed that was the only thing Chrollo was able to say about their new "relationship" together. No one would believe it even knowing that Kurapika's chains were the real deal, but here they were hanging out in her place until they would leave for the night. Still, the boss knew he would need to explain himself as they would be taking all the wealthy items her family had built over the years.

"So this is it then? You lie, cheat, steal, and just walk away from me ruining my life in the process. This is your normal routine!" Her anger slowly rose up as she began to piece together everything this group had done to her over the days of the auctions. Chrollo was not denying any of this, and Kurapika wanted to punch him right in the face while he acted so nonchalant about this situation. That's when he asked for Shizuku to explain everything she and Franklin took from the fault, but then he demanded his giant among spiders to release the items that belonged to Neon's family except for the special treasures of the Kurta clan.

"What the fuck is this shit." Nobunaga was quickly silenced by his leader.

"I'm not sure we can use this kind of money if the mafia knows that it got stolen. After all, we technically are dead right now, and if someone can link us to this robbery we all will be right back at square one. While we might not get much money tonight won't become a complete loss." At that statement, he looked at the young man with the moral high-ground on his side.

"Tch don't think one generous act will outweigh the many crimes your band of cutthroats has committed over the years!"

"You think I'm doing this out of kindness. I have not told you the truth I only wanted to bring you along on your first crime-spree as a spider, and it just so happens you will be the one with the haul of items tonight Kurapika." His smile brought a growl out of the blonde forcing him to look away. He didn't want to accept those items, but they were from his tribe so he would need to keep them safe.
from the world.

"So that's it then? All this work only to just to satisfy that prissy brat? This has to seem like a joke boss yet I'm not laughing!" This should really be a joke thought the deadly swordsman still not happy with Chrollo's recent decisions.

"You know this is the kind of live a thief has in store Nobu. There are nights where he doesn't get the big score, days when he manages to pull off the heist of a lifetime, and the times when his life ends up getting put into an orange jumpsuit having to see bars from a guarded cell." They were lucky they never ran into that third outcome so far in their lives since it would be a fate worse than death.

"I don't understand you..."

Neon was looking at a complete stranger nothing like the Chrollo Lucilfer she met before all of this happened to her. Nothing about his actions, motives, and behavior made any sense to her. Chrollo gave her one of the smiles that managed to influence her so well, and it might have been part of his mask however she feels more relaxed in the bed she was sitting in. He ordered Franklin to hand over the items that belonged to her family while the Kurta items remained in their custody.

"You're really giving this stuff back to me?" She thought it was just a trick by the mastermind criminal to manipulate her. He shook his head trying to make her believe him, and Nobu's face grew beet red like a tomato feeling cheated out of the money they could make off Neon's treasures. The sin named greed affected a large amount of the spiders, but Chrollo's sin was much different from the rest of his pack.

"This is your property much like those other items are Kurapika's treasures. I've already taken something more important than all of this stuff." The power to predict the future already felt more valuable considering how much has changed in his life.

"My Nen-ability of course. That's also why you saved me isn't it Chrollo?" Indeed Chrollo knew he could not let any of the victims of his parasitic-like ability die at the risk of losing the power from the pages of his Bandit's Secret. Neon felt scared, saddened, and heartbroken to understand how cruel the leader of the gang could actually be around people. She wondered if he even saw himself as a human being knowing he's ripped away so many of people's natural talent.

"You also must know you can no longer interact with people with people like us, but it just so happens that I can say goodbye to you. You don't know how rare it is for me to meet someone I've stolen a power from Neon."

She widened her eyes once she heard that fact from him. Did he really feel happy about this moment or was it just another lie to make her feel better only Chrollo knew this answer. Kurapika suddenly gained everyone's attention as he fell on the ground struggling to stay awake.

"What's wrong with that brat?" The samurai sneered at his arch-enemy yet he began to worry that it might be something serious that was bothering him.

"Perhaps it has to do with those eyes." Machi knew he used a lot of energy tonight so it might finally have caught up to him, and the fact he suffered some injuries as well. Despite Kurpika's effort to remain his usual self Chrollo knew something was wrong with him. Neon also knew they were short on time since her guards would likely find them, and she could easily help in their capture which would mean certain death for the spider. Well, she must do the right thing and help in their capture even if it might cost her life.

"Get Kurapika to safety. If the others find him they likely might kill him along with the rest of you."
Despite knowing this could end up being a grave mistake, and even if Chrollo nearly took everything that was hers she knew Kurapika and Chrollo helped save her life. She owed him on some level, but she did not know if she hated him or she just wanted the criminal to leave here. Still Neon knew that Kurapika could not get killed here if he wants to see his friends again.

"Are you sure that's what you want little lady?" Even Phinks was unsure how to respond to her decision quickly regretting those words that came from his mouth. She gave him a hateful glare before huffing out her anger.

"What are you deaf? I'm letting you off the hook, so why don't you get the hell out of here!"

Pakunoda even with her injuries almost giggled at that reply along with the sight of Neon ordering around a bunch of murdering adults. Machi remained calm however she also felt amused by this reaction from Neon Nostrade. The boys turned around at Pakunoda not happy with her laughing, but Chrollo cracked a smile of his own at the events happening in front of him.

"You heard her we can't stick around here for the rest of the night. Shalnark do you have a good escape route in mind?"

He looked at the expert who knew the layout of this place which would make their escape a lot easier, and this made him one of the most vital members to have for operations such as this one.

"Certainly, Boss! By the way, I found some info you might want to see later..." Yes, the secrets he uncovered about some of the mafia's recent activities, some new valuable treasures to steal, but more importantly information on the Kurta Clan and some of the Scarlet Eyes which both Chrollo and Kurapika would want to know about. For now, he explained the best way they could make their escape which would actually be through the boiler rooms in the basement area of the building.

"Wait I need to make use Kortopi's ability before we leave here." This sudden request caught everyone off-guard, and even Chrollo was not expecting that from the unwilling accomplice. Kurapika knew he could not last long before his body gave out, however, there was an important reason he needed the use of Gallery Fake.

"The Nostrade Family might look for me if I just leave here even with Neon's word against theirs. If they believe that I died in the battle protecting Neon Nostrade then I won't have to deal with them anymore." Just like the same way the Troupe fooled the Mafia into believing they were dead in the first place, making Chrollo smirk realizing that Kurapika was starting to learn some things from them for better or worse.

Much like the other spiders did before him creating a replica body to damage, wound, and use to manipulate for their sake like with the objects they steal for a living. Kurapika demanded he looks at one of the spider's tattoos to get enough influence to use his powers to their greatest effect. The symbol of the group that's ruined the name of the Kurta Clan brought out those chains meant to destroy them, or now, in this case, help them survive.

"How unfortunate that I can't do this to any of you..."

His eyes glared at Shalnark who quickly turned away in fear as he began the process of mutilating himself. Cuts, slashes, bruises, and blood suddenly appeared over his body in the middle of the chains inflicting this self-punishment. The other members saw the real potential Kurapika's Dowsing Chain has in both offense and defense, the group needed to rely on Gyo to continue watching the multiple wounds being made over the blonde's body.

"...Not...enough..." He needed to deal a killing blow or what seemed like one to make his body
double seem convincing enough for the mob. Neon looked on horrified by this spectacle that she was observing never used to such much gore like this. Chrollo hoped that Kurapika would not get himself killed during the process, but he felt impressed by his determination.

While one of the arms had gone limp from his wounds Kurapika was able to project the sharp tip of his Judgement Chain now using it as a weapon to carve up his chest. The cuts began to increase on him, the hands were also sliced open with the other limbs on his body. A few of the more hardened members began to wince at this bludgeoning happening in front of them. Kurapika drove the last touches around his heart which included several long scars over him which lead to a huge amount of blood pouring out of his body.

Shalnark could not hide his disgust by this act, he was a man who controlled the bodies of men with his Black Voice; but even he could not stomach the idea of turning your body into a piece of meat to cut apart like mere cattle. Shalnark would not be surprised if their new member actually wanted to commit suicide as he peeked over at the bloody mess called Kurapika barely able to stand on his own wobbling around weakly.

'Well, he certainly knows how to torture people.' Feitan thought being used to this level of violence, it was his job in the criminal organization to bring severe pain to a person after all.

Finally with the last touches done Kurapika gave the approval to make the fake body for the morgue to see before it disappeared in 24 hours. Kurapika used his Holy Chain to make sure he would survive the night, but his eyes and body returned to its normal state falling over almost landing hard on the floor. Chrollo ended up holding the blonde in his body knowing they needed to move fast.

"I must say you might turn into the competition for our torture expert with that level of dissection. Leave the rest to us and rest those precious eyes of yours." Kurapika tried to glare, but his now dull eyes could only close themselves in defeat for the night. Kortopi's Gallery Fake copy now laid in a pool of blood near the bed of Neon Nostrade. The blue-haired girl knew she would have to follow Kurapika's plan to save his life even if it meant protecting the person who stole her power in the first place.

"Your predictions didn't turn out the way I expected Neon, but perhaps that is for the best. This will likely be the last time we see each other goodbye." Neon turned around with a frown not trying to show her surprise at his farewell comment.

"Whatever...just take care of Kurapika for the sake of his friends." That boy deserved so much better than the life he currently has, but if Chrollo can possibly grant him that kind of peace in any way this decision she made would be the right one. As they began to leave Neon wondered if this was all predetermined to happen, so that would mean her fortunes had this destiny of going away from her yet something had changed. Despite no longer having this power Neon knew the future for everyone would now be much different from the expected outcome. With a sigh, she dipped her head under her pillows finally getting some rest. Her last thoughts were about Kurapika and Chrollo's future together in life on the run.

"I wonder if those two will get along someday..."

- Two Hours Later -

The usual hideouts after a crime spree ranged from abandoned hotels, old houses in disarray, and Chrollo's favorite an empty library tonight they would be resting in a dark hospital. The smell of decay, chemicals and other foul smells filled the noses of the Troupe. Even for the hardened criminals entering this place with no one else around gave everyone a bad feeling. They expected creepy nurses mixed in with satanic rituals, undead ghouls hungry for new flesh, a viral outbreak,
and other nasty works of fictional hospitals to show up.

"Really Chrollo, out of all the places to stay you chose this spot?" Shalnark could not hide his annoyance plus the fear of being around broken computers and other devices out of repair, and to the blonde genius, it was like a tech graveyard for the dearly departed machines of this building of healing. Naturally, that was the least of the concern of the other members, but they knew their leader was only worried about one thing now. The body of Kurapika lay on an operating table, surrounded by candles lit by Pakunoda, and some of the members distracted themselves with beer and playing cards.

These activities would often pass the time for the spiders while the moon was in the dark sky, or if the bright sun was covering the land. Many of the phantom thieves didn't know about the usage of the Kurta Clan's eyes so they did not know how long Kurapika would rest, yet they did want him to get well soon to move towards their next mission.

"Tch! How pathetic must that chain-user really be? He's just holding us here so he can get sleep." Nobunaga scowled at the resting hunter who wished he could be awake to jab back at his verbal attacker. He also could not believe Chrollo asked Machi to help in sealing any remaining wounds on his body, and he offered to pay for the medical bill she would ask for in return.

"Blonde is a new member so he gets a discount. Got a problem you take it up with Boss."

She already took off some Jenny payment earlier, however, considering the state of his body even with the Holy Chain he might need more attention. Nobunaga took issues with the newbie getting so much special treatment looking for any reason to insult him by this point.

"I don't think Kurapika has yet to nearly get himself killed on purpose like you and Uvogin liked to do so easily together." Machi's casual tone only made the hot-blooded samurai even more heated. He was about to fire back when Chrollo suddenly walked toward the man who's been unwillingly trapped in the web of the spider. While he did not have a genuine concern on his face his life did require keeping him alive much like the victims of his parasitic ability.

"I'll check up on him during the night, but I think we need to move when it gets light outside. For now, I want everyone to relax and rest up before we make our next move."

He quickly ordered his limbs into preparing for whatever comes tomorrow so he listed off the actions of everyone: Shizuku, Feitan, and Shalnark got sucked in a game of Go Fish, Franklin was busy tapping into their supply of beer, Bonolenov was trying to practice with his gloves, Kortopi was the only one actually sleeping, Nobunaga was back to sharpening his sword, and Machi was overlooking Kurapika with the second-in-command Pakunoda.

"Boss, are you serious about helping him retrieve the eyes of his clan?" While Pakuonda had discussions in private about this she did to actually think he was serious about this. Such a task would never be easy, and the resources needed to find the eyes would need a lot of effort. It's utterly ironic, the man who brought about the massacre giving the lone survivor all the remaining Scarlet Eyes just to please him.

"In order to gain his trust, I must do this Paku. Do you fear this will lead to my death?" Both of the female spiders felt shocked that Chrollo said that never believing he would die at his age no matter the circumstances. In the unlikely events that might put their leader's very life at risk, they would both sacrifice themselves in a heartbeat, but the same was not said for the unconscious blonde on the operating table.

"No, that it's just are you certain it will all be worth it to make him a spider?"
Kurapika's morality still remained a problem, so the idea of him turning into a ruthless, unsympathetic, and murdering thief would be troublesome. Another matter would be having him work together with the other members because he's already gotten along "so well" with Nobunaga being able to co-exist with everyone else might cause unneeded tension, and could start friction in the group's tightly knit operations.

"That all depends on how things turn out, it's a gamble much like flipping a coin. Kurapika's involvement could break-up everything we've worked for sure, but his abilities and talents might offer us with new rewards. My decision to welcome him to our merry band of thieves might be for the improvement of the spider, and or lead to the collapse of our group; I'm only human Paku."

"You're...putting everything up to chance?" Pakunoda and Mach in their years of knowing their leader never expected such a bold declaration about this. He simply stared at the both of them for a moment knowing he needed to regain faith from each limb of the spider.

"Do you still trust my leadership, Mach, Paku?"

"Of course Boss." Their replies were quickly made not leaving any doubt in their voices.

For now, he could rest letting Machi finish up her work on the young Kurta. Thankfully not all the medical equipment was in ruin, and it was better to make sure of a surgical scalpel and bandages and not her Transmutation: Nen-Stitches. Chrollo knew exactly what he was doing considering Machi was almost good enough to pass as a medical nurse, and hiding out in a hospital gave her more tools to work with.

"He seems to still be unconscious, but his wounds look fine. I don't know how long he will be out Boss."

She was not an expert on the eyes used by the Kurta, so she could not explain when he could wake up however he was no longer in danger of losing too much blood or having any foreign objects being in his body. The women left their leader to watch over Kurapika for the night knowing he wanted to have alone time. He did not know what to do with the time, but he decided to look at one of the books he's been reading for a while. It was a title of religion mainly the "good book" as some put it.

"The coin fell on my hollow hand.

I could not bear it, although it was light, and I let it fall. It was all in vain.

The other said: "There are still twenty-nine."

The events tonight made Chrollo realize several things that he overlooked recently. The idea of traitors being in the brigade was very real, and both Omokage along with Hisoka proved that theory was correct. In fact, it could have been Hisoka's actions that lead to Uvogin dying and Pakuonda's possible demise. While one of the two former allies was now dead the clown was still on the loose. Considering all the man wanted was just a battle with the mastermind Chrollo knew he would do anything for that goal as the other "Judas" of the Troupe.

He might have to do something he wanted to avoid for a long time, but then he looked at other different pages of the bible. Chrollo didn't see himself as the "messiah" of the book; while the number of members in his group did match up with the fiction. Indeed the Phantom Troupe bears twelve limbs that obey the head, and that had a parallel with Jesus and his twelve followers. He
found it ironic that he never considered why he took the last name of a figure from another religious work.

As he was pondering the similar nature of the disciples and his spiders Chrollo heard the voices of his comrades.

"Go fish Shalnark."

"Aww, how do you keep beating us Shizuku?"

"For such an airhead you keep managing to clean us out."

"Hey, she's not that dumb Feitan."

He chuckled happily that even after the bloodshed committed tonight the gang of criminals can still enjoy themselves like they never killed people before tonight. Such was the moral myopia nature of the group, and everyone knew they were hypocrites for acting that way. Still, he would never want things to change no matter what the future had in store.

- September 11th -

Naturally, the mornings brought out chaos among the members of the spider. Today the cooking menu would be provided by Feitan, and he vowed it would not end up burned while trying to piss off Nobunaga. Many of the criminals got started with their daily routines except for Chrollo. Once more he decided to stay in the room with Kurapika until it was the dawn of a new day, but this time the blonde was not waking up as he was still sound asleep.

"Last night must have really taken its toll on you." He hoped that with just a little more rest he will get better, but he had to speak with his fellow thieves to make his next move. Looking around he found Shalnark fighting with Franklin over some beer, and that had to become a new time for trying to get drunk.

"Come on you can't keep hogging the booze like this!"

"Yeah, but you're trying to get wasted this early when I wait until it's almost noon."

Just another day for this group of crooks the mastermind supposed, and yet he felt like this was the beginning of something new for them all. They felt more confident, happy, but most of all certain about what would happen after they managed to fool most of the world into believing they were dead. With their new freedom they could do just about anything, so why not plan out their next big heist while including the Scarlet Eyes on that list.

As he gave the order to the computer wizard to keep an eye on Kurapika Chrollo decided to follow Shalnark's lead in getting a cold, refreshing, and foamy drink to start the day. As he took his seat on the waiting room's lounging chair he began to formulate an idea of how to go about their next mission. The cobwebs near his spot containing dead flies brought some inspiration to his working mind. They had the moniker of the spider, after all, they usually ensnare others into their web of lies, deceit, and death.

"So you're serious about making the Kurta our newest member, Boss?"

"If I didn't take this seriously I would have killed him when we could, Franklin."

Yes, it would have been easy, that boy easily was at their mercy and Chrollo could have given to order to Nobunaga to gain their revenge for the "Requiem" they made for Uvogin. It was a spur of
the moment choice than to allow him to live on despite his past actions. Yes, and that began the building stages of a new long-term goal of growing his new disciple into something he would be proud to work in the future.

"I can see why you like him that temper of his matches Nobu, but he does not seem willing to kill anyone else besides us. Do you think he will attempt to continue his avenging when our guard is down?"

"Honestly I would actually be surprised if he didn't try assassinating one of us. He's already being inducted into our ranks, lost contact with those he really cares about, and should he get caught trying to kill us he will suffer the consequences. He really is more of a slave than a member now, but I do plan to change that over the following months." Taking another sip of the still cold beer Chrollo pondered what he should do once the boy awakens from his state of sleep.

"There's also the matter of that clown's whereabouts."

A sigh escaped the lips of the mastermind, so much focus was on Kurapika he'd forgotten about Hisoka stalking them like a predator hunting fresh prey. Eventually, he would need to give into Hisoka's demands to face him in battle. Still, time would be on his side until the sands of the hourglass ran out.

"Boss, here you might want to eat while you can Feitan is trying to outdo himself this morning with the extra long cooking time." The apple with the color red as the fruit went into his lap by Machi who seemed irritated today's first meal would now take longer than usual. Chrollo usually felt many of his "children" fought with each other to gain the approval of their leader, but sometimes he felt like a child himself when he went along with these fights.

"Nobu's likely trying to cut something up. We are a pretty dysfunctional family when you think about it Chrollo." Franklin mused about their daily antics.

"Tch, there's no way I'm going to become the mommy here. If we are a family then it should go like this: Pakunoda seems like the perfect maternal figure while obviously, you are the daddy, Nobu, Feitan, and Franklin are the big brothers."

"I'm more like the uncle of this family Machi. So that makes you and Shizuku the younger sisters, and Kortopi along with Bonolenov are the distant relatives."

"So that leaves Shalnark and Kurapika as the brothers, but this also means Hisoka along with Omokage are the ex-family then. It's funny how perfect that analogy works for us, Franklin."

"Don't think I'm going to actually become the protective older sis for the younger blonde Boss. I only did it to ensure your life, so now you can pay me for his medical care, we are in a real hospital." She playful rolled up her hand to Chrollo's face teasing him. Thankfully he did have the Jenny on him which he planned to use in the financing of their escape from this city. As Franklin and Machi continued their conversation he looked at the empty can of beer now sitting on the table next to him, and he figured they should stop at a place to get some coffee.

"How do you both feel about getting some caffeine to drink?"

- An Hour Later -

'How long are you going to lay there sleepyhead?'

"I would rather stay here than wake up honestly."
'Aren't you supposed to call someone?'

"It's...kinda early to make a call, isn't it?"

'Pretty sure Gon wouldn't mind that.'

Kurapika was looking at a different world than what he saw before going unconscious. Everything looked gray and shaded like some old picture or reel of film. The room was actually very similar to his old home, and the only thing different was the color along with the lack of any other Kurta clansmen around the place.

"Is this supposed to actually be a dream, nightmare, or maybe a limbo."

'It's whatever your mind wants it to become.'

"This isn't my imagination this house was real!" Kurapika while refusing to accept that noticed the voice was not full of malice like before during the battle with Omokage. Kurapika might have considering he was going insane, but he was still avoiding killing people like his new "superiors" so there had to still have some sanity in himself. It could just be his brain coping with the lack of activity, and yet Kurapika felt like there was more to all of this.

"Are you my conscience?"

'Is that is what you want me to act as then yes.'

"No! Give me a direct answer to the question are you really my inner thoughts?"

'I'm afraid Q& A time is over you should go elsewhere. Until next time...'

His body finally began to wake up from its slumber, and Shalnark thought Kurapika was now a zombie coming to eat his brains, the moans the Kurta made didn't help him not look like the walking dead. As Shalnark was holding up his Black Voice phone to whack the blonde Kurapika noticed he was now shirtless with only pants and shoes to cover his body. He figured it was taken off to perform surgery, and that was likely Machi's doing with her skills.

Suddenly Kurapika held up his chains using his nen to keep himself from becoming an actual living zombie by the silver needles held in the tech genius' hands.

"What the hell are you doing!"

"Kurapika, oh god I thought you wanted my brains. Believe me, I know why the undead would love to eat this meat in my skull like in the Moaning Dead!"

The Kurta assumed that could either mean a comic book or television show being referenced.

"Well...I never no want to consume your err brains Shalnark."

While gasping for relief he remembered that his body was hurt last night, but due to his rest most if not all the scars and blood was gone. He was lucky that injuries were not more severe he could have really died last night. That's when he took notice of two details: one he needed a new shirt to wear not one that belonged to the others, and to his "guard" had in his hands a working phone.

"Shalnark, do you mind if I borrow that phone?"

"Don't tell me you want to control someone Pika! I know Nobu might act annoying but he's not all that bad of-"
"No an actual cell phone. God-Damn it! There is someone I wish to speak with now!"

The young computer expert did not know what to say about that request. Seeing the anger in his currently blank eyes Shalnark quickly ran off to bring him a usable cell phone. In the meantime, Kurapika got off the operating table to look at himself in a mirror and wondered if his mind was changing itself over the course of the recent days. He never spoke to himself in long conversations before yet with his friends not being around perhaps that’s the reason he has gone through this action.

"Here ya go. I managed to sneak it away from Pakuonda's room so don't tell her or the Boss about this kay!" Nodding to one of the few spiders he tolerated Kurapika knew exactly who he wanted to speak with, and his fingers pounded in the correct order for the number. His ear went to the phone waiting, hoping, and praying someone would pick up. Those prayers were quickly answered with the voice he never thought he would hear again so soon.

"Gon..."
**Chapter Summary**

Kurapika begins to paint himself in tainted black while Chrollo becomes to embrace the white purity of a somewhat kind nature as they journey began into an unknown future.

**Act 4: Red X Black**
- **One Hour Ago - Yorknew City**

A few days had gone by since Kurapika's friends had seen their comrade since they were captives of the Troupe. They didn't let Kurapika's words to let him go stop them from looking, but his trail went cold after just only a few days. They looked for Neon's trusted guards asking Melody, Basho, and Linssen if he might have a clue about Kurapika, but they have not seen their leader or heard from him. They were becoming frustrated that he might have vanished from the face of the earth, so they doubled their efforts refusing to give up on him.

They got hopeful when they heard about some major incident happening at the Nostrade's residence, but then their hearts sank when they heard about one of the dead being named as Kurapika Kurta. They refused to accept a reality where their friend died like this, but then the news report explained the details around Omokage also being found dead.

"I don't know what happened exactly, but this man came trying to rob and kill everyone here. Kurapika...he saved my life, and yet he's now..."

"The person in question Neon Nostrade is one of the few survivors in this horrible story. Again the wanted criminal Omokage was slain last night along with Kurapika Kurta. Police are still unsure the culprit behind these recent murders, but it seems the death count has reached beyond 10 victims, and many of which are from the notorious guild of thieves the Phantom Troupe. Stay tuned for more news on this story after the break."

The group sitting in the cafe could not believe the story being reported, and yet that's the reason they came here after reading about it in the newspaper. It seemed that Melody's frantic call about his fate was true, but they didn't want her words being correct about Kurapika's death. Tears began to leak out of everyone's eyes, the weight of this story was now coming down on them hard.

"Why? Why did it have to be Kurapika!" Leorio was slamming his fist on the table, and due to the wooden material, it also got a huge dent in the surface. Everyone else looked worried they would be next, but Killua gave them a fearsome glare suggesting they look elsewhere. The emotions were coming out from their souls: the anger of loss, the despair of feeling helpless, and finally the understanding of mortality.

"We should have gone with him when we had the chance! Those fucking spiders!" The former assassin had a bad feeling about Kurapika's well-being the moment they left his side. It was because of them Kurapika likely ended up this way, and now he understands why he wanted to kill each shadow thief. It also made him consider the idea of continuing the last Kurta's mission as that would likely be his last wish to bring that clan peace in death.

Gon, however, was not thinking about blood vengeance or simply dealing with this tragedy. Why
not go to the source herself, and he was also considering the details about Kurapika's demise. Something about the series of events was not sitting right with him. This happened before with dead bodies seemingly being discovered, but only for them later to vanish like they were never there since they were just dolls to fool the authorities and mafia.

"I think we should visit Neon Nostrade!"

"You mean Kurapika's employer, the girl might have known about him, but I don't see what good that can do for us." Leorio sighed unable to understand Gon's reasoning. Killua also was unsure about Gon and his idea to meet her now.

"Gon, don't you think that's very risky, to go at her place after what just happened would mean dealing with tight security who likely won't let us meet her in person."

"Yes I know about that Killua, but she is the last person to have seen him alive. I think we also need to question her about Omokage, and the reason he was there as well." Who else would know the full details about last night's chaos than one of the few living witnesses at that manor in question? Gon also figured they should get there immediately before security gets even tougher to get past. Leorio and Killua were nervous about this sudden plan, but they didn't have anything else to go on besides her account for the night.

"Alright we move in 10 minutes, and Gon I hope you're right about this one." Sighing Leorio headed to the restroom preparing himself for possible conflict with the mafia. Killua knew they were stepping into dangerous waters, but if Gon's instincts were right there was more to this no one else knew besides Neon. Of course, this could also mean a lead towards finding the Phantom Troupe, and they likely have skipped town just yet so they need to find them before that happens.

"I know you want to have some hope that he is alive, but Gon if this ends up going nowhere then..."

"No! He's not dead Killua, and not until I see it with my own eyes!"

Their faces showed their different thoughts about the matter from optimism to acceptance, but their friendship made them understand why they each felt this way. Kurapika had become close to them, from when they met on the boat, to their journey through the exams, and when they reunited at the home of the Zoldyck family. Fate seems to have gone full circle as now they wanted to save Kurapika even if the odds seemed to suggest they were too late.

"Alright let's go visit her then..."

- 10 Minutes Ago - Nostrade Manor

The news media only made sneaking into the place that much harder for the trio. Between security guards, television cameras, and the public onlookers they were lucky they managed to locate a path to the sewer area. Compared to the risk of getting caught gaining a stench of decay, pollution, and feces would be acceptable for them. Leorio suggested they could just take a shower in Neon's place both in a joking way, but he also wanted to break the grim mood they were all feeling at the moment.

Killua was covering his nose with his shirt, walking beside the others to avoid falling into the murky waters surrounding them. Lord only knows what kind of things lie underneath that filthy liquid, and he didn't want to find a dead body lurking to scare the hell out of him. While he was a trained assassin he was still very young in age, so getting something like that might take a few years out of his life-span. Finally, they found the manhole needed to make their way out near where they wanted to get at the mansion, and it was all thanks to Melody's help mapping out a route with the other bodyguards.
"Well Gon, Killua, and Kurapika this is not our finest entrance, but at least we don't have to deal with any bullets, Nen-abilities, and fighting with criminal bodyguards."

"Wait. Kurapika?"

"Yeah, Killua. He's with us in our spirits..." Looking up despite not seeing the sky he believes Kurapika's time with them will never be forgotten, and his precious memories with the Kurta survivor. Finally, they opened the manhole leading them to a backside part of the manor not surrounded by many guards. While the hunters were not used to performing stealth operations they knew it was important no one besides Neon sees them here.

Naturally five minutes later something went wrong for them which involved a bathroom, guard trying to eat some foreign pastry, and before they knew it they were running for their lives in the hallway.

"Why did you help that guy with his food Gon!" Leorio shrieked as the mafia was now right on their tail.

"I didn't want him to buy another one, and it smelled really good!"

"I think we would have been better off charging in here in the first place!" Killua's mood quickly soured as he knew they had to avoid fighting them, but they could try shooting their heads with guns in the process. While easily removing the weapons as an issue Gon and Killua knew they had to find the girl's room fast. It just so happens they ended up running into her as she was heading out for something to eat.

"What are you guys doing here!?" She quickly began calling for help, but Killua covered her mouth as they moved into another room to hide in for now.

"Killua, what are you doing we can't just keep a girl prisoner?" Leorio whispered as he was looking out from the door to find anyone coming near them. The blue-haired heir of the Nostrade family got up and began pointing her finger at each of them.

"Girl? I'll have you know I'm Neon Nostrade of the famous Nostrade family, so why don't you just leave like those other thieves before you get caught!" Each one of their eyes nearly fell out of their sockets, the very person they were looking for was now scolding them with her finger. Killua took notice of that word thieves and realized who she might be talking about, causing him to get right in her face with his question.

"You don't mean the Phantom Troupe, do you Neon?" She just regretted saying that sentence, as she knew they would begin asking more kinds of questions. Turning around she looked angrier as she began to demand they revealed themselves.

"I'm Gon, that guy with the glasses is Leorio, and my other friend here is Killua. You wouldn't happen to have come across...Kurapika recently did you?" Suddenly Neon knew who she was speaking with, just as she heard from Kurapika himself these people were the friends he was trying to protect, and through his sacrifice, they were no longer a threat the spiders would need to deal with anytime soon. If anyone should know the truth of what happened last night it would be the Kurta's friends.

"The news story brought you here, your friend Kurapika is not really dead."

Gon, Killua, and Leorio thought she was joking for a minute, but she looked dead serious about her statement. Neon sighed to herself, she moved towards the group looking at each one of the friends of
"Omokage said he would protect my family's fortune, and kill the Phantom Troupe for us, he had no intention of actually keeping me safe." Neon admitted that both she and the rest of the family made a costly error in judgment, but at least no one else besides him died because of that decision. Still, because of both his and her actions Kurapika might now be further tangled in the spider's web, and so to please her conscious she continued her story.

"Kurapika came here with the Phantom Troupe working for them; however I don't think he really wanted to take part in the attempted heist last night. Things got hazy when I was unconscious thanks to Omokage, but it was thanks to Kurapika, the Phantom Troupe, and one of his dolls that I managed to survive." She hated to admit that the man who now claims her power ended up protecting her in the end.

"Then it got weird, the group wanted to steal most of the valuable items our family holds, and Kurapika somehow helped convince their leader to just take all the items belonging to the Kurta clan. The deal is I have to hold up the pretense that Kurapika died, but he managed to use a doll body to fool the media along with the mafia." Gon's face looked stunned by this revelation knowing that his friend was very much alive.

"You MEAN...he's still out there with those criminals?!!"

His happiness was short-lived understand the kind of lives the spider usually had in a day for the next crime wave. The fourth person in their group could still remain in danger if they didn't find the Phantom Troupe in Yorknew City soon. Worse yet the group likely had gained new-found strength in recruiting Kurapika against his will. Chrollo's group might become unstoppable, but Gon vowed to not allow that to happen no matter what.

"So then our goal is still the same, forcing that bastard to let go of our friend." Killua gripped his fists, ready to squash some of those bugs himself. Leorio shared those same thoughts, but he was not exactly ready to step into battles like Gon and Killua.

"Yeah! Kurapika has done so much for us, that means we have to help him out now!" Gon looked confident in his renewed hope while Neon looked surprised that they cared for him this much. While she never met any of these people before, as they seemed confident in finding their other friend she decided to help them out more with an idea of where they might be going now.

"I don't know where they are planning to go, but they were talking about finding some desolate building to stay in for the night."

Just as she was considering what to say next her black phone began to ring, as she picked it up to find out who exactly was calling her at the moment. While she answered Gon began to see the room: looking at the design, finding all sorts of "girly" items, but the thing that struck out the most to him was the empty container where some of the eyes of the Kurta clan once remained in.

"Do you think...she actually collected those eyes?" Killua found it disturbing such a person like Neon would be a collector of flesh like that.

"Well, Neon's family has ties with the Ten Dons. From what I hear Neon's actually quite talented, and she even has Specialization that lets her predict the future...until Chrollo stole it." Leorio remembered that night which changed the course of everyone's lives. Knowing their current enemy could do almost anything with his nen; his Bandit's Secret grants him certain Nen-abilities stolen from others, and the fact he could use them in battle along with crime made him extremely dangerous.
"His mentality is very bizarre as well, but the guy is not invincible there are some limitations on his power we just don't know them." Being a well-trained assassin himself, and knowing the stories told by his family about the criminal organization made him aware of the kind of man Chrollo Lucilfer is to everyone. Neon suddenly looked over at the trio running towards them with the phone.

"Someone, anyone, and please just only one of you answer this phone now!"

Leorio had the black phone placed into his hands not sure what exactly was going on, but he answered the call asking who was on the line. Suddenly his voice became heavy, words got formed yet not came out, and suddenly the taller man could not speak or say anything. He tossed Gon the phone knowing he would take who was on the other line easier than he could.

"Hello, who is this?"

"...Gon."

The room became very quiet once everyone realized who was now speaking to them on the phone. For a while, no one wanted to speak, and instead just relish this reunion after being split apart for some time.

"It's...um been a while huh?"

"That's all you're gonna say? After being apart from each other, the actions you've taken with the Phantom Troupe, and us trying to find out where you have been that's all you want to say!"

"...No, I'm glad to hear your voice again Gon. So I'm guessing Leorio could not speak since I heard his breathing over the phone."

"HEY! I'm not scared of talking to you Kurapika! In fact the second we find you I'm gonna give you such a punch on the shoulder for putting us through your "death" like that!"

Killua also felt like putting him through pain for tricking them like that as well. Still, he was happy to see Kurapika was very much alive, but his situation was still quite troublesome. Suddenly there was another voice on the line trying to interrupt Kurapika.

"Ohh! Ohh! Can I speak with your friends Kurapika?"

"No damn it! You don't even know them that well so why to bother Shalnark?"

"Well, it's not like I can't get to know them better with a simple conversation."

Shalnark was not a name they were familiar with, but if Kurapika was still with the brigade then he might be one of their members. Suddenly Killua realized they could find out where the group was hiding with Kurapika's help since he knows about their current plans.

"I'm not going to have a long call with your phone so just relax Shalnark."

"Kurapika, you wouldn't happen to know where you are now?" Gon asked knowing he would let them come rescue him from the Troupe. The long pause made the boy worry as he should have answered him. His voice came through the speaker, but it was not the kind of response he expected.

"Yes, but I can't tell you that Gon. Believe me, I would not wish to stay here if I could, however, I must stay where I am."

"You're joking, right? You can't seriously be helping them remain a prisoner Kurapika!" The white-
haired hunter refused to believe what he just heard from Gon. He was ready to snatch the phone and give him a piece of his mind, but Gon tried to keep him calm asking Kurapika what could be doing now.

"Why are you saying this? We can't just leave you with those guys you could really end up dead one day!"

"I'm very much aware, but it's...I can't get away yet there are so many things I can do with their help. I've claimed more items from my clan, and if this deal works out I can recover the remaining eyes."

Was this really the Kurapika they've gotten to know or some impersonator? The Kurta they knew would slaughter the spiders no matter the situation for his revenge. The same Kurapika who also cared about his friends, but now things seem different for everyone involved. Killua grew tense, reaching back in preparation to tear his "friend" a new one.

"You're serious about this, and we're supposed to just let them get away with keeping your against your will?"

"I promise that we will see each other again, the date is something I don't know however this is not the last time we will speak with each other."

The words didn't make anyone feel better about the situation, having this possibly be the last contact they could have with their friend only made things worse, and Killua decided enough was enough. He quickly rushed over as quickly as his Transumation skills and took the phone from Gon to begin a series of cursing at the other person over the phone.

"Kurapika, what kind of shit are you saying! We've been worried sick about your ass, had to sneak into Neon's place to find clues, and now you expect us to just let you go again! You're gonna tell us where you are so we can do some things! First, kick your ass for lying to us, next beat the hell out of the Phantom Troupe, and finally get back on our journey together!"

"I...I would-" The static over the phone caused everyone to panic fearing something happened to him during the conversation. For the next minute all they could hear was silence and other voices, but someone asking for Gon to pick up the phone.

"To think we would speak again like this, it is rather funny that I felt like this would happen someday."

"Chrollo...Lucifer!"

The last person everyone thought they would hear over the phone is the mastermind behind these events, and the person keeping the young Kurta in his clutches. Worst of all he was treating this like an average discussion instead of a hostage negotiation.

"Gon, Killua, and...Leorio yes I remember you all now. I'll admit it is unfortunate Kurapika and Shalnark conspired to make this call, everything happens for a reason I suppose and now I can tell you what will happen next."

"What you're gonna do is let our friend go, and if you got a problem with that I'll make sure you never complain about anything ever again..."

"Killua and I see you're the one with the hot-temper out of everyone in this set of friends, so I would like to speak with someone a more leveled head if you don't mind." Gon had to fight with the ex-assassin for a minute before he finally relented the device over to his friend. Leorio wanted to say something but knew that might cause the leader of the spiders to hang up which would be very bad.
"Why can't you just let our friend go? He might want to kill you, but that does not mean you have to right to keep him away from us!"

"Interesting, so can you tell me why you all care so much about Kurapika? I don't mind a long explanation, but please don't yell or rant at me during your answer." Gon was not sure where Chrollo was going with this, but, he knew how to respond to the question being asked.

"He's important to all of us because he's like part of our family; you likely just see him as yet another piece of treasure to keep don't you?!"

"I don't deny that is part of the reason I'm keeping him within the Troupe, but there is another reason I've become interested in him. As for the next "date", I'm afraid that won't happen for some time. We will contact you again don't worry about that."

"Wait just a moment Chrollo!" Leorio didn't want to hold it in any longer, he quickly rushed over and grabbed the phone from Gon's hand wanting to say his piece before the talk was over. He hoped his friend was listening wherever they were hiding in as he spoke to his kidnapper. Neon gasped at the amount of anger coming over Leorio's face as he let out his words slowly...carefully...and quietly.

"You can run all over the world, stay in as many hideouts as you have, and you can even try killing us, but we will find you one day. You just better hope Kurapika kills you before that time arrives..."

"I don't like him, so I believe this is goodbye gentlemen and good-"

"Wait!" Neon suddenly spoke up now taking the phone, and everyone thought that cellphone was now being passed around like a hot potato.

"You better take care of him Chrollo! I don't want to hear the next story in the news about Kurapika getting seriously hurt, and so I expect you to promise me that you're going to look out for him!"

Once again Neon was able to talk to the infamous leader of the Phantom Troupe like he was a school student. The anger suddenly gave way into confusion for the trio of hunters.

"Of course Miss Neon, and I will make sure that I won't harm a hair on his head. It's been quite an interesting discussion, however, I must cut this conversation, and so do have a good day."

Just like that the only hope they had of finding the Troupe was gone. Immediate sets of eyes glared at Neon who tried looking innocent, but really they had only themselves to blame. Killua felt like he failed to protect Kurapika, Leorio knew he should have never let Chrollo predict his fortune, and Gon wondered if they should have stopped them when they could.

"So, what are we going to do now?"

"Well I do know one piece of advice you boys can take in. If I know the Phantom Troupe they likely will go after new places to rob, but now they likely just want to leave Yorknew City in one piece."

"That's good and all, it only means we have so many places to look then!" The tallest hunter in the room huffed venting out his frustration with this ordeal.

"That's enough Leorio! She's just trying to help us, and even if it's not much we did get to speak with Kurapika again...hearing his voice means he still can get saved." Killua knew his friend was getting heated, and that could be a problem if he lets it out on the heir of the Nostrade family. Gon also realized this so he decided to change the subject before things got out of hand.

"Neon, do you know some places or things those guys might be interested in?" While it won't help that much they could get pointed on the right track, and perhaps they would get on their trail before
they reach the next destination. Neon gave a nod knowing some likely targets the spider would make, but she also knew they would know Kurapika's friends would now start following them.

"I don't have exact knowledge of the other families and their goods, but I think I can help you find the next big score for their gang. It's my duty as the clairvoyant to use my predictions to help bring people happiness!"

**- Now - Yorknew City**

What had been a private call now became public knowledge for the head of the organization keeping their newest ally on a tight leash. Naturally, Kurapika was ready to start a fight with Chrollo, and for the moment didn't hate Shalnark like the rest of the spiders.

"What are you doing damn you! I was just trying to speak with my friends, and I didn't even tell them about where we are!"

"While that's true you did go behind my back to speak with them, and you even convinced Shalnark to help you. I felt betrayed, but also impressed by your manipulation skills Kurapika." Tossing the phone towards the technical expert, and he managed to grab it just before it hit the ground. He was more worried about his tech getting smashed than the increasing tension between Chrollo and Kurapika.

"Why can't you just take my powers and kill me? It can't really be that difficult for you and that book!"

"If that were the case you would be dead now, but much like your own abilities, there are certain...conditions I must follow. Believe me, I considered absorbing your power however once I learned more about your history the more that idea seemed foolish." Yes, exploring the details about the unique abilities the Kurta learned would take a lot of time, and the fact he could end dead trying to snatch up his power due to the safety measures he could set up. No, he would need to become a member of the Troupe to use his power for Chrollo's benefit.

"I see then, the Skill Hunter could fail in taking away my Nen then, so that is why I'm still breathing and stuck around your gang of sociopaths."

"Quite a compliment you have given us, but today we aren't going to kill anyone rather I have a simple wish to get some coffee. Shalnark you must know a good place for that need, and I'm sure you don't mind having that drink Kurapika?"

"Oh sure got any poison for that cup of coffee?" The sneer was obvious, and Chrollo just smiled at his annoyance with having his call interrupted but knew he would get over it soon. In the meantime, he would need to give orders to Pakunoda since he would be going out for the trip for caffeine along with Machi, Kurapika, and Shalnark. As the second-in-command, it was her duty to keep the rest of the gang in line until his return.

"Boss, I don't know how to say this, but I think you and our new pal are gonna need a change of wardrobe." Who was he kidding all of our them would need to change their appearance, and should one person find out who they were then the mafia, officials, and Kurapika's friends would hunt them down. This meant they would need to find a good store for clothing, so they can get to the coffee shop without any trouble of being discovered.

**- 30 Minutes Later -**

While it was harder to break into a store during the daytime the Phantom Troupe were fortunate
some clothing stores were just now opening making it easier to steal and loot, and while Kurapika didn't like the idea he did need some new duds to wear besides the outfit of his clan which made him easy to point out by people.

The female owner certainly didn't expect to find herself wrapped up in nen-strings, and Chrollo made sure he prepared a blindfold to keep her from seeing them. They would not stick around, the witness would not be able to tell the police about how came here, and they can sneak into the people wandering around easily blending in. He would have just killed her, but with Kurapika in their party today he felt like pleasing the "princess" as Nobu would put it. Instead, she went in the backroom for now so they could pillage the goods without issue.

"It feels weird not just killing people as usual."

Shalnark commented on how awkward this felt before working on the security systems in place. Machi also noticed how different this compared to the usual order of killing anyone who comes across them. Chrollo meanwhile began to inspect the "booty" they would claim as the unique styles of clothing were now in view. His taste of goth-themed attire was here, but he wondered what his other companions would like to get.

"Ohh give me that nice shirt with the joystick Boss!"

"As long as it's something purple I don't really care what you pick."

"Hmm perfect, and what about you?" Chrollo didn't say his name since that could be heard by the employee in the other room.

All eyes turned to their other comrade who didn't really want to take part in the looting, but knew he could not stay in the same old shirt he's been wearing for almost two days now, and so he took a gander at the red mixed with black outfit, the red earrings hanging up on a wall also looked appealing to him. If the plan was to disguise himself he figured that he needed to look nothing like the Kurapika anyone else has seen before now. Chrollo felt amazed Kurapika picked out something that graceful in color and design.

"I think that will suit you perfectly now let's gets other outfits for the rest of our group before leaving."

"Aren't we going to at least pay her for stealing all this stuff?" Kurapika's mortality wanted to refuse this, but his instincts were beginning to sway his mind. Chrollo actually considered that question instead of just thinking about brushing it away as unimportant. The boy still had his ethics, but he was slowly beginning to understand how the group operates which was good.

"I suppose you're right; we should pay this fine woman with her life being granted another day. People don't cherish how important breathing really is until their lungs give out their last breath of air. Do you think a small amount of wealth can measure to the privilege of living to see another sunrise?" The lack of a reply brought a smile on the lips of the leader knowing he's won the argument. Not another word came out as the criminals took the rest of the clothing and then brought out the employee planning to let her go free once they left the store.

"Please," The female Kurai pleased despite being unable to move her body and being unable to see anyone due to the blindfold. "I just want to go home, so please just take what you want and let me go...please."

Kurapika was looking at what could have been the last moments of another victim of the Troupe, and the only reason she lives is that he was here watching helplessly. Instead of responding with
violence Machi traced her fingers of the Nen-strings untangled her binds dropping her on the floor hard. Kurai removed the blindfold seeing nothing besides an empty store, looted areas no longer holding the stolen goods, and not a drop of blood got shed in the store.

"Not a bad haul so far, but I feel like we should grab some food for dinner tonight. Nobu will likely cut off some heads if he does not get some traditional home-cooking in his belly."

Chrollo remarked as the group began to change their outfits to disguise themselves in a dark corner of the city's buildings.

"I'm sure Paku can handle the samurai's temper, but I'm more worried about Franklin if we run out of beer!" Shalnark knew the man also could get pissed if he is not drunk off his ass sometimes.

"We also need to consider finding a place to stay before we get out of this city."

Machi went further down to undress without being looked at from the boys, and while she didn't care what other people thought about her she felt like getting naked in front of her comrades was wrong. Kurapika shared that sentiment as he also changed out his looks in private, but he asked for help in piercing his right ear since his left one already had a hole in it. She agreed to his demand, the fee was also quite cheap compared to what she would offer for something more extreme like a tattoo, and Kurapika certainly didn't want that.

As the spiders gathered they all looked like they had a bunch of money, the group made sure they didn't look like how the public sees the Phantom Troupe.

Chrollo got dressed in a spiffy tracksuit that bore a similar design to Phinks outfit, with a black color on his pants, hoodie, and boots. Shalnark went simple in his makeover wearing the gaming t-shirt, the pants were blue in color along with his new shoes, and he also picked out a hat to wear a baseball-style one with a smile logo on the front. Machi settled for a black and purple baseball coat, with a light pink shirt, short light-blue jeans, tall, pink stocking with white sneakers, and like with Shalnark a white baseball cap for her head with the logo of a spider.

"Alright, Kurapika no need for the dramatic tension we won't pick on your new look!" Shalnark called out hoping he was not shy about revealing himself, but finally, their fourth teammate showed himself off to his fellow partners in crime. He left a powerful impression on everyone as he looked very different from the Kurta they have known before this makeover.

"Well? Do you think it's too much?"

For one thing, Kurapika's blonde hair looked different and wilder as now they could see the red earrings he put on himself with the help of a mirror. His outfit was a dark red turtleneck, but the design of the outfit had black lines over it. The pants were black with a gray belt holding them up, the flats were also red, and lastly, Kurapika decided to add gray wristbands to complete the attire for himself. Chrollo and his two followers were unsure how to react at first.

"You actually have a good look kid."

"Wow! Did you get a lesson in fashion from our Boss?"

"Very detailed, good matching colors, and the accessories really add to your look well done Kurapika." The praise caught him by surprise, and he scratched his head confused about why he was not feeling angry being stuck around them, and worse appreciating the compliments given about his new attire. He certainly was never going to give them praise for taking stuff, or not killing people when he's around the gang, but something was beginning to change about how he felt about the
brigade's actions.

With the outfits swapped out, the new clothing for themselves and other members gathered, and their disguises complete they could finally get their coffee with no problems. Much like with their outfits each one had their own unique tastes pleasing to their senses: Chrollo liked a simple brew nothing complicated, Shalnark wanted something very light with not so much sugar, Machi had a dark cup of coffee with some cream, and Kurapika got himself a Cappuccino for his beverage.

"Those guys have to have major wealth! How did they get that kind of clothing?"

"Perhaps they stole it no way that stuff is so cheap!"

"We should ask them where they bought those fancy outfits, the time of the year is right for some new things to buy for my family after all."

Chrollo didn't seem bothered by the vocal praise, Machi just ignored it as she drank her coffee, Shalnark felt like he was famous, and Kurapika just wanted to go somewhere else instead of feeling like he was some elitist brat. The young man was not one to grab people's attention, so all of this focus was making him get uneasy which the head of the spider noticed.

"Not used to this sort of thing?"

Kurapika refused to give him an answer just drowning his thoughts into his drink, but he began to feel how weird this whole situation has become for him. Just a few days he would have tried to kill everyone at this table, and yet here he is drinking some coffee with members of the group which ruined his life. He began to feel like he was sitting next to normal people, and not the uncaring, remorseless; and well almost remorseless gang of moral myopia.

The shopping customers around their table had no idea they were chatting, texting, and looking at cold-blooded killers who would take their lives without hesitation should they be discovered. Besides their more ruthless nature, the spiders easily passed themselves off as parts of the crowd around them. Kurapika felt sick they could just relax like this.

"Boss, what's our next target?" Machi asked with a nonchalant tone wanting to get down to business. She was ready for a bigger score than simple wardrobes to steal for the group. The hacker sighed knowing the "ninja" was one of the most serious members, and rarely cracked a smile or acted out from her usual stoic behavior. Shalnark didn't really care what they stole, but he was in need of upgrades to his current tech, the dreaded blue screen of death was now taunting him when he logged on his setup.

"I believe the next set of scarlet eyes is being held up on the black market, but I don't know if they got taken off the bidding table or if they are being held up for an auction." Kurapika was all ears about this, the fewer eyes he needed to collect the better the chances would be of escaping from his bond with Chrollo.

"That would be hard to look up Boss, but do you think we should look our travel plans? I know you like to split up our forces when a job gets completed." Shalnark figured that would be the case again here despite the recent developments with their new member.

"I thought you liked being around me Shal I feel hurt. Yes, it would be wise to form two groups once we leave this city, and once we reach our destination join together once more, however, there are some things to take care before that can happen." Gathering enough food, the directions to their next heist, and most importantly deciding which teams would get made since they could go from two groups, and or several two-man teams if the situation was dire enough.
"It's funny really the fact you're discussing this like it was just a daily part of your routine. I suppose I need to get used to this kind of life." Kurapika finally lets out his thoughts about how strange this was to him considering he might be a black-listed hunter, and even he didn't understand what is considered "dead" by everyone was like, the fact he was becoming more like a criminal was also not easy to accept.

"Ahh don't feel so down Pika! We all used to come from the same place like you. Then we met and started learning from the Boss, training ourselves to steal, and eventually become the most dreaded brigade known around the world. I'm sure you'll do fine as Uvo's replacement."

A mere glare quickly brought down the smile on the technical expert who was just trying to cheer up the troubled youth. Kurapika could not adjust to the idea of him becoming the very thing he swore to destroy no matter what.

"That's admirable to stick with your ethics. You continue to intrigue me every day, but for now, just considering that fact you've gotten what you need to survive on the streets. Believe me, we don't enjoy having luxury despite what we might steal from anyone our group comes across. Consider this your first days of living on the street."

"Yeah, and if you want you can consider me a big brother to look up too!"

"I don't think he wants your kind of influence." Machi remarked smiling on the inside at Shalnark's reaction.

"Why not, but I guess that's why you're the older, and meaner sister then!" He smiled right at Machi who looked ready to wrap her strings around his neck.

"Well, I guess that you will be getting some tough love then...brother. Does that make "Pika" the little, foolish, and innocent brother then?"

"I believe we have already gone over this, but I guess it helped me come to the teams for our trip to the next destination." Yes to accommodate each member's different actions, talents, and personalities. In some cases those pairings worked out perfectly, the other cases led to some members arguing with each other or infighting yet nothing serious came from those skirmishes.

"Wait you're not really gonna pair me up with one of your followers? The fact is most of your spiders would try killing me, and I would be forced to kill them in self-defense." Everyone looked stunned he just said that so casually, but then again they figured Kurapika would love to get that chance of removing one of his enemies from this world. Chrollo moved his hands over the table putting his cup in the middle while responding to that threat.

"Which is why you will be traveling with me." The sudden bombshell almost caused Shalnark's drink to spill over the white cover on their table. The untrustworthy new guy was going to go with their own leader during their trip for the next pair of eyes. Nobu and Feitan would have tried killing this kid if they just heard this sentence just spoken.

"I'm sure not everyone will appreciate this decision, but I feel that it is the best way to begin adjusting ourselves with our new comrade." Kurapika clenched his arms at that idea, but instead, he said nothing, and he knew not to make a scene in the middle of a public setting.

"So, how do you feel about cooking for us tomorrow? I believe we can get a decent supply of food to take for our trip, but I want to test your skills in the kitchen before we leave."

"You're...asking me to make food?" The blonde blinked thinking he was not serious about becoming
"Not really more like preparing your own kind of art. After all, even if you're considered a "dead man" it does not mean you can't create delicious food."

"More like you can't stand the dishes getting burned by Nobu right Boss?" Machi's comment brought some laughter out of everyone including Kurapika who tried holding in his giggle.

The world was such a bizarre place as the avenger of the Kurta clan was now having some fun with the people he wanted to destroy, and he didn't mind taking clothing that didn't belong to him. Kurapika wondered if this was a special hell and he died without knowing it and if this was just a strange dream that he can't wake up from. For now, he decided to continue this charade to see where it would take him in his "new" life. He also looked down at his new look seeing that perhaps the colors red and black thinking they might not really be so bad for his changing persona.

"Red and black...very different from my blue and yellow colors. Is it also a sign of who or what I'm becoming?"

- Several Hours Later- Yorknew City

The crime spree being performed by the four was going flawlessly, but in truth, it was only three members since Kurapika still refuses to consider himself a spider by this point. That being said he was not against the idea of taking good he would likely need and proper tools to help him during his travel with...Chrollo Lucilfer. If someone told him days ago he would need to head on a trek through an unknown wilderness, to reach a certain city, and his partner during the upcoming trip would be the leader of the notorious gang he wanted to kill Kurapika would have laughed...and cried.

He was beginning to appear less like a Kurta, and more like one of Chrollo's subordinates. Kurapika would have to continue telling himself there were his sworn enemies, the day might come when he forgets about his sworn revenge along with the promise to see his friends again. Should that day come his current self would truly become dead to the world, and the replacement might not act like the Kurapika Gon, Killua, and Leorio knows.

"These eyes of mine have caused so much death..."

His thoughts suddenly changed to his current task. As it turned out he would be in charge of the last meal before the adventure to their next destination started. He was grateful for this last night in the city Chrollo picked a different venue to rest in since this hotel while abandoned and old would suit their needs perfectly.

The blonde captive was grateful the kitchen area looked usable: the pots and pans didn't need much cleaning, both the stove and cutting tables looked okay, and most of all the goods stolen from the market would make a good banquet for Kurapika's talent in cooking. The female thieves stepped in to help him out since they all wanted a good meal to eat tonight. Nobunaga Hazama was sulking on the outside hating the feeling of being useless to do much of anything.

"What is taking so Goddamn long brat? When I cook there is no need for this kind of fucking waiting time to eat!"

"That explains why your dishes end up in such a bloody mess, and even this pack of criminals don't want that much blood in their meat!"

"So, it's not like that makes it bad I love raw meat!"

"That does not mean everyone else has the same kind of standard, you ignorant dumbass oaf!"
Naturally, this argument was taking place during the early stage of cooking the huge turkey which needed a lot of concentration. Pakunoda who was trying to prepare the side meals had enough of this, the woman quickly began a tirade against both men which caught everyone by surprise.

"Why don't the both of you just SHUT THE FUCK UP for a minute!"

The stoic woman's voice was loud and demanding fitting for Chrollo's second-in-command in the Phantom Troupe. Her looks were pleasing to the eyes of both men and women: the hourglass shape of her body, long and slim legs, slender arms, her hair smooth and soft, but most of all her chest area being shown in her business suit was the main attraction. Everything about her appearance seemed perfect, but like any human one flaw was clear her strange nose, and yet Nobunaga also had this same flaw on his own face.

"I was just giving my opinion on the dinner to our "head chef" and-

"More like bossing us around if you're not going to help just stand back already! As for you Kurapika why don't you focus on the turkey, and so help me if you so much as drop anything on the floor..." She crossed her arm not buying what Kurapika was selling.

"What! He started it I was just defending myself!"

This only reignited their feud as Nobu almost threw some paper in Kurapika's face while he was handling the food. Pakunoda had enough of the nonsense, the elder swordsman ran after getting a hard pinch to his earlobe, and Kurapika got the same treatment however on his nose almost like she was trying to make it look like hers.

"I swear to whatever deity you believe in this shit with Nobu has to end now!"

"Paku's right, the beef you have with Nobu is not worth the risk of pissing off everyone with a ruined dinner." Machi Komachine was sweating in the hot room, the knife in her hand was not bloody rather full of fresh peppers being chopped up for the huge feast, and Shizuku Murasaki was in charge of the special rice balls that would be packaged with fish.

"Do you think Nobu is being hard on Kurapika because of him being Uvo's replacement?"

"That is likely, but I think Nobu just enjoy screwing around with our newbie."

Kurapika wanted to object, but Pakuonda's hand just pushed him to look at the slowly browning meat in the oven, so he began to think about Chrollo's earlier statement about Pakuonda being the "mother" of the group. He certainly began to feel like the younger "brother" even if he didn't want to believe himself being part of their brigade.

"Well, I can see that the ladies are right where they belong...” Feitan decided that Nobunaga did not incur enough anger for Kurapika, so he decided to try his hand at their form of entertainment for the night. Kurapika was ready to start a brawl with the kitchen's knives at his disposal, but it seemed the other cooks were not having any of this abuse either.

"Why don't you play with the other children, the grown-ups are taking care of the actual work around here!"

"That's a laugh considering the only "work" being done is using those soft hands to carter to making food. I'm the person who breaks human bones, skin, and flesh for a daily living."

He grinned under his bandana that hid his facial expressions and wanted to see them all punk over the food. Sure Chrollo would give him a world of pain, but the torture specialist would not mind that
if it means seeing the girls suffer. The spiders co-existed with each other certainly, but that did not mean they would always get along...

"At least these hands can make a good meal! Your fingers would be spilling in the food by now either by accident or to purposely eat the dinner!" Machi starting to lose her cool was a rare sight to see considering her own calm nature and personality. The youngest out of the female spiders looked at the interrogator, and she remembered a time he looked a little different from he is now.

"Feitan used to eat so much he was actually much big-"

"If you finish that sentence I will break those glasses of yours Shizuku."

The sadist quickly walked away in a huff temporally admitting defeat, so Machi and Pakunoda snorted at Shizuku driving him away, the memories of a much chubbier Feitan came to mind. While he did get into shape with Uvogin's help Feitan always did have sweet teeth. Those days seemed much easier to deal with compared to now living as "dead men" walking.

Meanwhile, Chrollo was going through a unique reading experience than his usual taste for classical works.. Today he was reading a children's tale based on religion. Before they wrapped up this little spree of their next robbery he decided to pick out some new reading material, but it just so happens he found this certain magazine in a library.

'The knowledge of religious faith being made for children to understand.'

The mastermind knew there were several kinds of deities people worship throughout the world, but one of the most well-known is the story of "Jesus Christ" written in the Bible. The man never actually had the time to read such a book, and despite the fact, his last name likely became influenced by this and Paradise Lost he never really considered why it was given to him. Irony perhaps or maybe-

"Boss, we need to have a talk now." The samurai was glaring daggers at the mastermind who only just got to the second page of his new reading material. Chrollo did not even get a chance to formulate his opinion on the magazine so far before getting interrupted.

"I suppose you want to discuss why you have not been allowed to chop off Kurapika's head." This should have come as no surprise, the both of them have not gotten along since this arrangement was first made. Chrollo was lucky this was the last night Nobunaga and Kurapika would spend in the same place before they began their journey for the next pair of eyes.

"What, exactly is so special about that punk? He thinks he can just push me around like nothing, and he killed Uvo you can't tell me you're gonna let that go unpunished!"

"Of course not, but do you think Uvogin would want you to carry this vendetta for the rest of your life?"

"How dare you think Uvo would want me to move past this!" The tears of regret, pain, and hatred began to leak from the old samurai’s eyes.

"I know him just as much as you do Nobu. The roles reversed would not change since I knew he would see the bigger picture rather than just look at the here and now." Yes, the morning did come for them as they laid waste to every one of the mafias during that night, and the "Requiem" became composed in Uvo's honor. Now they had to look at their future, so they could not remain stuck in this city or the past.

"The only future I'm looking forward to is the last of the Kurta clan being cut in pieces by this
"Then what? You might be able to kill him without taking my life someday, but it won’t change the sense of loss within yourself." Chrollo knew this managed to calm the elder member down as he began to think about his words. Paku, Franklin, Machi, and Shalnark also felt like they should kill the last surviving Kurta, but Chrollo made them see how valuable he could become to their group.

"So, it's not like he wants to really act like one of us with those damn morals of his, and the fact he's such a preachy child!"

"It's not like we are without our own code of ethics Nobu, the fact is we have several things in common with Kurapika."

Even if the blonde valued human life more than everyone else in the Phantom Troupe his skills actually fit the methods used by the group to steal goods. Funny, the very fact they would have such a good meal tonight was in fact because of Kurapika's talents. He didn't like the idea of depriving a place of food supplies, but his growling stomach chose the decision for him.

"If you want to critique his skills give him some time at least. Three months in we can test how he's doing, and then you all can figure if we should..."let him go" so to speak." While the Judgement Chain lingered on his body, the idea of finding a way to remove it was not impossible. In fact, he's come to learn about the idea of a Nen-Exorcist who can remove certain conditions, curses, and or limitations placed on by nen-abilities.

"Consider it a trial run in a manner of speaking Nobu."

"Tch, whatever just don’t be surprised if I end up killing him in the future Boss!" There was no way in hell the elder would ever consider Kurapika as Uvo's replacement if he could hold a grudge against the spiders than so can Nobunaga. Shaking his head the elder left Chrollo to his "literature" wanting to let out his feelings on something he can slice apart.

The spiders not putting their work into the food were busy doing their usual business, the idea was to travel further east on the Yorbian Continent. Several goals would be open once they left the city: the next pair of eyes was being held up for a similar auction, the mafia would not find them allowing them to become more open again, but most of all the possible location of a Nen-exorcist was in a place called Greed Island.

"Boss, I think you want to take this call."

Franklin Bordeaux rushed over to Chrollo who only got two more pages in before deciding to give up for the night. While the group mostly operated by themselves it was not uncommon they would have outside help from other sources, and mainly the support of the Zoldyck family and it was Illumi's effort that kept Chrollo from actually being killed at the hands of Zeno and Silva.

Grabbing the phone the criminal mastermind feared the person on the other line was the clown he's been trying to avoid dealing with, but Franklin told him it was an old contact which brought a sigh out of the usually stoic criminal.

"Gittarackur, it has been some time since we last spoke..."

"Lucifer, I believe you shouldn't really be answering this call if you are trying to avoid a certain someone..."

Often when these conversations would begin spiders debated if they were trying to outwit each other, but other days they believe it was some weird mental foreplay between both men. In any case,
the men knew they would not speak to each other unless it was for business purposes so Chrollo got to the point.

"Do you mind telling me what Hisoka wants you to call me for then?"

"So, you want me gone already? Well, I merely wish to request a favor from your organization. I believe you have recently suffered two losses in your ranks."

"Indeed, but I'm sure you've already spoken with that "traitor" already haven't you. As for the other spot, Uvogin's spot has now been filled by someone who might become very talented with the right guidance." Well more like corrupting influence by the leader of the gang.

"Of course, the "deceased" Kurapika does seem like a useful ally, but I believe there is someone else I have in mind for the Phantom Troupe. In fact, the prospect is a member of my family Kalluto Zoldyck."

"How strange, and you don't offer your other brother Killua instead. True he's in the company of Gon and Leorio, but I have not heard much about this member of the Zoldyck line." Yes even with the legacy most of the family members gained due to their body counts Kalluto was never brought up for discussion.

"That's true, but let's say recent developments have changed matters here, and despite Kikyo's protests Kalluto honestly wants to join your organization."

His reason for trying to enter into such a criminal group was actually noble in trying to find his "missing brother" Killua, but Illumi was trying to induct him in for more twisted reasons. First, he can help teach the "sheltered" brother of the family how to learn the art of killing from such brutal murderers, and second to help further Hisoka's goal of fighting Chrollo Lucilfer with none of the spiders around to save him.

"Hmm, so you believe he can truly become a true assassin with my help then? I suppose it's something that might be worth a chance, but I can't see him in person just yet since well I'm still considered "dead" by the mafia."

"I don't want to ruin your funeral either, the meeting can take place on Greed Island. You can have some of your spiders meet him there, but don't be surprised if a certain clown will be around there as well."

Was that a warning or threat? Knowing Illumi it was likely both options, but Chrollo was grateful he was not hiding his partnership with the magician of deadly gum. As for the idea of another newbie that can get interesting, to say the least. Kurapika was still adjusting himself, but the mere thought of him teaching someone in his shoes how to survive in the brigade made the head spider smile.

"Alright then, the meeting will take place in one month. I can't give a correct date since there is some business I need to deal with first, but that should give you some time to prepare your brother for the new life he's about to have for himself." Yes, it will benefit both sides since Kalluto will return to his family a professional killer, and the Troupe will return to having 12 limbs along with its full strength.

"Perfect, but if you don't mind me asking how was he...Killua I mean." Ahh, he should have expected that question. He was the last person to have seen how the ex-assassin was doing recently, and he knew how overprotective the Zoldyck tribe was towards its own.

"He's still refusing to accept his place in your family. I can't say what he's doing now, so what I can say is he's likely going to start following us to save his friend Kurapika."
"I see...well I suppose he's still just as stubborn as ever. This has been an informal conversation now
don't be a stranger Chrollo..." The cell phone went into a dial tone as the leader had another issue to
deal with in the upcoming days. Then again getting a chance to spend alone time with Kurapika
might be worth it.

"Hisoka is stalking us, the idea of splitting apart seems like a bad idea."

The "Frankenstein" certainly didn't pull any punches with his suspicions with their newest
"applicant" for the gang, and Chrollo had to agree everything seemed very convenient, to say the
least. Having a new member would be a benefit to the group; it was also baited for a hunter to lure
out prey. In this case, it is an extermination against bugs he wants to squash.

"We can't live our lives in fear Franklin, and remember his real target is me not the spider as a
whole." At least that's what Chrollo hoped was the plan Hisoka had in mind. Turning his thoughts as
the smell in the kitchen the mastermind would enjoy this night while it lasted before meeting with his
changed future.

At least the last supper was complete, and Kurapika managed to outdo himself with Machi, Shizuku,
and Pakuonda's help, the critics Nobu and Fetian were ready to tear the meal apart not physically
rather filling complaints against the cooks. The others actually look forward to the huge traditional
Japanese feast made for the dinner. Kurapika was frowning knowing who would give him crap over
the meal starting right at the both of them.

"Time to taste what the girls brought to the table." The mature killers began to snicker like
schoolgirls at the "girl" in question.

"Not a word..."

Pakunoda whispered to the angry Kurta simply making him put down the dishes to have the meal in
peace. All of the famous criminals gather around the table to begin the feast, and Chrollo naturally
got to sit in the main chair with everyone else around him. The smells entered the nose of Phinks
Magkav who gave his approval with a whistle, but Phinks was on the side of those who wanted the
surviving Kurta to prove his worth for the Troupe.

Before eating Nobu demanded they pay respect for the fallen, and he was looking right at the killer
of Uvogin while Chrollo began the toast for their dead comrade. The tension was sharp already
between them both, and no one expected it to get any better with time.

"Uvogin, our lost friend who is no longer with us, the meal we shall now devour will be in your
name. Our sacrifice and memory will never be forgotten in our minds and hearts amen..."

Kurapika almost snorted hearing that last part come from the man with the last name as his, but then
again this kind of irony didn't phase him anymore. The sounds of lips, tongues, meat and other
bodily noises got made as everyone became entranced into their food provided to them by Kurapika
and the women. Kortopi, Bonolenov Ndongo, and Franklin were the quietest about their opinions,
but Shalnark quickly let out cheers for the turkey's delicious taste.

"Pika, why the hell didn't you consider becoming a cook! I mean this is good like really damn
good!"

"Shalnark, I can't disagree this is one of the best meals I've eaten in a while, but we have to thank our
wonderful women for helping prepare it as well," Franklin said digging into more meat before it was
gone at the rate everyone was eating now. Nobu and Feitan were still giving evil glares at Kurapika
sitting Pakuonda and Chrollo; that did not mean they had a lot on their plates silently admitting the
"brat" didn’t very bad with the dinner.

"Boss, have you figured out what teams we are going with for the big trip?" Machi said taking a break with some wine trying to wash down the steamy food in her gut. The remaining spiders were busy still eating; the latter of the bunch wanted to also hear what their leader had planned while the former was just trying to finish the food. The head spider knew this would need to get resolved, so why not announce it in front of his entire organization.

"The teams will be this: Kortopi and Bonolenov, Phinks and Shalnark, Feitan and Shizuku, Machi and Nobunaga, Pakunoda and Franklin, but this means Kurapika will be my partner." Suddenly the table looked like a complete disaster with several members of the gang accidentally making a mess of the food. Out of all the members, he decided on the one most likely to attempt leaving them or commit suicide by killing his captor.

"Me? You don't possibly expect me to go along with you!" Kurapika figured this was a trick, some kind of plot, and maybe Chrollo would try removing his eyes or anything else just to mess with him. This was the last thing he expected to deal with tonight, and even Nobu along with Feitan hoped this was their leader joking about this idea.

"He's still can backstab you, and your stubborn willingness to trust him despite the fact he hates your guts!" Nobu and Feitan cried out trying to make Chrollo see reason.

"Well, it's not I would mind being poisoned if Kurapika can make such delicious food like this." The joke didn't make anyone laugh not even the unwilling captive in Chrollo's care. The samurai decided to let his feelings get heard before everything got out of hand.

"Boss, why don't you take Paku over that brat. At least she is our mother-hen who you can trust and not that spoiled, arrogant, and childish runt!"

"Oh relax, Nobu. Can't you enjoy this feast that was not burned by your hands for once."

"I will not relax as long as that murderer of my friend gets to stuff his face like a pig!"

"Nobu, shut your damn mouth!" Pakunoda yelled out unable to relax since the samurai was once again instigating drama. Kurapika could not restrain himself under such abuse now deciding in fighting back with words of his own.

"Do you think I want to stay here with all you monsters! I'm trying really hard not to think about killing anyone of you, but it's not easy when each one of you took away all the people in my clan. Yet I suck it up, help make food, and hell I've even stolen items from other stores and people today! So, when I have to deal with these insults as the thanks I receive...it gets my blood boiling."

His eyes were just as red as the first night he got ensnared into the strings of the spider. His scarlet gaze slowly directed itself at everyone, the young man was sick of getting treated like a sideshow for their enjoyment.

"How about we test out his durability. Sure we can't kill the punk, but that doesn't mean we can't teach him to respect his elders, Nobu?"

"Now you're talking!"

Before Nobunaga could draw his weapon Chrollo summoned his book which forced everyone to stop what they were doing; the Skill Hunter while merely a vessel of Chrollo's vast abilities became used as a peacemaker during incidents like this. Any doubt about their leader's silent order was gone once they saw the look in those dark eyes.
"Can't you behave for even one day without resorting towards senseless violence?"

That is the reason they became so famous, as indeed they were a happy family in their own twisted kind of way.

"I have no issue with Kurapika being around," Shizuku spoke up to the defense of the Kurta which surprised him, the fact she also used Shalnark's nickname also didn't go unnoticed. "He seems pretty interesting to have around us." She usually was considered very air-headed, and yet she was also pretty blunt with her words not holding back.

"Well, the meal he helped us make was better than most of our usual nights so he's not that bad." Machi also came to Kurapika's aid entrusting the decision made by her leader.

"I know Uvogin was one of our founders, so would he want us to just kill him for simple revenge I don't believe that. The Uvo I knew would appreciate the man who defeated him now joining this group."

"Hey! I am still not considering myself a spider so quit saying that!" His huff made Chrollo chuckle finding his pouting expression cute. Why not let him keep hold of that defying nature, and it makes him very special compared to his other followers, but that does not mean he cared about them any less than Kurapika. Finally, everyone got back to finishing up their supper in peace.

"Something's changing in our leader. Do you think it's bad Kortopi?"

"Could be, and yet it could also be a good thing for him and us Bono."

Time passed as everyone knew tomorrow would be a big day for their huge travel into their next stops along the way. Sleep is a must for their bodies, however, getting rest would become an issue for everyone. Kurapika was tossing around on the decent bed, the fact it was the first chance he got to sleep in a good place in the past few days was not comforting his busy mind. Well, that and Chrollo once more sitting by him seemingly acting like a man who didn't need any rest just a book, a chair, and most of all his twisted ideals.

Earlier Kurapika believed he died and this was simply hell, on the contrary, he was very much alive, but now he was beginning to suspect he was the one turning into a demon. It was not physical changes, the claws, fangs, scales, and eyes of a monster were not seen on his body, and yet his body he could feel it adapting to these strange events.

'I should hate myself even more than the other spiders, but at the same time I'm already kind of hypocritical for helping steal for this gang.' He could no longer claim he was just an unwilling hostage of the infamous spiders. In the end would the sins he would now commit be worth it to reclaim all the stolen items of his clan, but more importantly the scarlet eyes.

- September 13th -

"He wept with all six eyes, and the tears fell over his three chins mingled with bloody foam. The teeth of each mouth held a sinner, kept as by a flax rake: thus he held three of them in agony."

The ears managed to wake up Kurapika as he heard the quiet voice of Chrollo reading out another page from one of his stolen books. The literature was not familiar to him, the smile on the black-haired man made him cringe in slight disgust yet he didn't scowl at him being in his personal space this time. The mastermind looked pleased Kurapika got his sleep, straightening his back he knew that he had to explain how their route would be going today.

"I wish I could tell you what I've learned from this book, and so that can get explained later since we
now will leave today."

"Aren't you worried about your forces being made thin? That clown might seek them out you know." Why should he care about that? Kurapika's conscience felt horrified that his lips spoke that line. The head spider knew that Kurapika was starting to become more complacent with his spot in the Phantom Troupe. It was not a complete assimilation, but it was a good start.

"My followers can handle themselves, and they know how to survive without me for some time. Besides after an operation, we usually split apart for several months and this is merely a few days."

True, the men and women were mass-murderers so they could likely handle mostly whatever threat comes along, but Hisoka was not like other threats. He also felt nervous about the clown going after them, so how can the chain-assassin deal with him now that they were outside the Hunter Exams. The sunlight almost caused Kurapika to shutter into the darkness, the moment seemed like a vampire seeking a safe place to hide Chrollo mused to himself.

"This will be a good chance to learn about living in the wilderness, having to catch food to eat for the night, and sleeping in the outdoors, but on second thought those exams likely have already prepared you for that..."

The nod confirmed that the young Kurta had some experience to survive the outdoor environment, but he didn't mention Gon and his friends giving him support in that field. The conversation ended as they knew they needed to pack up, and for Chrollo's to give his last orders before they gather at the auction site. They would need to plan for this heist, and they didn't know what kind of security was set-up there, so, for now, they would act with caution.

"Boss, please reconsider Nobu might leave or kill that boy when we all meet up again."

"That's when I'm leaving him in your care Paku. You're the only other person besides me who can manage to keep that hot blood in our samurai cooled down." She knew that was possible, but she never saw Nobunaga get so upset like last night. As she considered the idea she wondered if separation would help simmer down this hatred growing between Nobu and Feitan.

"Very well, Chrollo..." Her faith in her leader brought them this far she can't let him down now. Everyone else had their bags packed, and stood at the front door of their hideout ready for final instructions. Looks all came down on Kurapika judging, wondering, and scrutinizing the traveling partner of Chrollo Lucilfer.

"You all know how to behave, and I'm sure we can get along without each other for at least a week or two. That being said if not all of you can make it to our next heist I want to say now thank you for your hard work. I know many of you could have lived different lives as ordinary people, but each one of you chose to instead follow my lead. I can't promise your lives will continue if you stay behind me, and yet I know that life cannot be enjoyed without that risk!"

Each one of his men felt somewhat moved by this speech, and even Kurapika was not expecting this kind of emotion out of the usually stoic mastermind.

"We are the Phantom Troupe, sworn enemies of the world, and yet all of us thrive on such a reputation! All of you have placed your faith in me, even when you had the right to question my wisdom you still obey the head of the spider. For that, I am truly grateful for such loyalty..." All of the eyes looked widened by such praise from the man whom they would lay down their lives to save.

"Now let us match towards our next meal, the orders have been given to all of you, and failure is not acceptable since all of you shall return to me alive now go!" With their orders detailed in their minds
from which ways to go, how to find a good place to rest, and the site they would all gather the spider moved apart. All the pairs would mainly be heading east, but they would all take different paths to avoid possibly getting detected by anyone possibly tracking their movements.

'So, this is where my descent into madness begins on the way through Jukai forest to reach our next big crime spree.'

The day grew long, the sun was weighing down on his body, and the fact was they were only halfway toward the forest despite running around since the morning began. One thing was for sure Kurapika did not have to worry about himself getting out of shape. Chrollo also looked built for this kind of physical speed considering how fast they were moving through the land.

"Need a rest, Kurapika?" The smile was daring him to admit defeat, but the blonde didn't let his partner get enjoyment refusing a chance to rest when he got asked. The head spider wondered if Kurapika's pride refused to submit when he should, but if he could hold out for a while longer that would be just fine with him.

"This reminds me of when I first starting my life as a thief."

"Are you going to annoy me with your backstory during our trip?"

"Well, there is not much we know about each other, and I don't think you want to get bored of being unable to kill me right?"

Once more he did not reply merely focusing his efforts on pushing his body further until he gives out to exhaustion. Chrollo didn't want his accomplice breaking down, and so he decided to admit to needing some rest for his sake. Kurapika smirked on the inside yet was upset Chrollo was trying to look out almost like he did care about his feelings.

"Tch, don't like act you're doing me a favor just like before you're simply manipulating my feelings for your benefit!"

"The only thing I hope to gain is your trust nothing more."

"Are you sure that it's not also your only way of gaining my powers..."

"My that intellect of yours catches on quickly." The smile made him want to punch that handsome, slick, and soft...no horrible face and leave it with several bruises. Shaking his head the bag was opened revealing a good source of water, their bodies were dripping so much liquid it was only natural they had to recharge. Humans usually contained water running in their systems, but with enough work, through exercise, heat, and movement it comes out through the skin pores.

"You can hang very well Kurapika, the others figured you would demand a rest earlier than 11 A.M in the morning."

"Was there some bet involved in that gambit?" Kurapika quickly learned from Shalnark the need to waste jenny on a silly contest about who can steal the most during a heist, arm-wrestling contests, and or drunk dares done when they became bored with the day.

"No they did not put real betting odds against you, and I don't always put profit down for bets sometimes other things have more value than jenny." Yes, Chrollo wanted to win more than just simple kinds of treasure before his life reaches its conclusion.

"You didn't think the Kurta Clan had any value?"
"You will never let that go I see, but I was mistaken about several things in my years. Your tribe's wealth and strength are one of those oversights, and while I can't change the past the future can always be rewritten."

"OVERSIGHT! You dare call murdering all of my loved ones just a mere mistake!"

"What else can I say then? I'm sorry they had to die. If I could take it all back I would in a heartbeat." He knew all that would be a lie which could severely piss off Kurapika compared to just being honest with him. His traveling partner was not that stupid and he would not treat the young hunter like a moron.

"You live on for a reason, the purpose might simply be revenge, to reunite with your friends, and maybe some new desire you will have as time moves forward." Kurapika's face suddenly grew black with his red glare turning back to a normal frown of confusion.

"Can you say the same for your own ambition or whatever the hell you want from me and those subordinates."

"That might be the cause, but I can't say if anything can ever satisfy my desires completely." His stolen good mounted up yet not many could bring some amount of joy inside of his heart.

"Could it be you really enjoying being around those comrades of yours?"

"I'm...not sure." It was something he never put much thought into before getting asked that question. Chrollo wondered if he should research this matter when they got the chance once their next big score got completed. For a split second, Kurapika looked like a lost boy hearing and seeing the older man so unsure what to think about the concept of friendship.

"So, what do you wish to ask me? I know we can't spend much time rest however it does give us the chance to learn something about each other. I'm giving you three questions you can ask me, but depending on the question I might feel inclined to answer a different one instead."

"Are you trying to act like some genie out of a bottle?" Chrollo was unable to hold in his laughter at such a comment being made. He knew Kurapika had a sense of humor in his avenging personality.

"Hardly despite being able to grant the desires of my followers. No, I'm more akin to a twisted kind of angel." Now it was the blonde's turn at laughing from hearing such a remark about his partner.

"Yeah, and I'm a horrible demon from the bowels of hell! If anything you're more like a black angel Chrollo... Lucifir."

"Nelo Angelo, Satan, the "Fallen One", and the enemy of God. Indeed I've heard the tales spoken about him, but I never really read the bible."

"You are not serious, right? Why do you have that last name then?" Kurapika thought it was a sick joke someone with that last name didn't read any material containing the legacy of that iconic name for better or worse. Better yet it only made the name fit the Phantom Troupe's leader even more.

"It's something from my past that I can't discuss now, and now you only have one question left."

"I only asked you one question you bastard!"

"Two actually, the phrase you are not serious was asking in a questioning way so my answer to that is yes."
He was outsmarted once more by this man's swift thinking, and he silently cursed himself for falling into this trap. He had to learn something from him, so Kurapika needed to create a good question that appeals to both their desires and then he knew exactly what to say next.

"I might not know if I will uphold the comments of my Judgement Chain, but there is something I wish to know from you. What do you want from me? I know there is still my lingering hatred to kill you and all of your spiders, but I still can't understand why you recruited me or why you still haven't killed me..."

"Are you still worried about that? Do you think I would have let you survive this long if I truly intended to end your life, the vow you made to reunite with your own friends, but most of all collecting the remaining scarlet eyes? To answer your question I think you have the potential to become the most valuable thing I've ever stolen."

"I'm not your property you son of a..."

"No Kurapika, you have more worth than that rest assured. It will be most interesting seeing you earn your keep in the Troupe."

The blonde looked up at the sky no longer wanting to speak, so he took in the sight around him as they were now moving far away from the city. Part of him would miss the city despite what he's going through, and most of all it reminded him that he lost his friends despite knowing he would see them again one day., his companion thought the same looking back at the place Uvogin lost his life to the man walking behind him.

"Goodbye for now Yorknew..." Both spoke in unison before heading further into the deep, dark woods. Now things had gotten interesting since Kurapika was actually more used to venturing in the worlds; Chrollo was more used to navigating towns or cities so being in such a massive forest likely could lead to him getting lost.

"I think we should set up camp for the night. The time it's going to take for us to leave this area will be too long for the rest of the time in the day, but if you want to travel at night then be my-"

"No, the truth is I knew we would need to spend one night in Jukai forest." This almost meant they would need to catch some animals to eat for the night since they could not pour into their reserves just yet. Kurapika felt like he was back in the Hunter Exams except he was now an experienced hunter.

"Do you regret spending some extra time to get the stolen tent for tonight or..."

"Let's just find some food to eat!"

The wildlife was running free during the middle of the day, the creatures sometimes innocent and harmless, but others looked ready to kill or attack the first person they stumble across in the forest. Lucky for the duo they both felt like fish tonight, and they were able to uncover a deep river flowing near their campsite. The dirt and muck didn't ruin their better outfits as they changed into more simple white shirts with black pants on Chrollo and blue ones for Kurapika.

"I'm not used to fishing like this, so I'm sure with your help I'll catch on quickly."

"You don't know how to navigate this forest, and now you tell me that you don't know how to fish. I'm starting to believe you didn't just want to keep an eye on me rather you need me to help you out!"

"Believe or not there are some things I'm unable to do very well Kurapika." The black-labeled hunter knew that was him being truthful, but he still could not believe Chrollo was acting humble around
him. The sun began to finally set in the sky as Kurapika was able to finally grab their meal for tonight and told Chrollo to prepare a fire. Naturally, the older man could not spark one with the two sticks given.

"The person holding the Skill Hunter book with so many powers can't even start a campfire?"

The childish stare from the black-haired man almost made Kurapika smile in delight. Shaking his head the Kurta decided to step in taking a crack at the fire while Chrollo dealt with preparing the fish. Once the moon rose up in the sky, the embers of the fire move in the air, and the smell of burning meant entered their noses Kurapika and Chrollo oddly felt at peace.

"You know earlier when you told me that you never read the bible I wanted to know something, the concept of angels or heaven along with demons and hell. Is that why you have your last name or did something happen that made you change it?" Kurapika said while taking a few bites of the catch of the day.

"Long story short the man I used to really be no longer exists leaving who you see in his place. I don't want to go over the details right now...it's complicated."

"So, I can't ask if you about possibly spreading your wings then can I?"

"No, but perhaps I can tell you they aren't white more like the color gray or even black."

'Fallen from grace that sums up what I've been through so far.' Kurapika did not know how deep this rabbit hole would go, but he must continue his life for the promise of the reunion.
Act 5 Love And Hate

Chapter Summary

Wondering into a forest with the folks within the wild, the fallen angel flew with the chained avenger towards their next destination and target for the precious Scarlet Eyes.

Act 5 Love And Hate
- September 13th - Jukai Forest

While the time on Kurapika's new watch read 12:30 the night was very much young, the wind also felt rather vibrant blowing hard on the trees around their tent area. Kurapika's hair was being undone with mother nature's blowing, and Chrollo offered a solution with a gray skull cap for his yellow locks. The black haired elder considered Kurapika a street-style version of Rapunzel with his current outfit.

'A far cry from his traditional outfits that come from his clan.'

Then again Chrollo didn't know what it meant to come from some bloodline filled with tradition, legacy, and or family fellowship. It didn't bother him when he took the lives of everyone Kurapika ever cared about in his life. Despite the conditions placed on them, he would not feel surprised if his partner would try choking him later in the night. Of course, the head spider was not exactly an innocent man who wouldn't attempt that on his enemies.

"Something has been following us..." The blonde could not find much sleep as he used Gyo on the surroundings near them for this intrusion. The last thing both of the fugitives expected was a battle with some person or beast here. Kurapika didn't want to hurt anyone who might stumble across them, but the same could not be said for Chrollo.

"Such is the risk of wandering around in these kinds of places, but we don't have any other option as two "dead" people."

"Yes, but if these things are dangerous we could end up floating in a river."

"Are you implying this is will be our burial ground? Here I thought you had no sense of humor..."

The idea of both of them dying when they were nowhere close to their goal almost made him laugh. Of course, the criminal knew there were many dangers lying in the unknown parts of the world, and even forests like this could hold secrets and threats no man has ever never seen. That's why he was thrilled about exploring such lands with his gang and a new companion.

"So, how do you want to handle this?" Kurapika dryly commented towards the possible situation unfolding.

"We don't have to get fancy about it should they attack simply kill or drive the stalkers away." A beat came on Kurapika's face heading such a simplistic plan. Then again considering how ruthless both could act that didn't seem like a bad idea.

"Wait I think they are ready to come out..." Kurapika whispered listening to the rustling leaves to
find their location in the darkness. Their eyes combined with Gyo finally saw the creatures, the animals were simply bunnies that often roamed this forest area. A sense of relief came over the men thankful they didn't need to wear themselves out in battle.

"Hmm these creatures are going to end up killing us, and yet it would be humorous to end up eaten alive by such fluffy and small animals."

"Nobunaga wouldn't mind that being my fate..." The hateful samurai sudden popped into his head once Chrollo made his comment. The head spider knew he would likely never get over this arrangement, but in the end, he was not the leader of the Troupe. While there was still doubt in some of the members if Kurapika could continue in bringing the group fortune perhaps they will come to tolerate or even respect him.

Kurapika, on the other hand, was now holding the coin in his hand, playing around with the gift symbolizing membership into Chrollo's brigade. While he still didn't want to become part of the spider's web he did admit there were certain benefits of being an outlaw.

'I don't have to worry about obeying laws much besides my own conscious, the fact I will get everything stolen from my clan back, and most of all my comrades don't have to worry about the Troupe running into them, but I doubt they won't attempt to follow us.' Just another problem to add to his future worries along with Hisoka, and this next big auction they would attempt to steal the next scarlet eyes from.

"You might want to get back to bed now," Chrollo replied entering the big black tent they would need to share for the night. "We need to get out of this forest in the next few days so the quicker we make our next run the better." The blonde didn't argue submitting to the suggestion as he knew his mind would still be racing with thoughts even during sleep.

Kurapika expected a nightmare or the lucky chance of having a good dream, the darkness surrounding him was already a bad omen for another night terror. The area didn't have the color green or anything resembling a forest location. No Chrollo, no tent, and nothing that looked like the place Kurapika was staying for the night just a bleak land with no life around him.

( Heads up this next scene is not for the faint of heart. I won't get into a lot of detail, but yeah it's not gonna be pretty. )

"Chrollo?" He never believed that he would actually want to be around that man or call out his name like that. That's when Kurapika took notice of the silver chains wrapped around the dead tree limbs, and it gave off quite the ominous vibe.

'Is this some kind of prison?' The sky looked black, and yet the rain falling down was dark red almost like the color of blood. His nose took in the smell he can't stand, his body began to shake violently just like before when he was unable to control his senses. The running "water" also looked red with the color of death, several human limbs were moving around in the shallow waters.

"Please be a dream...why is this happening to me?!" Just like before only this was much worse than last time. The isolation was getting to Kurapika, his legs moved around looking for anyone as the light of the red moon shines down above his head.

"This is that night all over again." The fight with Uvogin, having the first blood of the spiders on his hands, and the events which changed his life forever. While he was lost in his thoughts unseen chains began to wrap themselves around his body trapping the user of the steel; the Conjurer had been ensnared by his own Chain Jail. His own power turning against him like before when he lost control of himself.
'Kill...the spiders...why can't I kill them...' The voice was Kurapika's only much darker, its tone was full of malice and the unseen speaker continued taunting the Kurta stuck in chains.

'You betrayed me and everything you believed in!' The unseen voice hissed in Kurapika's ears, the cold steel around his body tightens causing some pain in his body. The black label hunter wondered if this was actually happening to him, and or this was simply a projection of his conscious. While he didn't know the right answer he certainly didn't want to be here right now.

"What are you supposed to be exactly? My vanity, anger, hatred, or my guilt?!"

'I am a shadow...of yourself. The true self...'

"A shadow? What the hell does that mean?!" His eyes looked around trying to find who was speaking, but that's when he took notice of the ground. His shadow began to get much bigger than usual, the shape of the silhouette looked different than normal. Then red eyes began to glow from the ground Kurapika was hovering above.

'Your soul is in limbo because of this change of perspective, and I'm going to have to break you out of this cell you're building for yourself!"

"Are you trying to make me kill Chrollo despite the rules of the Judgement Chain!"

"Rules can be broken; if there are conditions for your power then surely this is a loophole in said laws. Perhaps even a way to remove this bond over your heart..."

Impossible there can't be a way to remove the commandments planted over his life, and there was no way Kurapika knew about the idea of something or someone removing his nen-abilities. Of course, Chrollo might be aware of whatever his "shadow" was eluding about which he might need to research in the future.

"A way to remove nen-conditions. Is there really someone or something that can do that?"

'In this world, such a possibility might exist. Still, that does not affect your mindset and your recent bonding with the person who drove you into seeking rightful revenge!'

He remembered that was his entire goal for many years growing up without his clan. The hunter for the spider's blood was thrust upon him, but now he didn't want to claim their lives out of fear and some other reason he could not name at the moment. It was not what some call "Stockholm Syndrome" or he at least hoped was not the case with him and the Troupe.

"I will not let them get away with their actions, the justice long awaiting them will be served!"

"Will you include your name on that list as well?"

He thought that comment was just a sick sense of humor from the mysterious voice, but he realized it was serious about the idea of Kurapika being a spider. He didn't even bother replying, his focus turning on the bonds still tightly squeezing his body making red lashes over his naked body. The lack of clothing revealed the scars and wounds he's gained over the years.

"I thought you were my shadow, so now you're acting as the judge of my soul!"

'That's up to yourself to decide. Just remember your blood, your family, and everything you hold dear to your heart. The second you betray those feelings these chains will destroy your mind and soul Kurapika Kurta...' To illustrate the point several pointy spikes began to impale Kurapika's arms and legs. The blood slowly came from the wounds, his neck was now being strangled under his own
power, and all he could do was observe this torture.

"So this is how it felt like in those last moments..." The events matched up with the setting, and the only difference was the blonde was now in Uvogin's position with the chains picking apart its master with no sign of stopping this gory show. His teeth grinding down on his tongue hoping to ease the pain building up in his body. The bars were surrounding him, the prison colors were simply red and silver, blood and chains, but none of this could break him down.

'Still holding on despite your suffering...perhaps you need to learn in a different way.'

Suddenly he could hear the sounds of movement near his suspended body held up in the air. Then the horror truly began; the injuries on his body would heal in time, but the sight of the dead Kurta looking at him scarred his mind forever. Their rotting corpses taunting him, the empty sockets in their bodies, the horrible stench of their decay, the smiles on their faces made Kurapika break into a heated sweat.

"Make it stop...make it stop...make it stop..." The madness began to take hold as he continued to whisper this mantra to himself as the hands began to caress his scarred face, the skin cut with more of the spiked chains still hurting his flesh.

"MAKE IT STOP!"

His emotions were unleashed despite the binds around his body as the final act involved Pario coming in front of the tortured soul with both of Kurapika's blood parents who all giggled at him. Their gentle laughter caused his head to fall downward, and his mind was close to shattering into pieces. All this moment needed to have was some horned demon, a tail curling around with delight, and the fanged smile of the ruler of the hellfire that would slowly consume the Conjurer into damnation.

"We love you Kurapika!" The echoed ringed in his ears, his body was shaking around violently, and he was now acting like a caged animal fighting to break free of the chains. His rational nature was gone along with the person he was; in his place was a beast created from the misery he's been through. The voice seemed to have made its point slowly telling Kurapika the conversation was over.

"Honor thy commandments lest ye be undone by them."

His eyes opened to look at the twisted grins on his parents looking right in his face, but suddenly they exploded into chunks of meat and blood. His mind was close to shutting down from the fear ensnaring his soul witnessing this sight before him. Finally, the world around him grew black, and he was lucky his life might be ending at this moment until a voice spoke to Kurapika.

"Wake up." It didn't sound like his own voice warped, deeper, and crueler the sound was teasing and soft much like...

"Chrollo?" He should have laughed to himself feeling glad he was looking at Chrollo Lucilfer's face relived his dream was over with, the nightmare seemed more horrifying than the reality of being stuck with a mass-murderer that he needed to travel with for the next few days. His body was dripping wet over the terror he witnesses that made his partner worry about his condition.

"Another nightmare plaguing your mind?"

Chrollo heard from Nobu about Kurapika's recent misfortune of having such terrible dreams. Naturally, the samurai thought it was his "weak" conscious trying to wear him down some more, but the head spider took things in a different light. Despite everything he's been through lately his resolve
was still very much strong.

"Nothing you need to worry about if anything you should be glad to see me like this..."

His voice came out slowly due to the trauma he just endured. Hearing the sounds of birds chirping meant they lasted through the night with no kind of beasts coming to kill the both of them. Chrollo to Kurapika's shock handed the blonde a towel with some water instead of just mocking him like the hunter expected.

"Today brings a new chance to continue our trip," Chrollo spoke, turning around looking at the morning sun beginning to rise up in the sky with a smile. "You will need your strength to continue onward. Take some time to calm down, but know we must get back on the move shortly."

While the encounter from last night was nothing concerning the fact remained there could be something else in these woods. Kurapika knew Chrollo made a good point so he nodded closing the tent for some amount of privacy.

The blonde rogue thought about just abandoning Chrollo during the night before he slept, but he began to doubt he could get back to the city on his own, and what consequences would come by failing to obey both Chrollo and the will of the Judgement Chain. His mind suggested he flee, but his body refused to comply with that idea.

'Another betrayal of my mind?' The young man thought to himself now getting ready for the next part of the hike. In a way he was grateful to get away from civilization for a while, the fact is he could act normally without having to deal with the other spiders, and the only person he needed to worry about was his partner.

"No one else is around to see me like this besides him..." Shaking his head Kurapika changed into his casual Kurta attire looking more like his old self again, but the skull cap remained on his head along with the new red earrings.

Finally leaving the safety of the tent he began to pack it up should they need another night of rest in the forest, so Chrollo didn't have to complain about coming back here for rest since apparently, he didn't want to sleep in a sleeping bag or under some leaves.

"Remember I'm a professional thief, not some nature expert, so that is where you come in Kurapika."

The morning dew was on the leaves, the insects were trying to surround the new flesh entering their lair, and the wild animals just observed the both of them wandering around the place. Kurapika wondering how they would navigate through this place to find civilization again, but Chrollo had planned this out with Shalnark's help. He memorized the map created by the computer genius but decided Kurapika should take a look at it in case they do end up lost.

"You mean you only now decide to tell me you knew exactly where we had been going! Do you realize I could not have listened to you and ended up lost here!"

"I figured you would just want to hurry to the auction, but I figured we could spend a night or two here since we are now ahead of schedule." He thought his comrade would enjoy the night with him out in this wilderness.

"I just want to get the Scarlet Eyes as quickly as possible, and I damn sure don't want to hang out or get along with you!"
"Hmm well that's disappointing, but I suppose you are correct we should get further along in "our" journey..."

Damn it he should have to know that remark was reminding him of the deal between them. Sighing he followed the direction on the map which would take them into the center of the forest which meant they were halfway out of the woods.

"Oh, that's interesting we appear to have been followed by some people..."

"What?" Putting Gyo on his eyes Chrollo's comment was made real by the shadowy figures lurking in the distance. Their aura didn't seem that powerful, but they had the numbers advantage against just two people. Stepping back against Chrollo Kurapika knew he had to be act carefully with his power. The nen-enhanced chains while powerful didn't have their full strength against non-spiders.

"We need to stick together if we're going to handle this."

Kurapika didn't reply but knew Chrollo was correct about their situation. Suddenly one of the men approached them revealing his odd look; the man while young in appearance had the image of an older fellow with the orange paint stripes over his face. In his hand was a wooden spear, the outfit he was wearing looked ragged and dirty matching his unclean hair.

"You...speak...words." The beard on his face moved with his head as he slowly managed to form that sentence. Kurapika could tell he was not a man from a major city and believed he's been living in this forest for some amount of time. Chrollo, on the other hand, had a pretty good assumption of who they've stumbled across.

"Those spears in their hands, the sneaking around to watch us, and that bag the female is carrying could they be..."

"Give us...things now!" The female bandit spoke revealing the worn down bag containing stolen items from a nearby village in the forest.

"So, they are like a less-civilized version of my gang." Chrollo found this very fascinating while Kurapika just wanted to get away from the muggers. The primal group began to grow impatient causing them to begin pointing their weapons at the both of them essential "holding them up" for their supplies.

"Go ahead you can have our supplies."

"ARE YOU FUCKING-"

"Don't argue with me "Pika" just give them what they're looking for now!" The spears now began to poke at the pale skin on Kurapika's face with several different hand-made knives looked ready to carve out his flesh just like in the nightmare from last night. Kurapika decided to take advantage of their primal nature, quickly grabbing hold of one of their spears and using it to fend them off.

"All of you just back away slowly, and let us leave here!" There was no way in hell he was about to get lost in these woods, and all over some lawless bandits which seemed ironic. Chrollo knew this pissed off the natives who now looked ready to take more than just their belongings.

"Hey! No need to get aggressive you can just take our items and leave us in peace." Despite his partner's urging Chrollo tossed over everything, they had besides the clothing on their backs. The group of natives began to sniff and observe the items before howling in triumph. The tribe quickly left them in the area with nothing besides their nen-abilities, the blonde was clenching his fists ready to punch out some of the spider's teeth.
"They shouldn't be far from here, so let's remain low and hide in the trees while we follow them." Kurapika blinked in confusion before realizing what Chrollo's train of thought was now. He was pissed off as he only went along with this ruse if it was going earn back their items, but he knew there was another reason the mastermind let them off.

"While I might enjoy stealing things I also wish to learn from others who share our lifestyle as criminals no matter their origin of birth or how they choose to live their existence."

"Why couldn't you just ask them to take us to their home then?!"

"A thief asking another thief to bring them into their safe, secure, and protected home you have a lot to learn Kurapika." Shaking his head the blonde had no better idea, and so the duo began to follow the tribe people hoping to find their secret home in the forest.

While Chrollo had some idea of their route they both ended up going round in circles eventually getting lost in a lower hill of the forest. Kurapika had several choice words for the black-haired partner who got him caught in this situation. Eventually, they could hear the shouting of those natives, the duo uncovering a small village filled with wooden huts, many different people in dirty clothing, and someone in the middle of the crowd.

"People...came...treasure...now ours!"

The audience broke out into cheers holding up the stolen goods they now claimed as their own unaware of the two observers hidden in the bushes. Kurapika's impulsive nature just wanted to get this over with despite the overwhelming odds, but Chrollo knew better than to let him just charge in so recklessly.

"Wait and learn you need to have that flaw of yours fixed Pika."

"Yeah, and you're just going to let them ruin all of our items or eat our stuff then?!"

Both of them knew their arguing would get them nowhere, so there had to be some compromise about what to do next. Kurapika figured they should make a distraction first, then sneak in taking the items, and finally getting as far away from here as possible. Chrollo had a plan of simply meeting them, but just politely asking for their stuff back instead of resorting to stealth.

Their egos, pride, and different ideas made it hard to come to a truce for this situation. They would not have to worry about their scheme as something else came up with some men in black suits walking into the picture. Judging by their appearances Chrollo knew they were subordinates from the mafia.

"Oi, let us go you creeps! We just wanted to make a deal with you savages!"

"Don't bother with that...the Ainu tribe never were the type to understand civilized people like us."

That name rung a bell in Chrollo's head as he learned that name from Bonolenov who also descended from a special clan of his own. Apparently, they usually willingly stayed away from the modern world, and they believing they should remain under the laws of nature, the people decided to live in the natural land instead of a technologically advanced society. Suddenly he realized that made their mugging of Chrollo and Kurapika a contradiction.

"If they refuse to live by technology what made them steal our items?" Kurapika also knew that sounded odd they would do this, and take both of these mafia goons as hostages. The tribe leader walked up to the men holding out a bundle in his hands. There was a woman crying suddenly as the leader showed both men the baby.
"We don't...want you here. You give us...medicine for baby!"

"What? Like hell, we're gonna act like some hospital just bring the brat to the city!"

Kurapika's heart waved realizing they only wanted some help to heal the baby which might have gotten sick. That explains the reason for the heist earlier, the villagers only wanted to save the child. While they didn't have any medicine he wanted to help these people now understanding their plight. The angry shouting drowned out his thoughts as the men looked like they would get stabbed to death soon. Not many would mourn their demise.

"Wait a minute! Alright, we can still work something out here, and if you let us go we can get you back to the city! There are people there who can help your little runt out, so just let us free okay?" The head of the tribe looked into the eyes of the desperate man, the windows to a man's soul as the elder was judging him silently.

"You take mother there, and I follow as well..."

Suddenly the ropes were cut letting both of the mafia grunts take their child safely to civilization. Both Chrollo and Kurapika didn't trust this knowing the criminal underworld knew how to weasel their way out of a deal, and they feared they would try killing the both of them if given the chance.

Chrollo looked back, to the face of his traveling companion, Kurapika; the only person besides his followers and associates who could influence the head spider into exploring the world with him. They agreed to trail the mafia grunts hoping their suspicions were not going to get confirmed. Thankfully none of the people noticed someone following their movements, but Chrollo and Kurapika hoped they would not have to travel all the way back to Yorknew City.

"Don't worry we got pals in this place with a good Mitsubishi jeep we can all ride in."

"Mit-su-bishi?"

"You know a jeep? We can't just drive a normal car in this damned forest." Somehow they got lucky with this news, the mafia just might have cut their journey down a few hours. The catch was having to deal with the mafia and making sure they don't leak out the news they were anything but dead. Kurapika's inner voice thought he should take the jeep and drive back to Gon and his friends.

'I'm already in this too deep just to back away, and run away like a coward I will see this though somehow...'

They found the resting camp where the rest of the mobsters lied in wait for their remaining men came back with the Ainu villagers in tow. The men were armed to the teeth, and the two spies knew what likely was about to happen.

"Oi Waku, what the hell took you guys so long! I had to piss with these bastards watching me, I think my ass got stung by something, and I almost fell into unfriendly muck which by that I mean she-""

"Nevermind that crap Hakui, the guests here want to go into the big city for their sick little baby!"

"Oh well don't worry we'll take good care of ya just like the boss wants." The tribe people didn't seem convinced they were being genuine due to the weapons they were holding onto, and neither did Chrollo and Kurapika. The men then began to push them into the jeep, but the two villagers began to refuse their actions worried about their safety in these men's hands.

"Wait! We can't...be sure you are not lying."
"Oh come on you can trust us city folk to not lie right..." The clicks of a gun barrel sent a shiver down the blonde's spine, and he knew what kind of people these men were now. Even if something inside himself just wanted to run away, the fact is he could not let these people get hurt by these mobsters. Against better judgment, he made the move to rush to the aid of the Ainu.

"Who the hell is this punk?!" Chrollo sighed as with the help of the different look they didn't catch on as to who the person standing against them really was, but they would shortly find that out.

"Oh whatever let's just stop with song and dance with these village idiots, but first, we can waste this chump!" The bullets were made worthless as like before Kurapika merely used his chains to defend himself from harm. The grunts suddenly noticed the flicker of red in the Kurta's irises.

"That's...the Kurta boy! That black-labeled hunter is still alive!"

"Not for long do you know how much we can make with his eyes?!" This lets Chrollo know they really had no intention of "helping out" the tribe members, and he decided to step in when two flunkies held the Ainu at gunpoint. While Kurapika still had to worry about his morality Chrollo did not hesitate to kill when the moment came; his lack of empathy made it easy to steal the hidden knife under the Ainu, and easily stabbing the mobster in the chest.

"The hell is that man? It can't be...CHROLLO LUCILFER!?!"

The black haired criminal knew there were other ways to kill people even without the help of his book, but he didn't mind swapping places with a mobster when he was about to come under fire letting the helpless thugs kill each other. Kurapika stepped back to aid the mother and tribal leader who just wanted to get away from the carnage. That's when he saw the mobster point a handgun right behind the mother's back.

'Kill kill Kill kill Kill Kill Kill!'  
His primal instincts kicked in dragging the thug back to him with his chains beginning to punch and kick the would-be murder to death. Despite his desire to not kill people if he could, the fact is these criminals are hardly any different than the Phantom Troupe. The spiders slaughtered Kurta children, and these monsters tried killing helpless people and a defenseless baby.

"You bastards! How dare you do this!" He didn't care about the others around him Kurapika wanted to make this guy suffer the most unaware of the pistols now being aimed at his back. His personal turmoil was boiling over, and this poor sack was his latest victim.

Chrollo was able to easily take care of the stragglers ensuring no one would make it back into the city knowing either of them was still alive. He could not stop the bullets from entering the back of Kurapika's body, but he did kill the man who shot him ending the immediate threat of last remaining mafia's goons. The blonde didn't feel hurt, the hatred was blinding the pain of the bullets in his back.

"What the hell were you doing here?!"

"I-I was just here to lure the leader of the Ainu to the boss! He...said that there were valuable resources here, and the goods would be perfect to sell on the Black Market." The mafia wanted to use this place just to earn money, but there likely was more to this story.

"You're holding something back now tell me everything you know!"

"Like I would waste my breath pissing out everything for you-" A loud punch shattered the man's face along with a tooth. His interrogation quickly made him change his tune.
"Look just don't kill me...he wanted to get the men dead, but the women he suggested keeping alive. Dude needs some new acts for his underground shows, and why not use some girls from the jungle for-"

"You mean to tell me you're trying to make these women into your whores..."

"Better having them do something useful rather than end up a dead corpse is what I say." The man got another bruise on his left eyes as Kurapika was slowly considering taking another life from this world. The only thing keeping him from removing the pleading worm was his inner voice begging him to not lose himself. Of course, it was a quiet sound compared to the loud booming voice, the unseen forcing demanding Kurapika to kill someone mainly his traveling partner.

"Go ahead you prick! The mafia will learn what happened here, and these Ainu bastards are gonna burn with this crappy village! Then my friends will come after you Spiders..." The accusation brought out the blonde's inner malevolence, the sudden snapping of a bone shattered the forest with a man's cry of pain feeling his left arm getting hurt like that.

"You're wrong about that and don't call me a Spider. I'm not a Phantom Brigade member...I'm far worse!"

It was like Kurapika projected his torture suffered in his mind onto this pitiful thug, the memories and horrible images came rushing back, and the love Kurapika once held in his heart turned into hate. The loss of Akuro and Pika was inflicted in scars, the forced submission into Chrollo's demands, and the mobster got another injury on his bone structure.

'This is just like before with Omokage.' The black haired older man now covered in the blood of his victims took in the sight of this more violent side of his new companion. Would he get consumed by his rage, and commit yet another "sin" as he would call in with murdering this man. The blonde looked ready to squeeze the life out of the weakened man with his bare hands, the thought of never seeing Gon and the others again drove him into despair and so...

"No! Leave the man alone!" The mother was pleading for the man's life despite what he and his fellow thugs just attempted to do to her and everyone else. She looked desperate as the baby in her arms was beginning to shiver.

"Take Shigeru and Wasabi to a hospital! Please!" The only thing they cared about with the health of the child which managed to drag Kurapika back into reality. Suddenly he looked selfish for wanting to kill this man, and that action could result in the death of an innocent baby. His problems didn't matter right now he knew what had to be done with this man.

"You hear her! We are going to help them out..." He spoke with an eerie calm having his bloody hand cover his right eyes attempting to calm himself down. The choice was made, and despite the taunts, the Ainu finally got the help they needed for their child which Shigeru and Wasabi truly appreciated from Chrollo and Kurapika.

- 4 Hours Later - Yorknew City

While the duo was grateful the jeep could hold more than four people, the fact heading back into the city would not take as long they would likely need to spend another night in the forest, and or wait for the doctors to heal the sick baby. Also the likely retaliation from the mafia due to their interference with this "trade" between them and the Ainu tribe.

"We're pretty deep in this aren't we?"
Kurapika's silence was a clear "yes" for Chrollo as they were outside of the nearest hospital they could find in the city. As for the mafia grunt, he was able to provide the details for getting here and quickly knocked unconscious being stuffed into the trunk for the moment. Thankfully a pond was able to remove the blood from themselves, but they needed to get their other clothing back once they returned to the village since for now...they were shirtless.

"I was so close to doing something I could never forgive, and unlike with Uvogin nothing about it would have made me feel better." Kurapika began to cover his face trying to hide his eyes from the world hoping they would not turn red again.

"So, the fact you would have killed a would be murder would mean nothing to your conscious then?"

The white band over Chrollo's forehead hid his expression of slight anger. He took displeasure from killing one of his spiders, and yet the death of a hired good would not matter in his heart? Still, Chrollo knew Kurapika had given up a lot already for his friends, so this kind of goodwill towards men didn't surprise him.

The criminal mastermind was not used to helping out people like this, and even if he did, in the end, Chrollo Lucilfer would benefit from the good deed beyond simply knowing he did the "right thing" as Kurapika would say. After all this, Chrollo would make sure they get their belongings including the jeep, and they would push forward not back into the fire like this.

"What's the issue? Have a problem with doing something besides killing or stealing things for once?"

"That's cute, but I wonder if you can handle the temptation of avoiding violence in the future. Eventually, your hands will be forced to submit to that desire to kill..."

The conversation quickly ended as one of the nurses came out of the automatic doors looking for the duo about the report on the child's health. They noticed the blank expression which could mean the worst news or...

"The child got here just in time. His body could have never survived if he showed up, later on, today. The child will need lots of care and detox from the poison, but he should be able to live through this."

"Poison?"

Kurapika and Chrollo didn't expect that to be why the child was close to death considering how small it looked, and if anything they would have expected the lack of weight to come into the reasoning for the need of medical support. The young nurse gave a gentle nod, the details of the doctor's study over the child explains what exactly was going on.

"Apparently the child while lacking some weight still looked fine at first glance, but then our study found some foreign substances in the body." They both knew that meant someone either unknowingly or on purpose gave the baby this poison. Then again they didn't know these people until today, so they let the nurse continue with the diagnosis.

"The child will need to spend a few nights here before it can recover, but I'm afraid the mother is another issue. The problem of her not being from this city, or well any city means we have to bill someone else for the medication. While I'm aware of the Ainu's distaste for modern society the baby will likely need to stay in the city for quite some time."

"So, what do you think should happen now? I know the child needs rest, but I'm not sure if these
people to want to stay away from their village for so long." Chrollo wanted to say they couldn't spend a long couple of days when they had to meet up with the others for the next big heist. This also had a risk of alerting the attention of police, the mafia, and Gon's crew to them both.

The sun once more began to set in the sky which meant night would be coming soon. Once the nurse left they both began to think about the next move. If they wanted to get back to the forest now would be a perfect time. Then out came Shigeru without Wasabi which meant the mother stayed in the hospital with her child.

"She will...stay behind with child. I wish to...return to the village we need...to return what we took from you." No good deed usually goes unpunished, but for now, Chrollo and Kurapika will take this kind of "punishment" for their help with the mafia. The head spider was considering using this little "detour" as leverage for their items, and now he does not even need to do that.

The ride back into the forest started off the next night as Kurapika wanted to learn more about the Ainu tribe, their deal with the mafia, and why they live without modern resources considering events like this could happen to their people.

"We believe technology from the outside village will bring ruin. To remain pure Ainu live off the land."

"So, why make a deal with the mafia?" Chrollo simply asked while driving in the front with Kurapika and Shigeru sitting in the backseat.

"People have recently wanted to explore this forest. They plan on tearing down trees for more building, and we could not lose our home."

"That means you would be forced out of the Jukai Forest unless..." Kurapika got interrupted by the tribe leader.

"We need them to keep city people away! We made deal with them, but one of them gave us strange drink. Said it was a gift for me to drink." Kurapika made an assumption that could have been the poison that got the baby sick, but how did it get into its system?

"Wasabi used gift on food for baby. No one else drank it yet..."

"You didn't leave it out in the open for anyone else to drink?" Chrollo knew exactly where this could be going, and hoped he was not right about his train of thought.

"No I put it away in leaves, but Kimo wanted some of the drink..." The talking ended as Chrollo shifted the gears trying to race back to the village before it was too late to stop anyone from drinking the tainted wine. The ride while enjoyable in seeing the many bugs lighting up the dark area, the wildlife that only comes out during the night hours, and having a quiet time to think was actually filled with dread.

Many of the villagers were awaiting them with looks of sadness on their faces, so they only assumed the worst has just happened. Sitting in the middle of the crowd was the body of Kimo with his eyes staring up at the sky. The bottle was somewhat empty, so the purple liquid coming from Kimo's lips meant only one thing. He became the unintended victim of this trap.

Chrollo and Kurapika let the tribe mourn the loss of one their own, but the blonde decided to "interrogate" the remaining pawn about why this had to happen. Naturally, after some punches, he was quick to bring up the explanation for the attempted poisoning of the tribe's elder and leader.

"Okay! Okay, I'll talk just...give me a second to breathe." He swallowed some much needed after
from the new bruises covering his face after Kurapika's series of punches.

"Boss wanted to kill the elder so he could swoop in earning these idiot's approval. Then he would seize control of both the tribe and this forest, so he could take the resources with nothing getting in his way."

"A clever idea in twisting around events to seem like a good person for taking control of this place." Despite the blunt response, Chrollo got nothing but glares from everyone in the area; his cruel methods were the last thing anyone besides him wanted to hear about right now.

"Please don't kill me I got a bunch of snot-nosed fuckwits I need to feed at home! I'll do anything!"

"That decision is not up to me, the fact is I don't know these people, but I think they should be the ones to decide your fate..." Kurapika decided to let this tribe handle this form of "justice" even if they decide to kill him it was not his place to step in. If Gon and the others were around he would act different, but this whole event has colored his views in a new light of the world.

"You can't leave me in the hands of these savages damn it I'll tell the world about you bastards!"

"You're gonna tell everyone about how you tried killing Wasabi and her child, attempting to assassinate Shigeru, and only succeed in killing Kimo and getting your own friends killed! If I were you I should be grateful if the Ainu let you out of this place alive..." Kurapika's red glowing eyes matched the darkness of his mindset along with his words.

The man was quickly brought into the circle unable to run due to the rope binding his hands and legs. The screams almost woke up the sleeping animals with how loud the man was pleading for his life. That's when the elder brought out the wine dripped with poison knowing how the man should be dealt with. Chrollo knew exactly what had been decided, the old saying "an eye for an eye" or in this case one last drink.

'I can't let them kill him like this...can I?'

'He can tell someone about my status...'

'He should die regardless!'

Seeing the man getting held by the neck with the liquid ready to enter his throat Kurapika knew what must be done for his sake.

"Wait! Don't kill him just...take him into town."

"You are not right! This man kill Kimo! He should die like others."

"So, his death won't bring Kimo back, and besides wouldn't it be better if this man faces a different kind of justice! Show the police that wine, bring him to the station, and let a courtroom decide how to handle him!"

"You would be willing to have him put on trial despite the fact the mafia can grease some hands to let him out, and or just kill him to keep the lone witness from talking." Chrollo decided to challenge Kurapika's sudden change in heart.

"It means that you won't have to always kill someone when they commit a crime! Besides, he's just a puppet if you want to kill someone you all should go after the mob boss!"

"Yet you just decided to kill one of my own men before coming after me."
"This worthless pile of crap didn't help butcher my clan did he?!"

Chrollo and Kurapika knew their battle of words got more heated then both of them expected. Suddenly the man bumped into the men near him trying to put his lips on the poison-filled bottle.

"HAHAHA! To hell with your judgment I won't let you take my boss down. You're all going down with me!"

"What about those "snot-nosed" brats you needed to take care of?!"

"Damn, you're a fucking knucklehead, kid. Haven't you ever heard of lying out your ass before?!!"

Before anyone could stop him the remaining goon drank up a lot of the bottle hoping to just die shortly afterward keeping the secrets to his grave. His body went limp quickly as the Ainu, Chrollo, and Kurapika looked on stunned by this.

'What kind of justice is this?' Kurapika's mind asked wondering if all of this was pointless. Love and hate came together today, but in the end, men still died for selfish reasons, and now it seemed like the truth would be lost forever in this forest...

- September 14th - Jukai Forest

Just two days ago Chrollo and Kurapika dreaded having to spend some nights in this dark forest containing all sorts of threats that could hamper their journey. Now they could have been considered royalty by the Ainu tribe letting them sleep in their huts for the night, eat some of their food, and let them get all of their belongs back to their rightful owners well that last part is not exactly true.

Chrollo and Kurapika were impressed by the meal they got considering the rule of the tribe was to use any kind of technology to help them with anything. Living away from the highways, stores, and other modern hot spots might bring a person close to death if they can't survive on their own. The villagers actually adjusted to life in the wild despite the odds being against them.

"They actually are willing to battle the mafia if they come here for revenge."

"Their pride seems to refuse any form of help in battle. In a strange way, they remind me of my clan."

"Long-lost family perhaps?"

"Chrollo, don't joke about that..."

The both of them felt awkward from the sudden change in treatment knowing the villagers still treated some outsiders rudely even the nurses helping heal their youngest child. Going against Chrollo’s advice they gave both the deceased Kimo along with the mafia henchman over to the doctors who was barely alive. The Ainu felt like Kurapika's idea might have some merit instead of letting the subordinate die.

"We don't have much more time to spare due to this incident. If we spend another day in this forest we might end up falling behind schedule for our meeting with the others."

"What happened to our chance to enjoy the sights and nature around us?"

"That was before we ended up having to return to the city we need to stay away from now more than ever."

The blonde rogue knew he was right about that point which made leaving from here all the more
difficult. Being so close to his comrades yet unable to see or even meet them. At least they cut their
tavel time down with the help of the "gift" left by the mafia in their new traveling jeep. Chrollo
actually suggested the idea of bringing along one of the tribesmen during their travel.

"I believe your village can use this method to return to the city for the mother along with her child."

Kurapika knew his real intention was to get rid of trace evidence about their whereabouts, however,
part of his soul felt at ease due to his "kind" gesture. It would not make up the many lives he took
over his years, but he didn't absolutely loathe being around him for the moment. Before they headed
out the Ainu treated them with one last gift as the elder gave them ritual bracelets for the pair of
criminals.

"Symbols of luck and you two need luck."

"Luck is something people believe in to feel better about their problems. If anything you should be
wishing the worst happens to us so we can overcome it."

"Chrollo, they are being nice instead of trying to steal our belongings! The least we can do is accept
their gifts, but I do agree we don't need them for any kind of luck thank you for this offering
anyway."

"No, the gifts are only a sign. Faith is key to lucky. Stick together and luck will be with you two."
Kurapika gasped, shocked at the tone the elder had with that sentence. He began to grow red in the
cheek as Shigeru laughed at the strange feeling the blonde got with that comment. Chrollo remained
as stoic as he usually was thinking about what could happen to this place.

"What will you do about the mafia? Even if the police learn about what they were planned, the Don
will likely seek to burn this place down including killing all of the Ainu here."

"Well, the truth is our tribe never stays in one place forever. Like animals, we follow the seasons. If
they come we will move on elsewhere."

"That's not right! You're built a huge village like this, and even if you take things that you don't own
you don't cause too much trouble. Why do you have to give up this place for those bastard thugs!"

"That is our life. We steal, eat, and settle all over the world. We've just enjoyed being here longer
than usual."

The Kurta felt his words had been useless knowing this sounds like the style of the Phantom Troupe,
and even more ironically his current living situation. The head spider grinned seeing that the Ainu's
traits felt akin to his spider's ideology. He felt it was a shame not many seemed to hold any kind of
latent power for possible recruitment. Shaking hands with the people Chrollo and Kurapika left the
cheering crowd with Umari going with them.

"Umari wish to find a meal for the tribe. Do you think we hunt for a beast first?"

The duo did not expect the green-haired girl to ask that kind of request. She looked to prove herself
among her people by bringing him some good food to eat, and her failures as a hunter plague her
mind even today. With the help of these two, she might have some "luck" on her side.

"Very well, just don't blame us if you come back empty-handed." The black haired driver waved his
hand teasing both of the passengers the Kurta and Ainu.

Chrollo didn't mind the girl's demand, but Kurapika wondered if there was some other agenda
behind this request. Their car found a few rivers filled with some fish yet the girl didn't want to catch
them. Apparently, she was looking for a bigger fish to catch.

Turns out it was not even fish she was looking to hunt rather a rare kind of animal in this forest which killed a few members of her clan who tried seeking it out. The creature was actually a weird kind of beast, the mixture of two species which confused both the travelers.

"It looks like a duck, and yet it bears long limbs that shock us."

"You mean like a jellyfish?" Kurapika never heard of two animals being made into one before this was told to him.

"Yes, and several of Umari's people die from this beast. We don't know why it comes here, but it eats meat we used to hunt."

"So, this predator's made a home in this area, stealing all of your food which forced you to take any you can find from other travelers. I'm also going on my educated guess the mafia would "help" deal with this creature as well right?"

The tribesman nodded her head which meant another reason the deal had to happen to the Ainu. Chrollo knew they could end up in serious trouble if the gang uncovered them soon. Umari began to tell them where she last spotted the unique being, and sure enough, the white crane with jellyfish tentacles coming out of its back was feasting on some fish it took from the river.

"What is it doing with those tentacles?"

"Incredible it really is using those tendrils to shock the water making the fish easy to catch and eat. I can't believe this kind of beast really exists..." Kurapika never saw anything like this during the exams, but Chrollo wasn't sharing his partner's enthusiasm about seeing this strange kind of animal.

"A creature that's been put together with two species or more, I think, the word for such a beast is a chimera."

The crane suddenly noticed them and began screeching out flapping the slimy wings on its body.

"Motherfuckingdick!"

"W-hat? What did you just say?!"

"I don't think she meant to say that...did you?"

"No! Motherfucking! Dickhole!"

Kurapika and Chrollo their heads the trio focused their attention on the beast now charging after them ready to shock them as well. Despite the size of the beast it actually was quite dangerous because of the electrified tendrils waving through the air. Suddenly Umari pulled out her spear weapon charging at the rampaging beast despite the protests of the blonde criminal.

"What the hell are you doing? You want to die from this thing girl!?"

"Umari must bring back creature! Show Umari's worth to her clan! Defeat this fucking asshole!"

"Not much we can do Pika. If she wants to die an honorable death that's her decision." The Ainu female was able to cut one of the tentacles from the body but got hit by the remaining limbs getting stung badly on her arm. Chrollo brought out his Ben's Knife to knock the beast out for study. Kurapika just wanted to kill this monster and move on with their journey.
"Getaway, this is Umari hunt! Umari will kill monster pigeon..."

"Pigeon?" Kurapika and Chrollo tilted their heads in confusion.

"Yes. Does it not look like a pigeon?"

"Well, umm it resembles more of a crane than that kind of bird."

"Hold on a second Kurapika. Do you mean that's what you've been saying all this time?"

"Yeah! Fucking shit up!"

"..." The duo was speechless.

Getting back on the current matter at hand Kurapika decided to jump into the fray. The animal was not a spider which meant it could not be wrapped in his nen-sealing chains, but he was not exactly defenseless. His switchblade would have to cut into the beast's limbs. His reflexes would have to be perfect in order to avoid getting stung by the mutated creature wanting to kill them.

"This skin is tougher to cut than I expected, the beast seems much stronger than your average crane-jellyfish mutation."

"Don't joke now Chrollo! I'm trying to kill this thing, and not think about killing you." Yet both knives were unable to slice the limbs like Umari's tribal spear weapon. It also was trying to scratch the party with the sharp claws on its feet, the long legs of the animal made this easy to do against prey. Before they could do more the girl suddenly charged the beast with one good lunge at the chest area.

"Yes! I hunt you good biatch!"

The beast roared out in pain getting a severe wound yet still able to hit the girl with more electric stingers making her fall over twitching. Chrollo had no choice, the knife going deep into the wound inflicted which lead to the chimera falling into slumber with the blood slowly coming out of its body. Kurapika went over to Umari worried she might be unconscious or worse since her eyes looked closed.

"Sorry...Umari went in too hard didn't pull out in time."

"Umm yeah, you kind of did actually." Rubbing his head he took her hand trying to pull her back onto her feet, but she needed Chrollo's support to remain upwards. Looking down at her prize with her one good eye she knew her people would rest easy with the food situation.

"That monster was stealing our food, and Umari stole its life it is the cycle of living."

The huntress looked at the dead prey, and despite her wounds, she was feeling nothing but pride at the moment. She would be able to bring the remains back home, showing her people they were once again the prime creatures of the forest. Chrollo, however, felt curious as to why this mixture of animals was in this place.

'Did it get separated from its group, but then why did it hunt for food all alone?'

The creature was put into the trunk of the jeep which might start to make a stench of death if they didn't hurry out of this forest. Umari actually didn't mind such a smell thinking it was good the beast was pretty much dead. As the car was in motion once more Kurapika also began to get a strange feeling by that beast now laying in the trunk of their mobile vehicle. The trip was slow, the wind
blew through their hair as the trio enjoyed the ride for the most part.

"Umari wondering about you two. Where you both go from here?"

"We have people of our own to reunite with soon. Consider it meeting up with our own clan so to speak."

"You mean your own clan Chrollo, not mine!"

"Do the specific words really matter to you?"

They were still at odds with each other, but Umari remained unaware of their issues with each other. Kurapika knew he had to stick with the spiders, so he kept his mouth shut trying to avoid getting into another verbal fight with his partner. With a few more hours they finally got out of the forest with their guide's direction seeing a building over on a hill.

"Ahh good even though it's almost nighttime we are closer to Burkland."

"Umari is grateful to you both. You always welcome in Ainu village!" Kurapika smiled at seeing the hunter give them such a nice sendoff despite their rough start with the tribe. The green hair of the female Ainu disappeared into the forest's trees as the duo looked at the building in the distance, the possible location could mean a place to rest for the night. Without the jeep, they would need to travel on foot likely for the rest of the way.

"How many more days will this journey take exactly?"

"Well, like I told you before the forest was going to take up some time. If we can make up the next two days with little rest perhaps we can be at our destination in less than one week." Kurapika didn't believe they still had at least one week to go before getting to the next target, and that only meant he would need to spend more nights with just Chrollo Lucilfer to sleep with.

"Don't you appreciate my company? Or deep down inside you enjoy being around my spiders, but you can't admit it to anyone including yourself."

"Just start walking..."

- September 17th -

Chrollo and Kurapika were used to having bugs and the weather affect them by this point knowing it could take several more hours in the outdoors before they could get another good place to stay like an abandoned motel. At least the rain no longer was pouring out of the sky making way for a bright sun lighting up the white, puffy, and calm clouds. The Kurta's lingering anger towards Chrollo was slowly ebbing away as he began to learn more about him yet with their imminent arrival in this place would mean they would soon collect the next pair of scarlet eyes.

Chrollo wanted to stay out of the public's view when they get there as he wanted to remain off the radar until he can reunite with his fellow spiders. The area was much smaller than Yorknew, but it still contained a charm for tourists to enjoy when they came here. Looking at his phone he read the update about Shalnark's group which looked to be heading to the city in a day, but Pakuonda's team was coming here by the end of the night. Chrollo would need all of his men for this heist meaning they had some time to spare despite the delays that affected their journey.

"How do you feel about some learning to steal more properly?"

"Is this a trick question? While I'm a hunter the idea of thievery is not foreign to me. While I can't
stand taking things that don't belong to me items from my clan are the exception."

"You are mistaken on that, Kurapika. What we do is more than just senseless violence and taking stolen items. This line of work requires discipline, training, and patience much like what it takes to become a hunter." While the black-labeled hunter thought his standards made him better than the criminal brigade Chrollo saw things differently.

"Do you think having the role of simply killing people on a certain list makes you superior to me in terms of some morality rating?"

"Uh yes, it does Chrollo. You kill people for selfish, cruel, and heartless reasons while I'm merely upholding justice and revenge."

"What makes you believe your justice or revenge is truly right then? Who gave you that right to simply kill people on your on a whim..." He found this funny, his ears listening to his blonde partner preach about such standards when he was in the same boat as the orchestrator behind the Kurta executions. Both of them chose to kill for their own reasons; the key was Chrollo knew he was never a "good" person while Kurapika still believed he was doing nothing wrong. Each day his mind was clinging to the hope he could escape when he was only burying himself deeper in this new lifestyle.

"I...just want to make you all pay for your actions...it might not be right but..."

"Won't someone make you pay in return then? People believe in the Phantom Troupe, the very words you speak of revenge could end up being the reason for your own death."

Kurapika realized he was not wrong about that point as he's learned from Chrollo the many underworld connections the spiders possessed, the different business partners they work with to sell their stolen goods, and finally the friends they have in some assassination groups like the Zoldyck family. Their actual deaths would draw attention to him easily which meant people would seek him out for costing them money, but others might be grateful he took out the infamous organization.

"You can't live like this for the rest of your time in this world, staying on the run, having to steal to survive, and killing anyone on a simple whim."

"That is how I've lived so far young Kurt, your comment reminds me of someone that I met before who also suggested I take up another way to live out my remaining years."

Chrollo never took heed of such advice thinking that it was someone who believed he was not cut out to be a criminal mastermind. How would that person feel if he met the head of the spiders today? Shaking his head Chrollo got back on the subject he wanted to discuss with Kurapika before they went on their way.

"If you wish to obtain the items from your clan you will need to play a part in our heists. While I don't expect you to kill just like my spiders your abilities need to be refined for stealth as a Conjurer: the Dowsing Chains, Holy Cross Chain, and Emperor Time are useful abilities however you see them as simply tools for battle against us. I want you to think not as a mere hunter and more like a thief."

"I'm not..."

"I'm pretty sure those outfits you wear don't belong to you, Kurapika. The idea of stealing is one thing, but to truly learn how to exist like a spider, the Gordian Knot parable; and for you, that means you wish to steal not kill unlike the rest of us." Chrollo was not sure if Kurapika knew about that metaphor invented by Alexander the Great yet it perfectly described the Kurta's mindset. He wanted
to cut through the tangled ball rather than untie it.

"Let's discuss how to perform a successful heist without being discovered." Kurapika was held a prisoner of Chrollo's words once again being impressed by how detailed his words can be or how strongly they can impact someone. Despite his issues, he was grateful the expert criminal was bothering in teaching him how to steal things without resorting to simple violence.

"Hold on you mean to tell me there are times when you have to kill people..."

"Yes believe it or not we don't always rampage like Uvogin enjoyed doing some operations. I wonder how he must feel knowing I'm teaching his replacement how to become unseen by guards."

"There is no way I'm gonna be that guy's replacement!"

"You are more than just a simple new leg you've become something that I wish to understand Kurapika."

The conversation went on for a few hours as Chrollo and Kurapika got to understand each other's history, Nen-abilities, and by the end of the talk, there was a small change that took place between them. The sun once more was beginning to fade into the darkness of night as the duo packed up feeling their relationship will still full of hostility was not as bad since the first few days of this arrangement.

The rest of the night involved them taking on the last night of being out here by themselves knowing things would get more chaotic with the other spiders coming back into the fold. Another complication would be the first meeting with the new prospect Illumi spoke about a few days ago in Kalluto Zoldyck. It could be a trap between Illumi and Hisoka, but having the young assassin would mean his forces having its full amount of legs once more.

'I wonder how Kurapika would feel no longer being the newbie of this group...'

Chrollo pondered to himself never telling him about that detail, the surprise on his face should be interesting to watch. The stars made it easy for them to get sleep as tomorrow they would meet the other criminals to begin how to attack the auction that would be taking place in this city, and how to incorporate their newest "ally" during the upcoming heist. Tonight they would need all the rest they could get before the big push tomorrow.

- September 18th -

After a couple of days being all alone in the wild, they would now rejoin other wanted criminals and deceased people according to the public. While it would take some time for Shalnark's party to return from Greed Island he wanted to speak with Pakunoda about what their next move should be in the meantime; compared to his calm nature she was having a bad time dealing with Nobunaga's issues as she regrouped with his team several hours ago. From the text, she sent out apparently Hisoka did meet with his spiders, and only told them one thing.

"Here is my replacement, the boy should be a good peace offering if I can fight you next...Chrollo Lucilfer." While there were other details about the matriarch of the Zoldyck family demanding they send him back to his home. From what he's heard about Kiyko according to Illumi she sounded like their own version of Pakunoda. That meant don't piss her off under any circumstances unless you can defend yourself from her wrath.

'I've never been the type who gets involved with family matters, so I'm not going to let that get in the way of Kalluto's membership into my group.'
It didn't matter where, who, what, and why you wanted to join as long as you believed in the cause then you were fine by Chrollo's standards. The fact he manipulated someone who killed one of the spiders into this group was the perfect example of that fact. Their arrival in Torodo was under the radar as their disguises were not out of place as they were in simple white and black clothing besides their earrings and Chrollo's headband. The meeting area would actually be in a public setting as Nobunaga wanted some traditional cooking today.

The duo followed the instructions which lead them to a classical-styled diner where Nobunaga was already eating his choice of food, and the smell of teriyaki chicken filled their senses. Pakunoda was just sighing at the samurai who was not bothering in eating his food slowly just devouring the meat very quickly, her hand went over to some tea to relax her stress gotten from dealing with his antics.

"Nothing is better than this stuff I don't know who wouldn't love eating this crap!"

"They likely don't want the image of a sword-user who is stuffing his face and his teeth with chicken meat to enter their mind."

"You're one to talk I've seen you eating like a pig over sweets, and hell I bet Feitan talked you into getting as fat as he was a while ago!"

The usual business that took place amongst his follower brought a smile to Chrollo's face feeling like he was back in familiar territory. Franklin was getting something outside of his usual choice of beverage holding a sake drink in his left hand, and judging by the lack of Machi, Shalnark, and the remaining members meant their leader and Kurapika rejoined them earlier than expected. Even if they were in a public setting his subordinates were grateful to see their leader in one piece, the partner of his left a mixed reaction in their minds.

"Holy Crap, Boss! I'm glad to see your handsome ass again. Being around some of the creeps we met were rather unappealing on the eyes."

"You might want to be careful Franky your image as our gentle giant is slipping." Chrollo's code words for stop acting drunk off your ass and stick to staying in disguise. The giant criminal's true appearance would be a major warning sign that the Phantom Troupe was in town. Just like in Yorknew they would need to stay away from drawing attention to themselves until the night of the auction. That wouldn't be until the end of this week Friday which means four days of planning, stealing, and irritating each other would now begin.

'I have to deal with them...for the sake of my clan and friends.' Once again he was in the calm of a huge brewing storm not related to an actual weather surge this time. He knew he might need to compromise his ideal in order to get the next pair of scarlet eyes, but he was hoping his accomplices would do the same. His unusual situation only got more strange when he accepted the tea being offered by the employee of this establishment as did Chrollo. Looking into the water he knew his life would return to chaos in a matter of a few days.

"You can still back out of this by running away when we're not watching, Kurta."

"And let all of you bastards go free from my chains? I wouldn't be much of a hunter if I let my prey out of sight..."

"Hmm, I suppose you are fit for this kind of role even if you don't want this life." The two enjoyed their drinks having the rest of the day to think about what comes next. Chrollo and Kurapika would soon meet one of the famous assassins of the Zoldyck clan who might change their futures just like
the last replacement to the Phantom Brigade; the other looming threat of a clown seeking a fight would also come into focus in the upcoming weeks...
Act 6: Sin X City

Chapter Summary

With the first target of the scarlet eyes now found, the Kurta's mind continues to devolve into that of his forced associates during this heist taking place in a place full of sin and sinners.

Act 6: Sin X City
- September 19th - Toredo City

Chrollo and Kurapika had to admit being able to sleep in a decent room with good beds were rather enjoyable after resting in the outdoor bags for the forest, and the small made-up mats stolen from a camping couple in the forest. The battle-plan as Franklin would put it for the upcoming auction was simply the old method of the Troupe: crush, kill, and destroy everything. Kurapika outright refused to take part in bloodshed to please the giant beer drinker, which nearly got him shot in the head with a nen-bullet. Their personal issues would have to wait until this next heist was completed.

The group was taking advantage of some free time to discuss events that took place when they had split apart into pairs during their travel. There were some fun things like Nobunaga catching Pakunoda naked when they all got back into town, the slap he got on his cheeks was so hard it bothered him now even when he was trying to drink some tea. Of course, the samurai didn't mind having that image of the blonde mind-reader flash through his mind again nor would he want that moment taken back. He also felt proud he could claim to have witnessed such a thing unlike most of the other male spiders.

'Heh, and now I only need to see Machi and Shizuku by...accident.' He couldn't help letting his lucky break dive into some perverted nature for himself. Speaking of the others today all of the group would come back together in a public setting even if they were in disguises to make certain the operation does not get ruined by someone tipping off the mafia. The meeting spot was a place Chrollo was thrilled about visiting a public library.

"Boss, why couldn't we go somewhere more interesting like an underground fighting spot, another Japanese pub, and hell I would even consider hanging out in the back of some nightclub over this boredom..."

Nobunaga whined to his leader flipping through a random book having nothing else to do besides offer complaints about the lack of activities he can do here. Pakunoda wondered how well her superior got along with the most hostile person in their crew, the fact he refused to consider himself a spider alone made him an unknown factor much like Hisoka. Like the clown, Kurapika could and still might attempt to kill the head of the troupe, but for now, it seems like that is not a possibility considering he needed to reclaim his clan's eyes.

Franklin also knew even if the boy still loathed all of the thieves he will require their help to complete one of the major goals in his damaged life. There was also the issue of his personal squabbles with guys like Nobu and Feitan who constantly got under his skin. While not all the members got along all the time in order to work as a unit they couldn't have constant infighting between each other. Sighing, the giant wondered how the operation in Green Island went since it was possible something
could have gone wrong during the meeting with Kalluto. All he knew was the other members would be coming here today, and there was no confirmation about the Zoldyck besides just waiting for their return.

"Do you think our newbie will be like our last recruit, Boss?" He almost said Chrollo's real name forgetting they were not supposed to be an infamous gang of super criminals wanted by all sorts of black-list hunters. The leader was unsure what would happen once they meet the offspring of that family of assassins well if he does show up. So many unknown circumstances could happen today for the group of master thieves.

"Hopefully not I enjoy meeting different people, who have varied beliefs, abilities, and ideals. The world can be so boring if everyone had the same thoughts running through their minds."

That is what made his organization special since there were other members besides the founding spiders that came from Meteor City. Members like Bonolenov who descended from the Gyudondond Tribe, Hisoka who only recently came into the fold, and now Kurapika who defied all the expectations one would have for joining such a notorious gang. When looking at the blonde, a certain optimism grew in the leader's mind.

'Now he might be the one teaching someone how to behave like a criminal.' Well if the boy can get through the first days of being in the Troupe. Still, they had some time to kill until then, so Chrollo decided to hunt down a particular book he's been looking for ever since he gotten to know more about the Bible. There were many different interpretations of the religious document from stuff like The Old Testament, to Genesis or Revelations, and even the new stuff peaked his interest.

'I would what Kurapika might want to read from this library.' Much like himself, Kurapika held some investment in learning from books, but he seemed more willing to read stories in fantasy than reality. That wasn't an issue since everyone had their own style or taste of literature that made each of his followers stand out from one another. He saw the blonde pick out a certain book that seemed to have the image of a group of people on some adventure. When Chrollo asked Kurapika just told him it was a book about elves along with other mystical creatures, magical rings, and some traveling adventure he wanted to read in peace.

The sudden loud slam of a door made it clear he wanted absolutely no one interrupting his reading time. The whole room full of attendants were surprised by the noise as they aren't used to that kind of separation yet they quickly returned to their own world inside of a book. Not one of the people in the library had any idea some of the "civilians" were actually known murderers and fugitives, which would kill all of them in a heartbeat should they learn of their real identities. The Phantom Brigade simply went back to their business of plotting how to take on the upcoming auction.

"I think we need to employ a different tactic for this operation. The boss won't admit it, but having a new member will complicate matters." Franklin whispered to Pakunoda who was studying about kittens along with other cat-like animals. Despite having not much sympathy for any human, not part of the spider she can't appreciate the attention cats usually crave from humans.

"We have quite a lot on our plate as it is right now, the last member has not exactly been a loyal comrade, however, he's still here despite everything we've done to his clan. So, with this new member, we should try to avoid creating tension in our ranks like with Nobu and the Kurta."

Her eyes narrowed at the people walking by as she was looking for a possible spy or nen-user who might get suspicious of them. While Franklin knew his disguise was not perfect he hoped they would be able to avoid causing violence this early in the day since he was also feeling kind of hungry. His huge fingers did find some reading material about cruise ships which his fellow members would enjoy to see; unlike the other spiders, he was kind of scared about going out on the water.
'Something about drifting out at sea frightens my nerves, which is not easy to do...’ He figured it could be the fear of drowning, but even then he was not afraid of stepping or swimming in water. The dread he felt must come from something else involving boats and the vast sea.

As for Kurapika, the youngest fugitive was grateful there was a backroom in the library that let him enjoy reading the fabled tale of "The Last Fantasy" without his unwilling accomplices watching him. His stay in a small church before their journey sparked this new interest in stories like this which felt like an escape from his reality.

'Sometimes I wonder if I could ever be a child again. Would these kinds of stories be easier to read if my mind believed it could be real for me?'

His imagination was not how it used to be yet he could picture a group of people with pointy ears, brandishing middle age weapons, and fighting evil monsters during their pilgrimage to a volcano. Funny how the idea of people from different backgrounds coming together for a similar cause reminded him of his own "fellowship" that he was working with for his own goals.

'This must mean I'm becoming insane, the fact I can feel more relaxed around the executioners of my clan...'

Shaking his head the blonde tried getting more into his book until the purple-clad samurai opened the door sneering down at the Kurta.

"There's our prissy brat. Boss wants us to head out soon so...hey what the hell are you reading?"

"Nothing you need to concern yourself with, and what exactly is that book in your hand?!"

"A book on samurai weapons. While I can't stand a boring place like this at least there something here I can use for later."

Kurapika figured that makes sense for the kind of person Nobunaga is to get that book. The samurai does enjoy learning about different styles of sword skills after all, but the blonde figured he wanted to know how to behead people easier with his weapon of choice.

"Don't tell me you're going to chop up that piece of literature?"

"Are you saying that I can't read a book you bastard!"

"No, I'm saying you love to spill blood with that sword in your possession when it can do so much more."

"A weapon is only meant to slice down your enemies, but of course, your pacifist mind would care about random people like they wouldn't stab you in the back." Kurapika didn't reply back as he knew that was not an insult, and he was trying to avoid drawing attention to himself. He could not fathom the fact Nobunaga made a good argument for trusting strangers, criminals, and unknown people with hidden agendas which could end up costing him everything.

"That's why I want to be with my comrades...my real friends."

"Like they can help you now brat! The world is looking for us, and you're considered "dead" by everyone in the media."

"Then you should keep your mouth shut before that changes, Nobu!" He felt a smile grow on his lips as Nobunaga got flustered by that response. For once Kurapika won the argument with his arch-nemesis in the spider and watching the older man storm off brightened his mood.
Chrollo had to hold in his laugh as his subordinate mumbled less than fond words about Kurapika under his breath. Pakunoda and Franklin also covered their mouths when the samurai nearly tripped over a book on the ground. In fact, it was one of the very books Nobunaga wanted to steal from this library, which didn't surprise the gang as Nobunaga was considered the most clumsy of their group, and that also lead to him hampering some operations despite his clean-cut methods with his signature blade.

Time quickly passed for everyone signaling the Phanom Troupe to leave the library along, so that meant all the books they wanted would be coming with them. Kurapika was hesitant to steal the books however compared to being forced to kill people he figured it was a lesser evil he could commit today. When he considered how much he's already taken for survival needs he felt like it would hurt to feel somewhat greedy today, and the books would give him a decent hobby besides feeling so depressed about his situation.

What he was not happy about was seeing Nobunaga threatening someone who tried to mess with him over a stupid incident involving the bathroom, which nearly resulted in someone becoming headless. If the giant gunman hadn't stepped in their cover likely would have been blown right there and then. Kurapika knew this man didn't know how lucky he was to walk out of this library with his life. Chrollo also figured out how to leave the place with the books thanks to this outburst by Nobunaga.

"What on earth do you want me to do!" Kurapika's eyes refused to believe what Chrollo asked him to do with Pakunoda; what he wanted him to do to her was even more shocking to hear from such an emotionless man.

"It won't be too much of an issue, but you will likely get a slap on the cheek. Still, if you want those books then we will need to make a big distraction..."

"Why can't we just yell at each other then? I'm sure that will draw people's attention!" He might have compromised his morals a few times in the past yet this was crossing a very different line. Chrollo merely saw it as some harmless prank in the greater picture of his group. Sure his second-in-command would be upset, the anger she would feel wouldn't last once they were reunited with the others later on.

Unfortunately, Kurapika was not given a choice as the blonde Nen-Specialist was called over by her leader unaware of his intentions, and then came the question that broke the silence of the library.

"So, how firm does your ass feel?"

Pakunoda was not only speechless but flustered that Chrollo Lucilfer of all people would ask such a thing.

"...What?" She had no anger in her voice at the moment only confusion perhaps wonder if he was just making some kind of joke.

"You heard me, and he was wondering the same thing. How firm is your ass exactly, but I suppose your breasts feel much harder than your fine rear..." The calm woman suddenly had a nasty glare combined with a hand ready to slap the saliva out of her own boss along with his young protege who was just as shocked as she felt about this.

"That suit really does your body justice except for that strange nose, but even that adds to your sexy as hell beauty. What's say you and me create our own little fantasy novel." Chrollo decided to force the issue of this scheme, the blonde had enough time to see Chrollo grabbing his arm only to send it right on Pakunoda's ass giving it a hard slap. For someone else in their teenage years, this first taste
of adulthood would be considered amazing; Kurapika felt like he was going to either throw up or pass out from knowing what a female butt feels like to touch.

Chrollo was pleased to see everyone suddenly having their attention drawn to their direction while Franklin and Nobunaga would smuggle the stolen books away as he told them to do, the samurai was even more pissed off he couldn't take part of this show wanting another chance to look at whom he felt was the prettiest, seductive, and smartest female member of the gang. Adding icing on the cake he began to grope her breast from under her revealing suit which got the reaction he wanted.

Several loud slaps began to sting the cheeks of Chrollo and Kurapika, which were followed by loud ranting having a few f-bombs dropped into the verbal assault. Unlike last time both the Kurta and Troupe, mastermind feared she would lose her voice or make them go deaf by how loud she was screaming at them.

"You perverted jackass! Here I thought you were above such things like this, so I know now that both of you are just like the other jerks in this group! You better believe I'll wipe this out of your sick minds before this day is over with!" Chrollo gasped realizing if she couldn't find the reason he was acting like this he would forget everything that happened, and Kurapika never thought he would see the infamous Phantom Troupe leader looking like a scared child. Once again the newest part of the brigade understood why Pakunoda was considered the "mother" of the organization.

'Lesson learned never piss this woman or hell any woman period...' The public audience saw a random stranger hitting two guys for trying to feel her up not watching the other two men making a break through the door narrowly avoiding the chip reader by the back exit. Before anyone could start thinking clearly, however, Chrollo along with his unwilling conspirators took the "fight" outside ensuring no one would figure out what's just happened to the stolen books.

"That's enough why don't you leave the lady alone your perverted assholes!"

"Yeah picking on a pretty girl like she is low for scum like you guys!"

The trio eventually departed from each other only meeting up with the others in an abandoned house to discuss their small grab of goods, and to keep Pakunoda from choking the life out of her leader unaware he was merely creating a huge ass out himself on purpose.

"Why did you do that you bastard! We've been together for so many years and for..." She began to read his memories suddenly realizing he took advantage of both her loyalty and Kurapika's innocence just to steal the books from that library.

"For those years we've been together I know that your acting skills are nothing compared to feeling a real hand slap your rear end Paku."

Kurapika took up the chance to give him a nice punch to his cheek still having that sensation of the second-in-command's shapely rear end on his hand, and Chrollo got yet another hard slap from Pakunoda who planned on using two Memory Bombs even if Kurapika hadn't meant to grope her butt cheeks on purpose.

"Hold on I had nothing to do with that slimy bastard's idea, so why should I lose any memories?" Pakunoda gave off a menacing glare silently telling him to keep his mouth shut or he might lose more of his memories than she planned on erasing with her gun.

"At least we can safely say that was good practice for our real heist later on this week." His optimism was just as strong as ever knowing with the full strength of the Phantom Troupe along with their unwilling associate they would not run into too much trouble at the auction. He went into another
part of the house once the Memory Bomb wiped out his less than humble actions with Pakunoda, and she did the same to Kurapika explaining later that they merely got knocked out by someone at the library.

"Apparently you both offended a female customer who nearly knocked you both us, but fortunately for you two I helped you get out of there with some stolen books as well."

"Don't you mean after the boss and our Kurta brat got their hands over your fine-" Nobunaga was not able to block the hard spine of a book thrown into his head by the 9th spider. Franklin almost fell over laughing at this scene watching Kurapika looked as confused as he was when this whole series of strange events began.

"Why did...how come I got these books?"

Kurapika knew he wanted to read them however due to the loss of a certain memory he was unsure how they came here after going to the library. Pakunoda shrugged her shoulders, and just gave him the reading material that he chose for himself. She had to admit Kurapika had become a bizarre addition to the brigade yet she felt like he was empowering all the members with his morality and vendetta against them just as strong as ever. She couldn't be certain if he would attempt to stab them in the back, so she would wait until later to consider letting him see the memories of what she knew about the massacre...

Chrollo attempted to text Shalnark where and when their crew should meet up which had been in a seedier part of the city, which was known for its drug activity and prostitution rings. Indeed the nickname the public gave Toredo as Sin City made perfect sense with the illegal activities running even during the afternoon hours. that all said, at the end of the day Chrollo and his followers felt right at home in such a place like this considering most of the group was born in Meteor City. Kurapika, on the other hand, was not used to the kind of world he was about to enter...

Chrollo decided to avoid detection by a wanted fugitive looking to make a quick score Kurapika and Pakunoda would go by themselves, and both Franklin along with Nobunaga thought their leader was trying to kill them both.

"Tell me who would a mugger likely try to rob from two men who look like killers or two normal looking people who just happen to be two lost tourist."

"Boss, I can't believe I'm saying this but this is a bad idea! That brat can't protect Pakunoda by himself, and what if he attempts to sneak away to go find his stupid friends!"

"I thought you wanted one of those stupid friends in the Troupe, Nobu?"

"That was before I found out how annoying that Kurta really was, and this boy is getting too much special treatment from your boss."

"Like I care about that crap! I don't want to have that attention anyway considering I'm still never going to be a spider. The only reason I'm doing this stupid idea is just to get away from you for a while!" For the blonde fugitive, it was like a mini-vacation away from listening to that voice taunting him all the time. Compared to the mostly quiet giant, the calm emotionless woman not named Machi, and even the man who ruined his life Chrollo were better options to hang around with than Nobunaga in the opinion of Kurapika.

'We will see about that...' Chrollo mused with a smirk knowing Shalnark and Machi questioned the wisdom of this plan to have Pakunoda and Kurapika check out the new recruit first tonight. It was both a test for Kalluto and Kurapika to see how they would interact with one another, the benefit of
the meeting would be learning how well the blonde would feel about being around the other spiders for a change. Sure he still despises them all for what they've done to his clan, but he was not attempting to kill them whenever he was given a chance.

"Consider this a chance to prove you can handle yourself without a leash on your neck Pika."

"Don't call me that!" Seeing the blonde seething about his own nickname was a treat to watch for Chrollo.

"Hm alright, then Kurta just remember that will be representing me when you meet the Zoldyck. I expect you behave your very best young man."

"Yes, father..." His scarlet eyes locked with his partner's cold pupils staring deep into his pitch-black heart. The man looking nothing like he expected from a crew of master thieves, and worse yet he was beginning to doubt he wasn't becoming more like the predators holding him in their web of deception, destruction, and death.

When the clock hit 8:00 in the night the bizarre pairing of Pakunoda and Kurapika made their move over to an abandoned grocery store for the meeting with the newest member of the Phantom Troupe. The shorter of the duo of blondes saw the neighborhood they were walking in becoming very different and more active with activity, the streets became full of cars containing a few drug dealers trying to make their usual rounds. He was not used to observing this kind of criminal activity or looking at woman dressing in revealing outfits to attract customers.

'Can people really just sell themselves out for some drugs?' Kurapika had a hard time understanding the reason people throw their lives away just to get a momentary feeling of being high. Thugs killing people on the street just to get either: money, more drugs, and or having a stupid feud with someone else.

"You know I've heard your leader talk about Meteor City being your group's origin...is it really likes this place?" His head turned up to see how she would react to his question, the second-in-command was not surprised he was in a talkative mood yet that question was not what she anticipated he would ask. The mind-reader shook her head despising the sight she was forced to witness as they made their way to the others.

"Hardly that land is full of people who genuinely care about each another. I wouldn't be surprised if everyone here sold each other out for petty reasons."

"Funny when you spiders are known for manipulating others for your own ends." The hypocritical nature she expressed hadn't surprised him, but the fact she might honestly believe her gang was right in their actions got under his skin very quickly. The avenger of the extinct Kurta thought Chrollo managed to brainwash so many people into buying his philosophy of the strong devouring the weak.

"The world isn't black and white believe me you don't understand the full details about the massacre..."

"What don't I understand exactly? Your group of inhuman monsters killed everyone I loved, and now I have to kill each one of you to ease their spirits. I will likely die when my revenge is complete however your actions helped make this my future..."

"What about your comrades? Your friends will feel terrible about that fact you died over this vendetta against us."

"...They know what I am, the reason I exist for, and why this survivor will take back everything that
"you stole from me." Even if she had not acted like the hot-blooded samurai she helped out in the extermination of the Kurta, and thus in his mind, she was on his list with the others. With that said he began to think about her relationship with Chrollo, and the fact she knew just as much as he did interested Kurapika.

"So, what made you decide to follow him anyway? A promise of power, love, and wealth or something else entirely?"

"Quiet! I can feel foreign nen..." While she was packing a real gun filled with bullets Chrollo suggested she avoided killing someone unless it was necessary for her safety. Kurapika else felt the surge of unknown power approaching them revealing a guy in a dark hoodie, the stranger in question was in his early adult years, having a hidden knife in his coat, and was dark in skin color contrasting Kurapika and Pakunoda. She decided to walk toward a hidden alleyway to avoid anyone watching them.

"Ayy what'ya doin with a fine ass honey like this, kid! Ain't it past ya bedtime, you little shit?!" The duo had the same sigh of annoyance seeing the man attempting to hit on Pakunoda with such a weak compliment/insult.

"Come on with your fine ass and let a real man treat you out to a good night in the shack. Who is this half-pint supposed to really be your boyfriend?"

Kurapika suddenly was lost for how to respond to the weird guy attempting to hit on his walking partner since he couldn't tell the truth, but what should he say then to avoid raising suspicion. Pakunoda got a stupid answer in mind which would catch Kurapika off-guard since it involved...

"Why this is my darling child!"

The last remaining Kurta was suddenly wrapped into a hug by one of the people who slaughtered his kin. The hopeful romantic was not expecting the image of the taller woman rubbing her hand over Kurapika's hair with so much affection. He was trying to keep his rage over being treated like this by one of the people who killed his clan down deep inside feeing the "beast" lurking within...

"No way this shorty is your baby!"

"Oh he most certainly is," Pakunoda giggled, giving the "son" a sweet kiss on his cheek no longer acting like the second-in-command of the brigade, and she adapted to this situation like an actor putting on a new role for herself. Kurapika's eyes were close to turning red being in such close contact with this woman. "His father is the person we're trying to meet tonight along with your brother! You just forgot isn't that right sweetie?!" The thug grinned seeing her "child" still look confused about this accusation beginning to suspect they were lying.

"Of course, mother! I really did forget that my brother will also be there as well!" Kurapika had to put down his building anger just sliding into his place as the younger brother of this screwed up family. It was hard to ignore the fact in some ways Pakunoda actually resembled his mother twisted that wound inflicted on his physic. Ruleus was unsure how to react, but he licked his lips when he realized something important.

"So, you're a milf then that's pretty bitchin, you whore! That's cool with me just, so put junior in time-out while us adults can handle our fucking business."

"Sure thing! Kurapika darling just close your eyes for a minute!" The Kurta thought she was joking yet she was, in fact, stepping closer to the guy desperate to have sex with her. He was about to punch the man in the lower midsection when he noticed her other hand reaching down towards her gun,
and suddenly he got the clear picture about her real intentions. Chrollo mentioned she could do more than just read memories and implant them in others.

"Okay, mommy!" He had to admit he couldn't feel sorry for the poor sap who was about to get more than just a simple kiss on his lips from the infamous criminal locking eyes with him.

"Damn you are gonna make one fine bitch on the streets what's ya name?" He grabbed hold of her head while she snaked her hands over his chest and gave a sly smile of seduction.

"Fufu! You can just call me Paku darling, but what is your name dear?" She gave him one short yet sexy kiss on the lips knowing what was about to happen. "Ruleus, and damn I must say you got some fine lips even if that nose could use some surgery. What do you say we ditch that bitch boy you call a son and-" A swift hand shut his mouth up while she brought out a silver gun with a new memory bullet made just for him.

"Actually we will be leaving now, but you won't have to worry about remembering me, that kiss, and well everything that's just happened to you..." Kurapika decided to aid Pakunoda, wrapping his hands around his body keeping him still while the chamber of the gun was loaded, the target was rendered helpless, and the bullet found its way into the man's skull piercing his mind. The now amnesiac man limped over on the ground unable to use his knife or even remember what just occurred to him.

Kurapika and Pakunoda made their way out of there before anyone could find Ruleus as they were focusing on meeting up with the others. While the hatred in his heart still lingered that whole exchange of acting felt too real for him as his mind was pondering something, what could have inspired such a well-performed act like that, and why did it hit so close to home. Finally, they got to their destination with no one following them which meant they could go inside.

While no one was around Kurapika knew people lived here. First, the graffiti covering the walls next was the fire pits made out of barrels, and finally, the smell of cigarettes filled his lungs which could mean people used several drugs or smoked a lot in this building. It was a variety of sins here that people chose to make, or ignore in order to get away from this concrete jungle. Kurapika could have easily said it was not hard to move beyond this atmosphere, and yet he never took any kind of drug or had a drop of alcohol in his system. Unfortunately for others, they had to struggle with taking the easy way or fighting to remain sober or have a life without crime.

"We are here..."

"How come there is no one around this place?" Kurapika hoped the answer would involve everyone just left, but he knew the Troupe well enough at this point to considering a more sinister response. The hint of blood entering his nose only confirmed his fears about what occurred before he came to the apartment. Sure enough, there was indeed a few bodies on the floor with some bullet holes in the room implying a fight took place before the slaughter, the bloody sight was accompanied by Shalnark playing around with his phone like the corpses weren't even there at all.

"Pika, Paku you're both here." The calm tone came from the medical ninja who had a rare smile on her lips seeing the right-hand of her leader again. Shalnark grinned at the sight of his new pal quickly taking a picture of the both of them for his phone gallery. The images contained many funny, violent, and favorite moments during his time with the Phantom Troupe. Now he planned to begin a new album full of pictures with his new "brother" Kurapika, and he was not fond of being put into pictures for the joy of the group's technical support.

"What a great picture of "mom" and "son" together! You two could really pass yourselves off as a family with me as the big brother naturally!" Despite the following hiss and stare from the Kurta he
was happy, their group would be reunited again. Feitan had no say on the reunion simply playing with the arm left from one of the thugs who tried robbing them for currency and crack. Despite having the profession of a sadist in his opinion he never could imagine becoming addicted to any kind of drug that would sap away one's sanity, strength, and intelligence.

"Great now the preachy kid will be giving me a headache for killing these goons..." He snapped one of the bones of the arm, detaching the limb from the already deceased body just playing with the corpse to pass time. Kortopi and Bonolenov had not much to say in the current conversation besides noting how more calm Kurapika was acting even with the blood and death around him. Much like they figured their newest comrade was slowly changing, and now they would add another person to their ranks. Phinks was flexing his arms for relaxation after snapping a couple of limbs and necks during the earlier rampage.

Standing in the middle of the group of individuals in the room was a younger child of the Zoldyck family and Killua's own brother which Kurapika never thought he would see: Kalluto Zoldyck.

While being with his mother was not exactly a great thing she never would drive her children into these kinds of places or situations like this. He decided to defy her orders to remain a simple heir to the family name as he chose a new path for his life, and he knew how she felt about the criminals.

"The Phantom Troupe, what a pack of social outcasts, and to think we have to associate ourselves with street rats like them?!" Kikyo's less than fond words about them ringed through his mind as he was looking at the people who will bring him closer to his brother. Still, the first impressions he was getting was nothing like he expected to see out of this pack of killers. Much like his own family, no one can judge the shadow brigade by their cover.

"Remember that you should always be ready to kill when you are with them, dear brother. Unlike professional assassins, they usually kill on a whim rather than under orders." Illumi's advice was something the Manipulation user took to heart while he observed the faces on each member of this group of thieves. His current thoughts were in tune with how they all looked and acted...

'...Th...These guys are definitely weird!'

"Let's get down to business. While you seem genuine with this request to join our crew there is one final test. Boss won't be here to watch, but if you succeed then you will meet him Kalluto." Machi looked at his eyes with a cold expression as Feitan thought it was a good time for a punchline about Kalluto's outfit, hair, and overall image.

"Oh wow Kalluto is a boy that certainly is surprising to hear. I figured he could do what Kurapika did by wearing a girly dress just to infiltrate our group." If Nobunaga was here that would have met the young Zoldyck on Greed Island those would have been the exact words used that Feitan just spoke out.

"It fooled you didn't it Feitan?!" Kurapika fought back with a smirk knowing the spiders were fooled by such an outfit would piss them off mainly Feitan who was hiding a scowl under his skull mask. Shalnark enjoyed the fact someone managed to silence him like that, and he was trying to hold back a fit of laughter at the angry expression in his eyes.

"Anyway, the leader feels that there should be a one-on-one spar match between Kalluto and one of us to see how good our new kid is in physical combat. To decide who that is how about we play heads and tails!" One of the methods used by the spiders to avoid conflict was naturally this golden coin with the heads or tails symbols on it. Phinks whistled ready to get his first crack at the newbie, and only Kurapika didn't look ready to start a fight only caring about leaving this place as quickly as possible.
"Don't you all think we can do this elsewhere? I refuse to take part fighting here with...those bodies on the floor." Taking a look at one of the corpses being a woman dressed in just her panties and bra likely being a prostitute who fought for her life, the body having its neck look out of place showed the cause of her death building up Kurapika's rage in his eyes.

"Oh what scared to admit you don't like killing people despite taking away Uvo?!" Feitan's comment was laced with venom feeling hatred about the Kurta's mentality of refusing to become like the rest of them.

"Do you want to join him Feitan?" He was ready to fight someone even his "fellow" spiders which forced Machi and Shalnark to play the part of peacemaker.

"Wait a minute! I think the Kurta has a point about not staying here. We can't afford to get caught, and some friends of these people might show up later."

"Exactly, and besides I don't want to hang around here if we don't need to remain here. Boss had no clear instructions on where this fight had to take place."

"Like I care about that Machi, Shal. This boy needs to get his ass kicked sooner or later to keep that pride in check!"

"You seem to forget that I'm not helpless without my Nen-abilities, and even in Zetsu I could still punch you right in the face!"

Kalluto was surprised there was this much infighting taking place over his induction into the Troupe, he began to walk forward to keep maintain some order when Phinks suddenly stepped in knocking both Feitan and Kurapina on the head with a knuckle to the forehead.

"Why don't you dumbasses resolve things the right way, the both of you can arm-wrestle to settle your beef like men."

"Fine, but like I said before we are not doing it here that is final."

"Who are you to boss us around like this?"

"Someone who is not so willing to break the fingers of a dead body!"

"Enough! Both of you are behaving like children, so why can't we leave to go somewhere else like adults." Machi had to raise her voice being her usual monotone in order to get through the hardheaded nature both Feitan and Kurapika had. They eventually managed to agree to such terms leaving the building riddled with corpses, reminding everyone living in this town about the Phantom Troupe's reputation of a high body count in the news.

"Is this what it truly means to become a spider?"

Kalluto felt confused about everything he just witnessed, and worse questioning his choice to follow this group for his own goal along with Illumi's instructions. Still, he felt like he would enjoy himself with others like him who took in a practice just as old as time itself the art of killing. Walking behind the other members he knew there was one person he wanted to ask more questions, but that was not the leader instead it was the most uncooperative member Kurta that peaked his interests.

'I wonder if you are here for a special reason like myself, Kurapika.'

- September 19th - Toredo City
The pack of criminals located a good spot for begin Kalluto's initiation into the Phantom Troupe, a small workout dojo which had no one around for the night. If anyone did find them Kurapika could only hope they just get away if they can. The place meant to serve as a non-lethal training center now contained several known killers including the last remaining Kurta. Kurapika knew while the Zoldyck looked rather young in age, the mental behavior of his mind has to be old enough to kill people like the rest of his family.

'In a way, he's the perfect fit for them.' Much better than himself, so why did Chrollo wanted Kurapika and this boy for the Troupe? As he was leaning on the wall pondering his own thoughts Shalnark walked over ready to start another conversation. His smile only made the unwilling accomplish curl up into a defensive shell.

"Don't act like we aren't friendly with each other! Hey you know I wanted to ask what do you think about the new kid since everyone else believes he's kind of...weak."

"I thought you all considered me weak at the beginning of this...partnership."

"Oh that was just a misunderstanding, the truth is we usually pick on the newbie who enters our group for some fun, and to see how well he can act under pressure." Kurapika clenched his teeth hearing that comment, which got him angry since they did more than just teasing him with words. Looking at Kalluto he figured perhaps he might have gotten the same treatment from his own brothers.

"It was the same for me you know, but I toughed it out becoming a valuable comrade of Chrollo's group. It's only a matter of time before Kalluto is accepted along with you Pika!"

'Once that happens I'll truly become a monster...'

He feared that his comrades would not even recognize their friend anymore, he couldn't bear the thought of his friends seeing the person they knew as Kurapika would be lost forever and replaced by this warped version of himself. If he could just speak with them again...Leorio, Killua, and Gon then he might retain a hold on his sanity. That wouldn't be easy as he would need to earn Chrollo's trust and support first, so he decided to play along with the crew nodding his head at Shalnark's optimism.

"Alright, who wants the first crack with the boy?" Phinks asked cracking his knuckles feeling the anticipation of getting picked.

"It really doesn't since we won't take the battle seriously." Feitan did want to see how a Zoldyck fights, but in a life or death situation with nothing held back.

"You don't know that Feitan, our leader did say don't make it easy for the recruit." Even if Kortopi was not a fighter he understood the directions given by his leader for these initiation rituals; while Kurapika was special in not having to get "jumped in" Kalluto would need to at the very least survive his fight against one of them.

"Does it really matter who fights our newbie? If we keep arguing chances are he will just leave or attack us." Machi never got why the boys would make a huge debate of the simplest of things knowing the Kurta might be sharing her train of thought. Bonolenov walked up to the new member decided to start fighting him in order to end this discussion for his fellow spiders.

"Hold on Bonole you can't just jump in like that without a vote!" Kurapika was putting his hands over his ears drowning out the noise echoing through his skull, which was causing his eyes to flicker between his normal color and his scarlet gaze of red.
"Why don't I battle him?" Kalluto pointed at the person who hadn't take part in this heated discussion causing the spiders get confused. Kurapika was also surprised when the young Zoldyck requested to face him for his test, his reaction was a look of surprise along with questioning if he should go along with this demand.

"Let's put it to a vote?" Machi said not really caring who would volunteer just as long as someone did fight their newest member, but there were a few more steps before he could truly be considered part of their brigade. Each of the spiders raised their hands to agree, the ones who didn't just glared at the other blonde as the votes were being counted up by Pakunoda.

"So, Feitan, Bono, and Kortopi vote nay. Machi, Shizuku, Pakunoda, Phinks, and I vote yes which means you're gonna fight him Pika!"

"Wonderful are you going to act as the referee like in the Heavens Arena fights, Shalnark?" Kurapika said with a sigh knowing that he was about to do something for people he didn't want to work for, but in the end was a necessary step for earning trust with Chrollo Lucilfer. Shalnark wanted to actually take that offer up yet Machi held him back with a string, her decision to act as the ref was not questioned by the computer expert who was now tied up.

"Bets on the fight guys? I think Kalluto will last 10 minutes with Kurapika." Phinks knew the assassin was pretty good so he felt like he could make a good profit going with him. Feitan actually was putting his money into Kurapika being the victor to the shock of his fellow criminals.

"I think that brat is obnoxious as hell, however, I would be foolish to underestimate his skills, the fact Chrollo inducted him into our group is proof of his untapped potential." Feitan wondered how badly the blonde would get beaten up here, through it all, Kurapika never got into a real battle with them so this would not only test Kalluto but Kurapika as well. The others decided to let the fight determine their opinions on the both of them, which lead to them both walking in the center of the room with Machi standing by as the "ref" for this contest.

"Don't kill each other." Machi's comment had her usual tone of apathy as Kalluto brought out his fans, and Kurapika knew he had to rely on his physical attributes instead of his usual method of nen-enhanced chains. Of course, he couldn't trust the heir of a family of killers to restrain from actually taking his life in this battle. He also needed to control his emotions to keep himself from hurting Kalluto too badly.

The assassin made the first move, his hands began to dance with his Manipulation skill of paper confetti, which forced Kurapika into observing with his Gyo. The other spiders knew that Kurapika was already at a major disadvantage without the full strength of his chains, the fact he didn't know much about Kalluto's abilities and needs to avoid getting into a state of killing intent.

The blonde used the room to his advantage, his legs ran towards the wall and ran up it to avoid the line of paper heading in his direction which surprised Kalluto.

'He's pretty fast, and from what they told me he's a Kurta as well. I will need to remain on the attack.' Bringing out both of his paper fans he moved around with his attack, his paper came after Kurapika forcing him to dodge all of the projectiles trying to avoid being caught in whatever was coming next from the Zoldyck. The spiders while impressed by the speed Kurapika was showing knew this was just a stalling tactic, and it would not be able to last for a long period of time.

"I've never seen him move this quick before," Shizuku commented. Phinks didn't respond; the girl was reacting to Kurapika, and he knew that the Kurta's skills were good enough if Chrollo wanted him for his crew.
"This is just a tease, the both of them are merely feeling each other out." Feitan knew this was the opening part of the fight where nothing really happens besides the opponents getting a chance to size each other up, adding on that statement he noticed Kurapika was studying how the paper moved with his eyes, and how Kalluto remained in the same spot he started the fight in never moving from that area.

"So, are you regretting not going with anyone in this fight Machi?"

"It really does not matter Feitan, but if you lose jenny for picking the wrong horse that will be fine with me."

"Why you arrogant-"

"Quiet! The real fight is about to begin..." Pakunoda shushed the private crowd observing this contest as Kalluto was closing in with his paper, and ready to begin to win this battle in order to prove himself worthy of being called a spider. Before the first piece could fall on Kurapika's arm there was a sudden sound of chains rattling in the air, which showed Kurapika conjuring a different kind of chain to defend himself.

'I'm lucky this kind of chain has no limitation placed on it, but that also means it's not as effective.'

While not as strong as the ones used against the Troupe this chain can be useful in protecting Kurapika from harm like with bullets or in this case paper, the confetti fell around him as not one shred of it reached his body. Kalluto along with the Troupe certainly didn't anticipate that kind of defense from the Kurta who was now using the full effect of his Scarlet Eyes.

'That is the beauty of the Scarlet Eyes. They looked so full of despair, and yet they have an unearthly gleam of perfection just like my brothers said, the color of red never looked so wonderful.' Kalluto was almost put into a trance when he looked at Kurapika's face, his face looked determined however in the Zoldyck's eyes he seemed breathtaking.

Showing a smile of gratitude Kalluto continued his dance of paper letting himself go loose due to his enjoyment of this rare chance to duel with the last remaining Kurta. Paper clashed with metal, both combatants were getting more serious about harming one another impressing the crowd observing this fight despite being in close range. Kurapika waiting for the right moment as the surge of paper was ripped apart, his fingers lunged at Kalluto to rip the paper fans apart to disarm the young assassin. Kalluto waited for Kurapika to enter his range before using Shu, which enhanced the power of his folding fan making it capable of slicing steel.

'That weapon feels different, the chain I'm using...is he trying to cut?!'

Kurapika had little time to move backward as the fan was moving to remove the only chain Kurapika could use in this battle. Kurapika moved his other arm to take the brunt of the attack getting his arm cut up by the fan, but he was able to send his chain around Kalluto's hand cutting it with the sharp edge of the chain. Taking hold of his hand Kurapika dragged the boy closer to him and tried wrapping the chains around his body to make him immobile. Phinks whistled despite possibly losing the bet he made with the other spiders, Machi wondered if she needed to step in to keep things in order, but Pakunoda knew this fight was not finished yet watching Kalluto grasping his folded fan even in his current situation.

Kalluto moved his legs around, knocking around his feet to hit the injured arm to gain a momentary chance to break free of Kurapika's hold on his body. The Zoldyck knew he had to remove the chain which still pierced his hand otherwise he would remain bound to the Kurta's hand. Of course, he would have trouble using his own hand since it also was injured with blood slowly coming from the
wound, the youngest heir of his clan never was in this kind of situation where he was dealing with a skilled target like this.

'This pain...the sensation of combat...feeling the effects of fighting...this is beyond my expectations!'

He had to admit Kurapika was becoming an enjoyable opponent to fight with now, his pain was numbing due to the enjoyment he was starting to have in this battle. Their hands began to connect with each other, they now were relying on physical strength as the deciding factor abandoning their nen-abilities.

"Machi, this is getting of hand they might be willing to kill each other." Feitan was joking about it yet the other thieves took his words seriously, observing the both of them pound the other harder and harder with each blow. Shizuku wondered if Kurapika was enjoying this on some level unlike Kalluto who's facial expression showed he was loving every second, every punch, and every bit of pain he was receiving and dishing out.

Kalluto and Kurapika got several more injuries on their bodies showing how much they were getting into their duel despite the wounds getting more deeper as time went on, but they were attacking each other at a balanced level with neither one having the edge. Kurapika tried sweeping the legs, only to end up getting a hard knee in his chest from Kalluto who in turn got an elbow to the side of his head. The blonde criminal finally got the advantage once he gave Kalluto a headbut knocking him down on the karate mat they were standing on.

"I'm not done yet!"

Kalluto grabbed onto Kurapika's legs, dragging him on the floor with him and tried cutting up his face with his folded fan ignoring the bloody hand which still had the spear stuck in it. Before the situation got more violent nen-strings came around both Kurapika and Kalluto's bodies, and Machi finally stepped in to stop the bloodshed from getting worse. Feitan was impressed by the brutality both of these recruits had, their level of violence intrigued the man who loved causing physical pain to the human body.

"That's enough you're both going to end up hurting each other too badly! We still have an operation to perform, and the both of you will take part in the heist." Kalluto and Kurapika knew she was right; their fight had gotten out of hand however their pride refused to let them surrender the battle meaning one of them would lose. Machi quickly went to work on the both of them, but only after she hit them on their heads as punishment which caused laughter to spill out of Feitan.

"Look at them, Machi has to patch their wounds and treat them like a bunch of cry-babies! If only Nobu could see this crap!" Pakunoda and Phinks had a different thought about what just took place seeing the potential both men had in this short contest.

"What's the time for this match?" Kortopi asked looking at Bonolenov with his one eye peeking out of his long hair, the bandaged man looked down at some watch he took with him during the earliest heist.

"10 minutes..." The bet went just as Phinks expected, and Feitan was demanding he good a look at the watch's time refusing to lose jenny over this bet with his fellow spider. Pakunoda wondered if this potential could grow the longer both remained in the ranks of the Phantom Troupe considering they were rather young compared to the other members, and she knew her leader wanted to take advantage of the growth rate of newer potential like both the Zoldyck and Kurta clans had in these two.

'I have to protect them in order for Chrollo's desires to come true.' As Machi was fixing up Kalluto's
hand Shizuku had a sudden question enter her mind about what will happen next.

"So, are they both getting a tattoo? Or will just one of them become a member?" After being "jumped" in it was only a matter of time before they got their own tattoo which symbolized their relationship with Chrollo's group. Kurapika knew he would rather die than put that image on any part of his body, and Kalluto was unsure if joining up would be worth getting pain like the one he felt in his wounded hand. Still, the new prospect figured his brother endured worse in order to break free of his family, so he might as well learn to roll with the punches as they come to him.

"Boss said we can only give them ink once the heist in this city is finished. For now, they are spiders in name only..."

"There is no way I'm going to let any of you monsters put that putrid image on my body no matter what you-"

"Do you want to speak with your pals again?"

Kuraika realized Chrollo was using the chance to speak with his real friends as leverage against him; the desire to speak with Gon and the others again would it be worth it to complete sell his soul to his personal devil? Kurapika had already come far despite his morals suggesting he simply kill himself along with Chrollo Lucilfer, the voice wanted to carve up any one of the spiders looking at him in the dojo. His hands were shaking as Machi told him to remain still while she finished patching up his arm...he complied with her request.

"You don't know how much I hate you all...because I can't stop any of you...why?" His voice showed his defeat and submission, the hair moved over his face as Machi ignored his words as both Kalluto and Kurapika were no longer in danger of losing too much blood. Kurapika wondered if his mind would get broken first instead of his body when this whole series of events was finished.

"That's simple to understand rookie. You have something to lose like your friends, those eyes you covet and the hatred inside you. If you had none of those things you might really decide to kill our Boss despite losing your own life." Machi could tell from his voice he couldn't refute this point she stated.

'Gon...I can't...she is right...I can't lose you...'

Overall, the spider had succeeded in defeating him once again as Kalluto looked at the man he nearly went to war against.

"There is something in common with us after all, Kurapika!" The Zoldyck smiled in realization as the other spiders counted and tallied who would get the winning prize money for the intriguing bet made. At least Kurta could rest easy for the night since it would only get worse tomorrow once the auction got underway.

- September 20th -

Chrollo learned from Shalnark there would be a major criminal syndicate coming to this particular event: The Divine Blades. Under the thumb of powerful crime families like the mafia, these groups of swordsmen hold some of the most valuable swords known around the world, and Nobunaga was thrilled to hear about this.

"Finally my first real test as a samurai, the chance to face some of the best blades across the globe!"

"This also means security will be much tighter than last time, but we will go in with the original plan of getting inside under the guise of bidders."
"Fucks sake! Why do you have to kill my good vibes, Boss? As a samurai, it would be dishonorable to not fight one of the best of the best to the death with this sword of mine!" Kurapika scoffed at that notion of trying to prove himself to a group of killers when he already did so with the brigade.

"What is going to be our plan of attack then?"

Franklin knew his leader usually tried to move two steps ahead of his competition in order to steal as much as possible, so he would benefit having the right people and resources at his disposal which explained his reasoning for recruiting two new assets for his cause in Kalluto and Kurapika. The blonde was simply reading his fantasy book while Kalluto was crafting new art out of paper.

"We will need four people to sneak in pretending to act as bidders firstly in order to have eyes inside of the building. Kalluto would not be out of place at the event, and his partner should be...Kurapika."

"What?! You're asking me to just ignore the fact people are trying to buy the eyes of my clan!"

"Not really I only wish that the both of you get along in order for this robbery to work out." It was not anything different then Kurapika spending time with the other spiders, the different would be Kalluto was inexperienced compared to someone like Machi or Shalnark. Chrollo found it amusing Kurapika was not going to serve as a mentor figure to the new member while still learning new things himself.

"Pakunoda, Shalnark, and myself with being mission control for this operation. I have enough faith in your all to get this operation done without me being involved physically. Kortopi you will replicate the objects stolen, as usual, Bonolenov will be your guard in case something goes wrong, and for the offense Franklin, Phinks and Feitan will perform this role."

"Boss, aren't you forgetting me and four-eyes over here!"

"I thought you heard me say there will be four bidders for the auction, which means you and Shizuku will go with Kurapika and Kalluto in disguise." Nobunaga took a while to process the fact he wouldn't be able to fight the Divine Blades as he expected and he would need to babysit the younger recruits.

"There's no way I'm going to stay in the same place as this bastard!" Their voices spoke at the same time causing Chrollo to blink his eyes in surprise. Shizuku, however, felt like this arrangement made a lot of sense for them to use.

"Boss, where are we going after this particular heist?"

"Hold on a minute! What makes you think I'm going along with this stupid idea Chrollo has in mind Shizuku?!"

"You can still meet the Divine Blades, and if the worst outcome happens to fight those swordsmen in combat. Nobu, I only want you to interact and play with the other auction bidders nothing more."

"You can still meet the Divine Blades, and if the worst outcome happens to fight those swordsmen in combat. Nobu, I only want you to interact and play with the other auction bidders nothing more."

The reply didn't make the sword user feel any better about his role in this upcoming heist.

"As for our next move, once we take the eyes, the problem would be splitting apart as usual since the authorities have been more careful about watching out for our kind of activity. We will need to stick together as one group for the next few days before splintering off into smaller groups again. As for our next destination honestly, I don't know where we can go from here..." The group was stunned by the admission made by Chrollo of being unsure about their next move.

"Boss, don't you usually have some other place in mind once we leave from a robbery?"
"Indeed, but that was before...things changed for us, Kurapika's actions have given me a new understanding of certain things. There is more we can be in this world besides killers, robbers, and criminals."

"What are you saying exactly?"

"Our future might be something none of us expect to have...for now we enjoy the thrill of the hunt once more!"

**Toredo Unity Square**

The home for the recent auction which would feature the Scarlet Eyes to several major underworld bidders, and hidden among the civilians expert thieves plotting to take everything they could out of everyone coming to this meeting. To the crowd, a man with slick-back hair in a decent tuxedo, two younger men in black suits, and a girl with glasses along with a black dress seemed normal to them. The ordinary people usually could not see anything extraordinary out of the four people now entering the main hall where the auction would soon begin, but under their new looks were the same infamous, notorious, and murderous tribe of crooks ready to strike again.

"Daddy! Can I get those red eyes, please! They look so special and I think my friends would be so impressed if I got them!"

"Now honey you know there are lots of valuable goods being sold here, and I think mommy would love to get a nice painting for a good price."

Kurapika felt reminded of Neon Nostrade who also desired his clan's eyes despite how they ended up on the market, to begin with, and now he would attempt to earn them back legally this time or rather buy them illegally without resorting to violence, however, Nobunaga just wanted to chop off the heads of anyone who looked at him funny including the purple-haired heiress laughing at his nose.

"Look, daddy! That man looks like one of our servants! His nose even looks like the one our silly butler has!"

"Don't make fun of the man he just wants to be like you and me, the outfit can hide a lower-class pig however it can't make them an upper-class party like us. Perhaps after this auction, he can pretend he's on our level now come along, dear."

Kurapika knew money could make someone different however he never heard such a smug amount of pride oozing out of a person before this conversation. Killuto, in particular, was reminded of his mother as her own superiority complex matched the nature of the father and daughter in front of him, but, mentally he feared that he might end up like that girl who relied on her servants judging by how she acted.

"Did you hear about the incident in Yorknew City? Apparently, the higher-ups are worried there might be a similar attack here, so the hired the Divine Blades along with some mafia muscle."

"Bah! Like I care about that the goods here better be worth the trouble of coming to this screwed up shithole. I almost got mugged when I drove here by some thugs, the hell drives people to become so desperate..."

"When they have nothing to lose, and everything to gain." Kurapika could understand such a reason as that described his current situation perfectly. He could have said something about who the people he was stuck with yet the reasonable side of his mind knew that was a death wish. Instead, he
remained silent even as his knuckles tightened, and there was so much he wanted to say while his lips remained sealed.

"Ohh check out the babe with the glasses!"

"Why is she hanging out with those bums? There are plenty of good-looking dudes better suited for her in this auction."

"She might be one of their "ladies" who they bring just to look pretty you never know with those kinds of chicks."

Nobunaga was not going to stand there letting random strangers accuse Shizuku of being some prostitute whore yet Shizuku just looked around at the crowd not even caring what was just said about her. Suddenly she walked up to an older female wearing a necklace made out of what seemed to be real diamonds on her chest.

"I want that." Her eyes were enthralled not by the beauty of the necklace rather simply having the item would please her mind. The scarlet-haired women sneered pointing back at her comrades not wanting to get bothered like this.

"You can never have this selfish harlot! Why don't you sell your body on the streets, and maybe then you can get some third-rate version of this treasure."

'Greed...nothing but pure greed being shown by these people if they still are that.'

Kurapika began to wonder why despite how much the Phantom Troupe steals they never act like the civilians walking around them. It could have been to avoid suspicion, but even when they were alone they never bragged about what they stole if anything they might give away a majority of the items they nearly stole when they visited the Nostrade estate. There were certain moments when they could even act generous enough to leave items alone like Chrollo did for Neon.

"Come on darling we should get some good seats the auction is about to start up." That meant the spiders along with Kurapika would need to get into position to watch the event. Shalnark was studying the event with his laptop trying to figure out when the Scarlet Eyes would be up for grabs, and Chrollo had two methods for snagging them in case they could not get bought by the members waiting at the auction site. In the meantime, Chrollo, Shalnark, and Pakunoda were observing things in a nearby area using information taken out of a poor sap about tonight's events.

"Shalnark, is the sprinkler system well protected?"

Chrollo knew in order for his scheme to work he would need to rely on manipulating the electrical programs in the building like before with the Nostrade home, which also means he had to ensure his spiders don't get their cover blown. If a problem happens they would not have their leader, hacker, and mind-reader to help out physically during the operation.

"Nope, and compared to the tech at the Nostrade estate this is much easier to break into. The issue is there might be a few traps installed to fool hackers like myself. I'm ready for any challenge thrown at me, boss!"

"I can only hope Nobu can resist not trying to kill the kid or anyone else with his anger issues."

"Come now Paku, the samurai is not that much of a tyrant..."

"Your joke is not amusing that Boss."
"Who said I was joking..."

A woman in a sparkling white dress walked out in front of the huge crowd to begin the opening introductions for this certain auction which felt boring to the samurai observing his party having the same mindset as him. They knew most of the people here would throw away their wealth in order to get these items when quite a lot of it came from other sources. The first item which was brought it didn't peak their interests either, the green vase with a dragon design likely was just an opening taste before the real bidding starts.

"Do you want to get something else besides the eyes. I know my mother would love to get something like that vase..."

"Ugh, your momma would like something like that kid."

"You don't even know her that well to say that!"

"Believe me brat I know she's not completely classless, and she would never get something that tacky!"

"Do you want to waste your money so easily go blow it away in a casino. There is only one thing I care about getting from this auction..." Kurapika closed his eyes trying to keep them in their current color. The night would only get worse if he revealed the truth about himself now when he was meant to be in disguise. Deciding to make conversation to pass the time he talked with Shizuku in hopes of learning more about her, the reason for joining Chrollo's group, and why she lives as a thief.

"I don't know...I just suck up things for Blinky."

"Don't you care about what you're doing? How your future will be if you even have one with this lifestyle you have right now."

"Nope! I just want to collect stuff, but I would like to have something else...I don't know what it is yet I really want to have it."

"A certain kind of item?"

"I don't want an item it's not even an object...more like an emotion."

"Interesting perhaps "Pika" and I can help you explore this more at another time."

"Impressive work brats! Not many of us can get that empty-minded girl to speak let alone get her to speak a few sentences."

Shizuku had no reaction to that statement, however, Kalluto and Kurapika figured there was a good reason she refused to speak much which might involve a guy like Nobunaga. She likely had a lot she wanted to say, but likely not around men like him or maybe Feitan.

"Alright our next piece comes from a place far away from this city and this certain item is from a time far away in the past. From the land of Giza we've managed to recover a relic out of the land filled with wonderful gold and huge pyramids, the flint bracelet here was once in that very home but now it can be yours. Shall we start the bidding at 100 Jenny?"

"200 Je-" Nobunaga got his mouth covered up by the angry blonde trying to keep him out of the bidding on the item being displayed by the hostess.

"Do you have any sort of brain cell in that skull of yours? I thought we came here just to get one item
"I know that you bastard, the bracelet just looked like something Phinks would want to have. You know he loves that kind of stuff haven't you seen his ridiculous headdress?!!"

"Headdress?" Kalluto was curious about the item Nobu mentioned and Kurapika wanted to hear more since it would keep the samurai from trying to spend their only Jenny for the bidding on the Scarlet Eyes.

"Well, I can't say I know much besides what he's said to me. What I do know is pharaohs usually have on those headdresses as they lived the life of kings. Those pharaohs held many slaves along with women to be their wives, and most of all controlled lands in vast deserts as their kingdom."

"I can't imagine living in a desert without water..."

"Kalluto, the pharaoh likely could rest in his palace most of the time, and there were rivers of water they could just use for nourishment."

"Did Phinks tell you about that as well?" Kurapika had a smile grace his lips when he got the reaction he wanted.

"No! Believe it or not, I can read things like a book arrogant brat. Anyway, I'm sure that guy can tell you all more whenever he stops working on those arms of his. I swear he will break them off if he keeps moving them around so much."

"More like you're gonna chop them off the way you swing that sword around people." Kalluto had to wedge himself between the angry samurai and the smirking Kurta.

"Why you prissy little punk!"

As the auction went the quartet of criminals wondered if the information about the Scarlet Eyes was false since they were showing off everything besides that item not to mention the hours passed them by since the last few items were now up for grabs. The lone survivor of the massacre was considering leaving to vent his frustration when the jar holding two eyes suddenly came into his view.

"Alright everyone these are the main attractions for today's auction. The assortment of items here along with the eyes came out of the legacy that is the extinct Kurta Clan! Today you can have the Scarlet Eyes which in fact belonged to a member of this clan long ago." The items of his family and friends were being treated as part of a side-show to make a profit for the people running the auction all because of one group: The Phantom Troupe.

'My clan...is, not a show for people to laugh it! None of these items should even be sold to slime like these people in attendance. I don't know what's crazier; the fact I'm helping the people who murdered my clan or everyone here trying to buy these eyes just because they want it for themselves.'

Kurapika knew he wanted to earn them back peacefully, however, the rest of the valuables here would come with blood spilled...

"Let's get the bidding started at 400 Jenny!"

"500 Jenny! Let's get those lovely eyes as a gift for your mother my dear daughter of mine."

"Yay!"
The father and daughter for earlier happened to have seats right below the row where the spiders were sitting in next to other bidders. While Nobunaga got into the bidding Kurapika looked around at the crowd seeing everyone get excited about getting their hands on the Kurta clan's eyes, and not many of them care about the fact they ended up here was because of the slaughter of his people. Still, people can remain unaware of such things, the details behind these items only caring about winning them as a new trophy.

"700!"

"900!"

"1200!"

The bidding quickly rose up as demand was very high for this item, and Kurapika knew they only had so much jenny to spare on them thanks to their previous heists. It was also meant to be plan A if they won, the other plan would just be the old plan on relying on brute force. Speaking of which...

"If you can handle things here Nobu, I'm going out to get fresh air."

"As if I'll let you run off for your own reasons you prick! You will sit your ass right here until this bid is done with!"

"I have no intentions of running away from here. Believe me, I know exactly what I'm doing right now..." Ignoring the ranting voice of the samurai Kurapika walked out of the auditorium. With no one walking around besides a few mafia guards Kurapika wondered where the other spiders would be coming in to begin the raid on this auction. This also gave him the chance to gain control of himself before he let out his bubbling rage inside of himself, but he let the voice screaming for blood vengeance win over his conscious.

'Can't let them get away with this...we've become a puppet of that bastard...'

He ran into the bathroom, his body was on the verge of collapse, and sweat was coming down his body from the struggle within his soul. This whole night was proving to become a tough challenge for the mental state of Kurapika's soul. Little did he know the idea of getting out of trouble would land him in a very dangerous situation. Two more deranged individuals walked into the bathroom to relieve themselves unaware of the blonde criminal looking at the mirror in front of him.

"Heh I can't believe what my bitch did to me today, she actually had the balls to call me out over punching her right in the face. Then she tried telling the cops on my ass, but she got her ass stuck in jail instead. It pays to have the police in your back pocket!"

"You might wanna keep that down, the walls have ears don't you know..."

"So, I'll just kill that pretty boy if he decides to rat on me. Hell, I'll send my cops on him next he'll rot in prison like my last bitch of a girlfriend."

Kurapika's sense of right and wrong was coming into focus as he realized someone was getting away with injustice, and likely would continue to avoid getting what he deserved for his sins. How many people like him could manipulate the system meant to bring people who commit a crime to their advantage? He was wondering if he should leave before his morality got him into a situation he could not escape.

"I wanna hurry up before those Scarlet Eyes get taken by some prick. I heard that crap is worth a lot on the black market, so I figure I can buy it now, resell it for a higher price, and trick some dumbass into buying eyes while getting my money back for it anymore!"
"I wish there were still some of that Kurta clan was around, the eyes would be easier to sell with a boy to rip them out of their faces. Better yet I would love to get my hands on their girls...hehe imagine what sex with a Kurta must feel like!"

"You always go for the babes when I enjoy the charms of a fine male figure."

Their conversation was drawing the attention of the remaining Kurta still alive...still wanting to bring retribution on those who insult and disgrace his clan. His hands were covering the skull which was becoming full of voices screaming out for violence. His eyes were flickering back and forth between normal and red...normal and red...normal and red...

"What's your beef little guy?"

"Yeah, that face is sweating like you're in a hot box or something."

"LEAVE...leave me alone! Get the fuck out!"

Kurapika walked toward the door in the bathroom only to run into a tall man with a smile on his face. Suddenly he began to unloosen his tie which made the Kurta feel uncomfortable about what was going to happen next. There was no escape for him now...

"Hey don't feel tense if you want we can get to know each other better kid."

"Come on man you're really gonna do this in a public place!"

"Shut up Izu this is what I want! Since you got your fun earlier today it's my turn!"

The young hunter was beginning to shake around, his hands were moving erratically as his eyes were staring down at the floor tiles hoping to get his mind at ease.

"I'm begging you both just leave now before something happens that I'll regret..."

"Too late for that kid, the voice says no but that body is telling me yes. Don't worry a first time always feel special boy!"

The older man Uzua loved the hair, face, and structure of a boy like Kurapika. Despite hearing the request to leave he wanted this child to himself despite Izu not caring about the male sex for his own pleasures. Kurapika held his hands over his face attempting to hide the red glare showing in his expression.

"Just leave now!"

"What the hell is wrong with your eyes?! Hold on red...they look just like the Kurta's eyes! Oh hell yes I get to screw a Kurta Clan member!"

'Kill...kill...kill!'

A sudden scream broke out in the bathroom as Kalluto managed to find where Kurapika had gone to during the bidding. He was annoyed with the suit he had to wear instead of his traditional clothing as it was hampering his movement, but he was quick enough to follow the blonde into the room as he heard more screaming coming from someone.

"Oh god, what the fucking shit did you do to him?!"

The sight in front of his eyes revealed a man gasping for air with a cutthroat, another man looking distraught, and Kurapika who was covered in the blood of the would-be rapist of his body. Kalluto
realized this was very bad, and if the other man got away their cover would get broken.

"You're a god-damned Kurta?! Bastard I'll kill you for hurting Uzua!" His gun was cut in half as was his hand by Kalluto's paper fan removing the immediate threat in the room. The stench of blood was all too familiar for the Zoldyck while the Kurta wished he never had to experience what he just did to someone. Another life was about to get taken by his hands even if there was no choice in the matter.

"Goddamn, you bastards! I'll kill you and this other bitch boy!"

Kalluto had no hesituation when the guy went for the gun, the head quickly came off the shoulders of Izu with the body parts falling on the cold floor. With the soon to be deceased bodies in the room, Kalluto went over to Kurapika trying to snap him out of his state which made him nervous when he saw those red eyes. His pants shook with a new message appearing on his phone.

'The bid is over. We couldn't snag the eyes, so we are moving onto Plan B. Where are you and the Kurta?' Kalluto knew from the phone text Nobunaga would likely go after one of the Divine Blades, and that meant the attack on the auction was about to go underway meaning he needed to get Kurapika back to normal. Grabbing him by the arm he suddenly felt water pour down on his head signaling that Shalnark has hijacked the systems of the building to start the attack.

"Damn it Kurapika you can worry about this later! Besides, you must have needed to kill him to save your life and see your comrades again. Now get out of this state right now or we will get caught."

"I...should die here...maybe..."

A slap came on his cheek which resonated with the blonde rogue as the newest member of the Troupe was trying to break through to reach Kurapika. A burst of gunfire meant the auction was now under the raid of the spiders, and the unwilling accomplice shook his head coming to a realization about what to do next.

"...They are both dead...I have to reclaim the eyes..."

"Yes, Chrollo and Illumi said as much when I asked about you and your deceased clan. Your morality is troublesome to have if it can hinder the mind like this, but I understand why you wish to avoid brutality since I don't wish to cause too much destruction myself. Unfortunately being in the Phantom Troupe means we don't have such a luxury to hold back ourselves."

"I'm not a..."

"Do you wish to reclaim everything that belongs to you or die here in shame?!"

Kalluto didn't head a reply rather a nod of approval which made him smile as they at least had the same focus in mind. In order to achieve their goals, both would be willing to sacrifice their reasoning in Kurapika's case and family for Kalluto. The both of them joined up as Franklin was blasting away the guards with nen-bullets, Nobunaga was dealing with one of the fabled swordsmen Tamon Tenso.

"I should have known you would show up, Nobunaga the blighted one."

"Ahh! It seems like I've finally gained a reputation, but it will only get better when I cut off your head!"

"Don't insult me savage! I've been ordered to protect this place against petty thieves like you, and I will not fail my duty in crushing you bug!"

Kalluto sighed since he expected this behavior despite not being around the samurai a long time from
how he was acting before they arrived in this city the assassin knew the man had a giant ego.

"There you are blonde...hey why are you covered in blood?" Phinks asked in a casual manner with two necks being snapped in succession with the gunfire by the giant founding member of the group. Kalluto also saw Shizuku knocking out people with her personal vacuum cleaner only to begin sucking them up through the nozzle of the item.

"...Dead...he's dead...I killed him."

Kurapika spoke in a silent voice holding back the screaming cries of pain, suffering, and despair he was feeling in his heart. Phinks knew the kid likely was traumatized by whatever happened back there however they couldn't deal with it until later. Nobunaga was not caring about the mental state of their comrade rather on the battle with the slim elderly man with a huge sword in his hand. Despite being in close range none of Nobunaga's attacks could put a dent in the steel counting him, and he could not leave a single scratch on the member of those Divine Blades he wanted to fight so badly.

"Pathetic skills for a samurai like yourself..." With just one swipe of his blade, Nobunaga was sent back with a wound on his left arm. His teeth clenched together in pain, the blood showing proof of his injury, and he was struggling to keep up his blade to defend himself against the superior swordsmen.

"To tell you the truth, I could have killed you from the start, yet curiosity wanted to see how much you've grown as a warrior. Honestly, I'm disappointed with myself for overestimating your worth bug, so now I'll squash you like the irrelevant insect you are!" Nobunaga knew this could be the end if he didn't act quickly, he looked downward for a moment to consider his next attack, and brought up his weapon to strike the left arm with all of his might...it was the arm swinging down the sword.

"Gahhh! You fucking son of a bitch..." His torso got the edge of the blade cut right into it hurting Nobunaga badly which changed the tide for the attacking criminals.

"Nobu! Franklin cover him, Shizuku go find Machi now, and Kalluto snap Kurapika out of that fucking state already!" Feitan was concerned about his friend's safety yet he had to focus on the guards coming after the group of wanted fugitives.

Phinks realized he needed to intervene, but he was halted by a wave of gun-toting mafia goons. Tamon's ear heard that name causing him to look at the blonde with glowing red eyes just staring off into the distance.

"Kurapika...Kurta. I can't believe he's become part of these monsters. I must bring him in alive..."

"Wh-where the hell do you think you're going...I'm not done fighting you prick!" Nobunaga grabbed onto the elder samurai refusing to let go of his leg even if his hand would be cut off by his blade, but instead the edge came down on the hand making a huge gash on the hand causing more pain to flow through his body. The Divine Blade pushed aside everyone to reach Kurapika only to find Kalluto defending him with his fans at the ready.

"Stand aside child my business is not with you."

"Not exactly if you desire to bring him to my partner then you do have business with me."

"...So be it!" Kalluto suddenly felt the air around him grow heavy as a streak of blood came out of his shoulder, the hilt of the blade sent him on the floor in a violent manner. Kurapika hadn't moved an inch despite all of the chaos happening near him, Tamon believed he was a sitting duck unaware of how much trouble he was in.
"Unlike the other blades I can't rely on Nen-abilities which means I've needed to train my body to match this weapon; you meanwhile have been given a blessing of the Kurta Clan's blood running through your veins. It is unfortunate to see a skilled person as yourself falling this low to join in league with the spiders. Have you no shame left to care these people killed your own clansmen?!"

"...

"Speak up I wish to hear your plea and reasoning."

"...Go away...please...

"Spoken like a naive boy! I will take you in for justice along with slaughtering the rest of you criminals here an-" A sharp pain came into the man's back as Nobunaga managed to lodge his sword right into him during his ranting despite his wounds making a pool of blood underneath his body. A smile graced his lips before he passed out from the injury.

"You should know better than this. A samurai never turns his back on his opponent..." Enraged Tamon pulled out the other sword deciding to just kill the rogue Kurta instead of bringing him back alive, the shine of his blade caught the eye of Kurapika who didn't bother moving out of the way. Kalluto closed his eyes believing he would see another head being removed, but when he looked again the sword was now caught in Kurapika's chain unable to move an inch.

"What on earth is this? What did you just do?!

"Emperor Time, a skill which lets me become a Specialist. I can utilize all Nen types to 100% efficiency as a Conjurer, but you don't have any kind of nen for a "Divine Blade" so you don't have to remember any of that...because you're just trash." Kurapika dragged the blade from the older swordsmen plunging it right into his chest area with sharp quickness in speed.

"Damn you boy...how can you do this to a Divine Blade?! You will pay for this disgrace! AHHHHHH!!"

"If the others are this pathetic then you should be happy I'm going to kill you for disgracing them what was it Tamon..."

"Tamon Tenso, you bastard!" His arm moved to grab hold of the Kurta, his right limb got several slashes from the chain being projected while Kurapika continued to torture the hired guard. Feitan of all people look surprised with this ruthless nature of the Kurta being displayed.

'What incredible speed and accuracy out of Kurapika. This must be why Chrollo is so invested in making him a spider.' The Zoldyck never expected this violent streak from the normally reserved young man, he watched the elder get carved up piece by piece until he was gasping out to breath with the sword lodged near his heart.

"You...won't get away with this injustice! The...Phantom Troupe will fall along with you...then the Kurta Clan will become extinct!

"Perhaps, but who said that is what my future holds for me. Besides, I'm not the one who can't get a good thrill to kill right now! Especially if their ass has the weapon of their own choice sticking in their body, and looking like such a worthless loser! Consider this your early retirement old man."

Kurapika took out the samurai's own weapon before jamming it right into his head finally ending the display of torture. Kalluto was speechless as he saw Tamon fall down to his death while Kurapika was enjoying the carnage he just put on display. Was this really the Kurta who was friends with the likes of Gon and his own brother?
"What are you waiting for dumbass! Help me kill some more of these hopeless goons already! Isn't this what being a spider is all about with such rampage and chaos happening here! Why aren't you joining in this excitement assassin of the Zoldyck family?!!" Kurapika's sadistic smile combined with the blood on his black suit would be etched in the mind of Kalluto who believed he was looking at a monster wearing the face of the last-remaining Kurta on this planet.
Act 7: Spider and the Fly

Chapter Summary

Hisoka and Chrollo discuss their upcoming duel, the association takes notice of recent developments within the spider, and Kurapika finds himself as a helpless fly in Machi's web.

Act 7: Spider and the Fly
- September 21th - Hunter's Association Headquarters

There were many topics coming to the attention of the world's largest organization of hunters that require the observation of several experienced members, but the final decision would usually lie with the 12th and current Chairman: Issac Netero. Usually, these meetings would not have major news or people showing up except on a few occasions, but today was going to have a special moment with a certain man getting involved. In the meeting room, Netero was discussing the recent up-and-coming hunters who managed to survive the exam this year.

Alongside the elderly chairman were a few of the chosen members of the Zodiacs, the 12 members chosen by Netero for their skills, abilities, and overall potential as hunters in the association. While only half of the numbers were in attendance the meeting was progressing rather well as the "Ox" and "Snake" representatives were in the middle of a conversation about the progress of Gon, Killua, and Leorio since their time in Heavens Arena.

"Those kids continue to surprise us with the actions, and if the report about what happened on Greed Island is any indication they are only getting better as time goes on for them."

"Like that means anything that blonde brat clearly didn't amount to anything if he got himself killed in Yorknew."

"He went up against the Phantom Troupe, Ox. They are not the kind of criminals to underestimate considering how many black-list hunters failed in killing and or capturing them. Sometimes they succeed with their crimes, sometimes they fail, it only means that people will try harder in stopping them for good."

"That does not change the fact Kurapika failed in his goal of vengeance against the spiders. His clan is extinct with his death, and if this is how the last-remaining survivor will go out then I won't miss them."

"Miza, Geru calm down! I thought we were trying to have a more positive discussion about the future of this association along with the newest hunters." Cluck the "Rooster" huffed in frustration not being one to handle arguments or anything that gets on her nerves that well compared to the others. She also knew that with the "Tiger" Kanzai in the meeting room today a verbal fight could possibly happen.

'I wish Cheadle was here today.' She thought to herself knowing the "Rabbit" was arguably the most level-headed member of the Zodiac, and even Pariston Hill admitted that when he came to a meeting last time. Kanzai, on the other hand, was more concerned about the recent heists that happened in the Nostrade estate along with today's news about Toredo City's auction being under siege.
"That can wait considering what happened at the latest black market auction. That certainly fits the bill of the supposedly dead Phantom Troupe!"

"Naturally. It seems they've gone back to their old methods of chaos, but what I don't understand is what they are now stealing," Kanzai was referring to the stolen items belonging to the Kurta Clan: their clothing, written documents, and most importantly Scarlet Eyes were being snatched by the very people who helped bring those items on the market. Chrollo was not known as much of a generous person, but the fact he's become invested in regaining anything related to the Kurta clan was very troubling.

"I'd hate to admit it "Tiger" but you might be onto something with that confidence during these heists. What's more is the fact the reports made by the authorities state that many of the witnesses have been killed who could have provided information." Saccho Kobayakawa or the "Horse" spoke out usually not bothering to talk during these meetings, his lips sealed with many secrets kept to himself. Honestly, he was only intrigued by the chance of getting to fight one of the infamous spiders in person.

"Do you think they are removing any eye-witness on purpose? Could they be hiding something about these attacks?" Geru was puzzled by this new pattern which didn't fit the usual antics displayed by the gang, and Netero had a good guess about what this could possibly mean. The room suddenly had its doors knocked wide-open with a smiling intruder ready to give his thoughts about the whole thing...to the disgust mostly everyone in the room.

"In short our pest problem has multiplied!" Pariston Hill made his entrance complete with exotic chocolates serving as a peace offering, which he had dipped with hidden-laxatives in order to test his fellow Zodiac members on who would be sitting themselves first. His smiling face also served as a way of pissing off the members of this group who loathed his very existence while Netero gave a laugh hoping to ease the tension.

"It is good to see you again our fellow "Rat" of the Zodiac. I assume you wanted to take part in this discussion as well right?" The current chairman knew there were other reasons the former vice-president made his presence felt today, but for now, he gave the man everyone's undivided attention as he took his seat at the opposite end of Netero. The two intellects facing off against each other brought a new feeling of tension among the other Zodiacs in the other seats, and they got a rare chance to see both men in the same room.

"Not really I was just bored with the political mumbo-jumbo and decided to get involved with more interesting developments. I've also put together my own theory about the recent developments in the actions involving the Phantom Troupe." He knew everyone would want to know his answer which fed into his ego, the only person who could go toe-to-toe with him in this aspect was the current chairman and Gon's father Ging. With the present Zodiacs and Netero waiting for the answer, Pariston made his usual smile appear on his face.

"Chrollo held a strange fascination with this clan even before his men exterminated them all besides one survivor. While the official word is that young man is now deceased my research into this situation has left no doubt in my mind, the lone survivor Kurapika Kurta is still alive! What's more, he's no longer with his comrades from Heavens Arena rather he's found himself new allies...in the Phantom Troupe."

"That's absurd!" The rat of the Zodiac expected that response out of his colleagues, but Netero didn't seem to reject this idea, he was pondering it with his eyes closed in thought. Meanwhile Saccho, Geru, and Kanzai thought their fellow member lost his mind considering the bad blood that was between the murderers of the Kurta Clan and the blacklist hunter.
"What in the bluest of blue fucks would possess Kurapika to even sit in the same place as the spiders let alone join forces with them for any reason?!

"Nothing blue tiger, the color, in particular, is red as in crimson red irises." Pariston knew this had to be the only thing keeping Kurapika from just killing the men who ruined his entire life, and it also gave him the chance to keep his eyes on the enemies he likely wanted to kill in the future. The Zodiacs had to admit sticking close to your enemies could be useful to one's benefit thinking about his own agenda in the Hunter Association. Geru wondered if Pariston was onto something with his suggestion.

"Yes, the spiders know where and whom they sold the items and eyes to, but that alone can't justify a partnership. That is unless there is another reason made in that possible deal between them."

"That much I can't say, the reasoning of such a co-existence would seem impossible except for the fact they need each other to complete their purposes or whatever they have become now."

"That...actually makes sense how frightening." Cluck would have never imagined Kurapika getting along with the spiders under any circumstance, the world she knew was slowly but surely changing to an unknown land. The status quo also could be affected by Gon and the others who most likely were still remaining in the dark about this possible development.

"He wouldn't abandon his associates even under this circumstances! Oh sorry, Kurapika's "friends" yet my point stands they would try to get him back and he would have likely told them about this new relationship, which I still think has not really happened and you're just stirring up trouble, as usual, Pariston!" The ox figured their rat would use any piece of information to his advantage even rumors or unconfirmed details. He would need more proof before he would consider Kurapika a traitor, criminal, and worse of all a spider.

"Very true having friends can be such a wonderful thing others can use to manipulate a person. I've also noticed the spiders have been remaining off the radar lately hiding in the plain sight of the public, taking a priority in stealing the Scarlet Eyes from the last two auctions, and most of all decreasing the amount of time spent during these raids." Pariston knew his sources had given him the police reports on this recent attack, but he wanted to provide a more convincing argument to the members at this meeting. Of course, there was one last detail he knew they would all be interested in hearing out of the confidential information.

"As you are now aware one of the Divine Blades was killed during the heist along with nearly 100 other men despite their efforts to protect the building, the second one is currently in critical condition after suffering severe injuries to her body. While the doctors expect her to survive they have speculated her mental state might be impossible to repair, and the "proof" is right here gentlemen."

"What strings did you have to pull for this one?" Geru knew the scheming politician was sneaky enough to learn all sorts of things about people. That along with other things gave Pariston Hill the reputation of being a troll as some put it.

"Not much, believe it or not, I really did my best to go by the book on this one." Netero looked over at the document's writings himself as the other Zodiacs waited to hear from the chairman. Pariston knew what was coming as a delightful smirk highlighted his enjoyment of this moment.

"Zojo-Ten, can you tell us what you remember before coming here?"

"I...we had a mission...protect the bidders and the auction. Tamto and I fought the spiders...he was killed by those monsters first, then I found the wanted criminals, but then I...I lost?"
Kanzai was not the brightest member of the group in the room, however, he figured the swordsmen was suffering memory loss after sustaining those injuries after the battle with the wanted fugitives.

"You might have some moments where you can't remember things, I'm going to tell you some details about what happened to help you remember Miss Zojo."

"Phantom Troupe? I don't believe I've ever heard of such a thing...wait one of the people there said that, and they were trying to steal something from that place. Was it jewels, jenny, valuables, weapons ugh I don't know!"

"It seems her memory is essentially shattered, so I doubt she would remember the stolen Scarlet Eyes."

"Scarlet Eyes? You mean red eyes right like...oh god those eyes. Those bright red eyes, looking into my soul, and the laughing please someone make him stop!"

Geru, Miza, and Cluck got concerned with the last details being read out since it started to sound like Pariston might have something huge with this theory about Kurapika's new allegiance.

"Miss Zojo, calm don't the stress might affect your mind and body."

"No! Go away! Don't come near me I was just hired to protect this place I don't wanna die don't wanna don't wanna die!" Netero realized she was sedated after reliving the events before she was taken to the hospital, one last piece of information was the fact her injuries came by several different slashes on her body with the one on her skull likely being the cause of her memory loss. He knew the kind of nen-ability Kurapika has which made Pariston's accusation all the more damning, and the other Zodiacs no longer had hesitation in the idea of what's happened to the Kurta.

"We need to find him and the Phantom Troupe..." Geru knew this could become a major priority if the rumors turned out to be correct, the idea of the spiders regaining strength after losing Uvogin was worrisome. It also meant they would have to deal with them sooner than everyone in the room hoped; while the rogue organization was helpful in a few areas, in the end, they were on the opposite sides of the playing field, the officially-recognized hunters versus infamous criminals.

"Those bastards are nothing but savage animals, still, they will be brought to justice right chairman?" The ox and tiger awaited Netero's comment when suddenly they both received a glare of tranquil fury causing Pariston to lose his grinning expression.

"Don't compare ourselves to wild animals, the Zodiac is known for representing the 12 astrological signs along with representing some of the best hunters this association has to offer to the world. That does not make you actual beasts, and the spiders are nothing like the animal of their namesake. We are human beings at the end of the day...which makes us far worse than wild animals."

It was humans who helped build organizations like the Association and Phantom Troupe, it was because of men clans like the Kurta are pretty much extinct, and only the knowledge of mankind was capable of building "The Rose" weapon. Netero knew whatever monsters lurked on the Dark Continent could match the cruelty of humanity was capable of, but so long as he lived everyone would understand what his kind was capable of...every single thing they could do to each other. Looking at the former vice-president he knew what his thoughts were on this whole matter.

"We will deal with this situation if the worse comes to pass, but for now, we should focus on matters we understand fully. Kurapika could be dead like the reports believe so we'll go along with what the rest of the world thinks."
"Holding up a pretense to protect the Kurta's image?"

"More like saving our own if the public finds out we attempted to hunt down, accuse, and judge the last surviving Kurta without evidence to support the notion he's become a wanted fugitive. After all the last anyone's heard about Kurapika he was protecting the Nostrade's heir Neon during an attack by a former member of the Phantom Troupe. It would seem strange, to say the least, if we labeled him a suspect without concrete evidence Pariston."

Everyone knew the logic behind Netero's reasoning, however, they all still believed Kurapika had joined up with the criminal group like Pariston suggested, the man who instigated this whole notion was not thrilled about being upstaged by Netero once more, slumping down in his chair feeling defeat once more in his personal war against everyone. Part of him admitted that he was proud of how strong and smart the chairman was even considering the elder as a mentor to him.

"I suppose you make a good point Netero. If you will excuse me there are other matters I need to attend with no-"

"Wait just a moment! Don't you want to eat with us, Pariston? It has been some time since we've seen you in person, and I wanted to enjoy a good meal with you all, Menchi suggested a nice place we can go to later if you're all interested."

Netero's change in personality was not surprising as he usually displayed the traits of a commanding yet caring person, and some hunters even referred to him as "Grandpa" a few times because of this nature he shows to his allies and friends.

"110 years of age, still just the same as when I first met you, Issac, hiding your real self underneath the appearance of a wise old sage. The world is catching onto who you really are and your time is running out..." The Zodiacs got a rare chance to see Pariston sound more serious than usual, his tone of smugness was gone, and his eyes seemed more hardened than usual. His hand slamming the door as the others were left shocked by what's transpired.

"Well, he's out! Who wants to eat some classic Japanese cooking my treat." Issac gave a hearty laugh when a few of the remaining Zodiacs almost slamming their heads on the table in confusion. Pariston meanwhile was pondering everything he's just learned from the meeting, and what pieces he will need to move next in this game.

"You and Ging continue to remain a thorn in my side, but you have made me curious about Gon and his friends. How much would they be willing to give up on the small chance of seeing their friend again..."

- September 22 - Toredo City's Downtown District

Kurapika began to stir out of the void he's been stuck in once the latest raid of the Phantom Troupe was finished, the physical body of the Kurta was stuck in slumber after nearly exhausting the eyes tied to his nen which was resting on a made-up bed. Chrollo expected Nobunaga to complain about sticking around in this city, so the fact he was also nursing his own injuries put a stop to any complaining he wanted to voice. The mind was bubbling over in his personal world, and it was now dripping red with blood all over the place.

"Is this supposed to represent my soul? Did all of the killings, slaughtering, and violence create this place?" He was dressed in the tribal outfit of his clan, the white clothing made the bloody goop surrounding the darkened forest unsettling to his mind. No kind of person was around him dead or alive which made him relieved after what he experienced last time.
Running around he could not find a way to leave this forest, the sky was not dripping blood like before there was only a crimson moon hanging in the sky. The endless night Kurapika hoped to never see again, memories were coming back during the day when his life took on a different direction than what his clansmen expected him to have. Placing a hand on one of the trees surrounding the area, Kurapika looked at the wood covered in more of the blood decorating the forest.

'I have to be losing my sanity, you hear my random voice in my head?! Why did you take me back to this place?"

Either the disembodied observing refused to reply to the Kurta, and or it wanted him to stay alone in the crimson world to ponder his thoughts by himself. Kurapika just growled and sat down near the lake; in contrast to the red covering the area, the water looked normal with its blue waves making a ripple effect. The lonely blonde actually was feeling calmer just by watching the waves move in the water looking down at his reflection made in the mirror-like liquid. Taking a chance he placed his hand into the water feeling the coolness of the liquid, a sense of relaxation over his warm heart.

"Will there be a jump-scare to mess with my head like in those horror-themed movies?" Kurapika knew how cliches worked, the area seemed straight out of one of the slasher films, and his mind has been in a state of chaos lately. Instead of a monster leaping out or some horribly deformed body, he felt the wind suddenly pick up, and standing behind him was the silhouette of one of his friends...Leorio.

"You? Why are you here-no this is some kind of trick of my mind." Kurapika was not going to get fooled again knowing he was likely dreaming about the sight before him. Looking at the smiling face of a person he considered an honest, kind, and caring person the young Kurta wished this could be the reality of his life. Seconds later, "Leorio" approached him only to rub his hair in a teasing manner.

"What are you doing here buddy? I, Killua, and Gon have been looking for ya! Why did you disappear on us so suddenly?"

"It was...how do I know you're not just pulling the wool over my eyes whatever you're supposed to be!"

"What are you talking about it's me, Leorio! Did you forget about me...like how much I mean to you Kurapika and the same goes for Gon and Killua." As that was being said two more images came behind him revealing the images of his other friends he wished to see once again. This happy reunion was met by screams from Kurapika who began pushing the bodies taking on the image of his friends away, the figures still smiling despite his protests of being left alone and their figures continued to close him into their circle.

"Stay away! None of this is real, you are all just ghosts and phantoms!"

"Why are you saying that Kurapika we are your friends."

"No! This is another trick from that fucking voice in my head! You laughing bastard why don't you show yourself already!" He was sick of this torture, his thoughts were spiraling down a drain of mental despair and there seemed to be no way out. He closed his eyes, covering his face, and tried to drown out the whispers entering through his skull. Kurapika kneels down on the grass trying to escape this noise echoing in his mind, but nothing was working as they asked him why he wasn't their friend anymore.

"N-No...I AM your friend..."
"Lair! We aren't friends with spider scum like you!" Kurapika's eyes saw the stares of disapproval, shame, and disgust coming from each of the people he wanted to meet so badly. He realized the only way free was the comfort of the lake, his body crawled into the water hoping to sink into oblivion like the coward they thought he had become with their accusations. His eyes saw the darkness surround himself as he accepted the cold embrace of the liquid over the bloody nightmare he was experiencing.

"How could it come to this...was it because I killed someone again...perhaps my conscious is trying to destroy me..." He noticed two people floating up near him, and those bodies were his deceased mother and father. Instead of hateful glares, their lips were curved upward with smiles of joy.

"Welcome home, son..."

Kurapika wanted to die now more than ever before in his life; being tortured to death by the spiders felt a more acceptable demise than this purgatory of madness he was locked in. As he tried to get away out of the shadows below came very familiar chains that clamped down around his limbs, dragging him further into the murky depths. Kurapika had heard stories of people being able to escape from these kinds of traps during magical shows, but he knew there was no trick to remove the nen-sealing chains wrapped around the lower section of his body.

"Everyone has been waiting for you dear, the gang's all here including your best friends!" Kurapika shut his eyes which were glazing over in defeat, the brain was beginning to shut down as he looked at the deceased Kurta floating in the water, Gon and his other new friends were just laughing at him, but Pario was now holding his eyes open with his fingers.

"Open those pretty red eyes of yours buddy of mine. Oh, I know maybe a song will cheer him up!"

"The itsy-bitsy spider climbed up the water spout, down came the rain and washed the spider out! Out came the sun and dried up all the rain, and the itsy-bitsy spider climbed up the spout again!"

Just as he gave up with the twisted nursery-rhyme continued to break through his will to live there was a ray of light coming into the dark water he was drowning in, and while he couldn't move his legs he was able to reach out with his arms to rise up. The faces holding his beloved ones grew angry, each one of their hands went down to send him into the deep abyss while Kurapika accepted whatever salvation was awaiting him at the top of the lake. He was driving whatever strength was left in his body reaching up for a breath of fresh air, the savior wrapped him up in his arms as he placed him down on the grass.

"..."

The broken Kurta was unable to breathe, think, or understand why Chrollo Lucilfer was pushing his hand on his chest along with kissing his mouth to give him air for his water-logged lungs. The world no longer had the bloody background of a ravaged mindset rather a beautiful sunrise mixed with a warm atmosphere, the rays of the sunlight came down over his cold body. Kurta wondered if this was a sick, perverted version of heaven considering the way his savior was holding his head while trying to save the younger man's life.

"Come on damn it I will not yet you die it would be a waste of everything you've done. I've wrapped you in my web little fly, but this spider is not ready to eat up its prey just yet!" Kurapika wanted to deny this man after everything he's done to corrupt him, which would be a fitting end to the both of their obsessions with one another, however, part of him admitted this was taking the easy way out like he tried to do earlier in the lake. His mental mind sighed in defeat staying in the mortal coil of the outside of his mind as Chrollo smiled down at the last remaining Kurta.
"You never did tell me what you thought about your tattoo, Pika." His eyes widen as Chrollo took
him over to the water as when he removed Kurapika's shirt to give him CPR the black ink was now
visible on his backside. The brand of the Phantom Troupe was etched onto his skin with the number
11 on his back...11 such a strange yet fitting number Kurapika thought to himself. Despite everything
that he believed in as Kurapika was looking at the mark of his membership...no loyalty to their leader
Kurapika was not upset or screaming.

"I know Machi did most of the outline, but I always did feel like being our 11th limb was the perfect
role for you. Uvogin, while angry about dying by your hands would feel at peace knowing you've
proven yourself since that night." The blonde had no other reaction besides shaking his head
agreeing with the mastermind of the brigade that he seems to have accepted being a part of, the
resistance he had to defy this fate was no longer left in his heart.

"Let's go home now...my friend."

Chrollo's tone was very sincere as the hand came down to help up his new comrade, Kurapika's
weak hand slowly moved upwards only for the world around him to turn white in color as he left the
now calm forest of his mental household. Out of the confines of his head came the real world, his
eyes came on Chrollo looking down at the previously resting Kurta with a book in his hand.

"I see you've awakened from your slumber," Chrollo remarked in a monotone voice as he was still
looking through a few pages of a stolen piece of literature to feed his ever-hungry mind. Kurapika
felt the white sheets covering his body along with a towel dripping with sweat from his forehead, the
idea he was being treated with this much care is surprising. How many people did he kill during
the...raid? Kurapika suddenly realized that he committed sins during that night, but he was unaware
how long he was out, Chrollo explained the details to him.

"You were out for nearly 3 days straight, you've managed to kill a few people during our raid at the
heist, and without your help, Nobu would likely be dead today."

His worst fears were coming true...he was becoming just like his captors in every way. The last
image he could remember before his primal nature took over his body was seeing everyone react to
his laughter as he was enjoying the carnage. He could only find a bright-red color affecting what
little he could remember after that point, but Chrollo knew what happened during such chaos.

"You slaughtered several mafia puppets, killing one of the Divine Blades while traumatizing the
second who's blade matched the wild surge of the ocean; contrasting her was the now deceased
warrior who used the strength of wind leaving the remaining swordsmen who likely use ground and
fire nen-based elements. Hence their group title as the purest warriors of the dancing powers.' They
would likely seek revenge along with the mafia over the fact they've lost most of their valuable goods
stolen from them mainly the Scarlet Eyes.

As he was pondering the moment when Kurapika lost control of himself the blonde was looking at
his hands which had a few cuts and bruises only himself, the only major injury that was physical was
a cut on his chest area which looked strange as he removed the bandages.

"I believe that's the work of Zojo-Ten and her Hatsu, which from what I heard could not only soak
up the water from any source not limited to humans, and can use the liquid as her own blade
projecting it at such a high rate of speed it would be hard to see even with Gyo. Nobu wouldn't have
stood a chance against the Divine Blades last night, and I know he wouldn't admit that to anyone but
himself."

Kurapika realized that Chrollo wasn't just boosting the confidence of the unwilling partner during
that chaotic night he really did help save his "mortal enemy" at the cost of several others along with
Kurapika's moral high-ground that he kept. Kurapika clutched his hands on the sheets of the bed, he felt like he was going to throw up, and he should have punched the man who plotted this whole scheme to ruin everything he's worked to keep for himself.

"Are you crying?"

The weakened Kurta was unable to stop the tears that were being kept inside himself after enduring so much trauma. Wrapping the white covers over his face Kurapika weeps over the loss of any humanity he had left, the fact he would need to admit this to his friends, but worst of all knowing that part of his soul liked what he did to people during the raid.

"Nope. I'm not going to sit let and let yourself get depressed like this." Kurapka suddenly felt Chrollo wrap his hands around the sheets bundling it up into a small ball.

"What on the name of God are you doing now! Let me out bastard!"

"Hmm, I never figured you believed in that religion," Chrollo spoke while dragging the bundle that was Kurapika to greet people who would change his mood around, but the head of the spider knew this could also cause the opposite of what he expected to happen.

In the midst of the despair Kurapika was having his bundled, crying, and less than proud form was now in front of the audience of the Phantom Troupe enjoying the rewards of the Toredo heist. Phinks was the first to greet the blonde, the Egyptian themed man currently piss drunk while harassing the others mainly the women of the group.

"Phew! There he is our little red-eyed kid in the flesh. How would you like the chance to hang out with a babe like Shizuku?!"

"Do you...want me to kill you today, Phinks?" The mastermind of the brigade mentally slapped his head realizing this was not a good way to help raise the spirits of a down-in-the-dumps Kurta. The older man was not helping things as he offered some booze to Kurapika suggesting he could use it to cool him down, and in response, all of the beverage was poured on the floor of the room.

"Perhaps Pika might enjoy playing some pool instead?"

Shizuku requested as she was finishing up a game with Feitan, the spot where the group was hiding out today happened to have some recreational activities on hand like a pool table, some basketballs with a mini-hoop, and even a small gym area which was being used by Franklin working on a bench while Bonolenov was putting his boxing gloves to good use.

"Yeah right he will just get his ass kicked, but he might not even be able to pick up this pool stick with that poor injured body of his!"

"Give me the damn piece of wood..." Feitan was snickering as he saw the blonde get stuck in the bed sheets which turned into a white ball of pent-up rage. Chrollo knew he was being egged on by his subordinate's taunting, the issues between them will likely never go away so long as Kurapika remained close with his leader. Kurapika played along with the game being played, taking hold of the pool stick, and asking Shizuku to reset the balls for a new game with Feitan.

"Trying to feel better after breaking your worthless vows of non-violence, but maybe you're trying to hide those tears I can see them building in those valuable eyes of yours!"

The blonde refused to reply instead he was focusing on the table with the colored balls he needed to hit correctly, the idea being to hit each one into several holes made in the green table. While he was new to this game he knew it was not hard to understand with Shizuku's detailed explanation, the girl
managing to explain that much to Kurapika shocked Feitan.

"Hmm, pretty good kiddo, and might I say you know how to hit some balls kid." Phinks implied with red cheeks that only helped the innuendo he was making as the yellow numbered ball went into the proper socket after being hit by the new player. While he was thinking about a number of people he was forced into killing in a way this game was the perfect tool to vent out his frustrations. Each time the end of the stick connected with the remaining targets Kurapika could feel his boiling fury lessen, the game was actually beginning to calm him down.

"Don't you miss your pals what were their names...oh yes Gon, Leorio, and that Zodylck boy Killer no Killua. Oh well, it's not like it really matters what his name is when he's just a murderer like me and you!" Kurapika threw one of the balls at Feitan, thinking he would likely cut it up with the sword hidden in his umbrella when in fact it ended up hitting the wall creating a small dent.

"Damn! The kid knows how to make an impression, and that's just with a few verbal jabs. Feitan, you sure that pissing off the Kurta is a smart idea." The buzz-filled mind was not drunk enough to forget that making an enemy of the remaining heir of the Kurta was a foolish move.

"You should only talk to me when you're sober Phinks. Again, everyone has forgotten this bastard took away one of us without suffering any kind of punishment in return." Kurapika took out the pool stick in hand only to break it in two, holding the piece with a sharp edge right at Feitan's direction with a deadly glare. There was only so much a man can take before getting pushed too far...

"Can't you go a day without starting a fight Feitan?"

"Shut up you airhead! I can't believe you of all people are sticking up for this bitch, Kurapika should have been killed during our raid on his clan along with many other days before now."

"I'm still here, and if you want to finish the job then you better hope you don't let me breathe you petty crook." Feitan was about to lunge over the table to fight when Chrollo stepped in front of his follower, the leader had to stop this infighting in order to save Kurapika who was hardly able to stand up without support from the pool table.

"You've challenged this Kurta into a game despite his condition, the score is in his favor so why don't you beat him at this game you started my precious limb." Chrollo knew how his long-time partner felt, he likely felt just as sad about Uvogin as Nobunaga felt once they came to terms with the loss of their former 11th spider. Yet, the head of the group wished to look towards the next few months rather than acting out a senseless, useless, and overall foolish vendetta that would destroy the Phantom Troupe.

"I'm not going to take part of this stupid face, the only way I'll move on with life is when I hang this bastard's head on a wall!"

"What's the matter Fei-tan! Scared you can't beat me without your fists..." Kurapika was snickering which all of them knew was out of his usual character, the small giggles reminded a few of them about that night this different side of the Kurta was first unleashed on the helpless guards at the auction. The blonde could see flashes of people begging to live, the response was his chains wrapping around their neck either squeezing out their air or snapping their necks leaving another body to the rising count.

"Why you ignorant son of a-"

Feitan grabbed another stick to challenging his opponent since he could not physically harm the prideful boy. As he whacked the white ball into the others he could only get the red-colored target in
a hole, and on the next turn, he failed in getting a single one losing his turn to Kurapika. He noticed the blonde had become more wobbly yet manic as he was starting to laugh to himself as the other spiders came into the room to watch the contest taking place. Kalluto had a bad feeling his only real connection to his younger brother was slipping into madness once more.

"Boss, I know that I'm a newbie but I think he needs to get some rest."

"Not until I punk that asshole out Kalluto!" Another stroke from the stick resulted in two more balls heading into sockets leaving an irritated Feitan, watching a smug-looking Kurapika waltz over to another position on the pool table. Whether or not it was luck, fate, and or just the right amount of forceful tips Kurapika had quite the streak going even when it looked like he was about to fall over and hit his head on the floor hard.

"Chrollo, he can't even stand up straight I think he needs to return to bed." Pakunoda knew she was beginning to change if she was not concerned about his well-being considering she would have shot him dead if her leader gave the order after the first night this whole arrangement was made. Kurapika just began to laugh while slumping over on the table.

"Ahh trying to play my "momma" are ya? Honestly, I wouldn't be surprised if "daddy" tried having sex with ya, Phinks didn't you say that at one point?"

"That's right kiddo, and I'm not taking back a single word. If you want Paku we can also take off a few things of our own."

"Phinks, do you really love your Egyptian-styled headdress enough to get mummified with it?"

The snarky reply managed to make Kurapika chortle out of his mouth before the wounded body starting to wheeze in pain. He could take a look at the female swordsmen who tried killing him for taking her partner, and he remembered making a joke about him being her lover...turned out that was, in fact, the truth.

"Oh better to have loved and lost then better to never have loved at all...just like my mother told me about my own failed romance!" His laughing finally caused him to fall over on the floor with Chrollo decided this had gone far enough, his ninja medic in the form of Machi looked over at the wound on his chest, especially when she saw it begin to reopen again.

"The kid should not come out of bed for likely another day or two, and he should not get involved with stupid dick-measuring contests." She knew this was partly the Kurta's fault, but Feitan was known for pushing members into this kind of crap to please his ego. As she got to work Feitan was enjoying this display of chaos but decided to finish him off when he was dragged back into his room. It was a moment when no one else was around that he made his move with his sword planning to end what he thought was cancer to Chrollo and the other spiders.

"Put it down, Feitan..."

"...Nobu?!" Suddenly he felt another sword right on the side of his shoulder as a one-armed Nobunaga was coming to the aid of his own mortal enemy in Kurapika Kurta, the man who was once again helpless in a state of unconscious. Feitan was believing this was a sick joke he was watching the samurai defend the boy he's hated since day one of this deal.

"I might hate this brat with enough venom to kill every last one of his pals, but not even I would go so low as to do it when he's unaware he was about to die."

"To hell with your honor and samurai nonsense! This bastard killed Uvo, the guy who was more of a
man than this girly pansy ever will be!"

"Don't you think I know that, but our leader seems to like him not to mention he did save my ass during that raid. You know that I was a dead man if he didn't step in for me...it's the reason I might have to leave this group, the strength I need to remain useful is not with me anymore."

Feitan could not believe what he was hearing out of the person he expected to join in the murdering of this pest to their crew.

"I made a promise to kill one of the Divine Blade, and there is only one way to achieve that goal which will likely take several months. That's why I'm willing to put aside my hatred to ensure the Phantom Troupe will live...while I'm gone." The gulp in Feitan's throat could almost be heard, the seriousness of Nobunaga's words also was sending chills down the torture expert's back.

"Just leave the punk alone for one night...he's been through enough already." Feitan wanted to say no, take out his weapon and just spray the room with the blood of the last remaining Kurta. The sight of Nobunaga standing over him despite his injuries causing the will to falter in the would-be killer making Feitan leave the room in defeat. With the coast clear the real occupant in the room made himself known, the man who is known to Feitan as "Nobunaga" revealed the second person in the room with the face belonging to youngest Zoldyck with a smile on his face. He knew leaving the boy alone with the wolves hidden in the spiders would lead to a horrible future with everyone involved with the group.

"Consider us even Kurta." Spoke "Nobunaga" before revealing himself to be a shape-shifter and the current business partner of both Hisoka and Chrollo Illumi Zoldyck. While none of the other spiders except for Machi knew he was here Kalluto was grateful his brother could help save his new interest from harm tonight.

"This person was something else brother, the night of the auction I thought I was watching a red-eyed demon cut down and smash through the mafia's pitiful fodder along with the female swordsmen. While that power seems to have a consequence this Kurta does seem like a valuable asset to Chrollo's organization." Illumi only heard details about this young man out of Gon and his pals, what he saw during the Hunter Exams, and stories told by the leader of the Phantom Troupe.

"I wish that he was born into the Zoldyck, but perhaps we can take him out of this grew to make him a personal bodyguard or servant. Kikyo would have to break the child in, yet, he would be quite useful to our own family."

"I can't go back to mother...not until I find him again in my own way. Still what exactly did you come here for besides arranging a meeting between Chrollo and Hisoka."

"A little family reunion dear brother."

"Hmm, I doubt that very much..." The two siblings knew if Pakunoda figured out that it was Illumi who was acting like a drunk earlier they would have been discovered, the information was given to the Manipulator helped him infiltrate the group on more than one occasion. Speaking of which Illumi decided to get on with his own personal mission, his hand quickly pulled out a golden needle to use on the helpless Kurapika.

"What are you doing brother!" Kalluto was scared he might be considering killing him not remembering these tools could also leave a certain "command" in a person's mind. The will of a person could not easily break the command placed; however, should Kurapika resist he will suffer more torture on his mind.
"Simply fulfilling your wish that's all. Just like with my foolish brother, I will guide him to his
destiny out of the kindness of my heart. Now then your mission will be simple to complete.
Kurapika, find my brother for me. Locate Killua Zoldyck and bring him back to his family alive..."
Kalluto was unable to move or stop the process and simply watched the golden needle enter the skull
of the Kurta. With the two needles in place, Illumi's plan to complete his family again was in full
swing.

- September 23th - Toredo City's Downtown District

When Kurapika got back up the first thing he saw was not the cold, unfeeling face of the captor
holding him prisoner in this city rather one of his subordinates: Shalanrk. While the expert genius
was still holding his portable phone which had the game Aliens and Other Aliens 3: The Last Game
Truly on pause the computer wizard was happy to see his "friend" was getting out of the sleep he's
been stuck in ever since the raid on the last auction. Taking a risk of getting steel cutting up his face
Shalnark quickly wrapped his arms around Kurapika who didn't punch him rather started at his
criminal partner in confusion.

"Glad to see you sleeping beauty! So, are you feeling up to getting a nice breakfast today?"

"Breakfast? Oh, that's right..." His stomach answered the question for him as he was eating smaller
dishes when he was conscious under Chrollo's orders since he knew from Kurapika's memories how
long these rest periods could take, and how much the toll would be on his body with extended
periods of using his clan's eyes. His body slowly would need to re-adjust to normal activity, so he
asked his subordinates to prepare a special meal for him while he left to meet with their traitor alone.
Nobunaga, despite his wounds, believed he should go with him, however, Chrollo said he had an
ace up his sleeve.

"Yeah we can't keep the others waiting, and I definitely want you to try out what I made to eat for us
to eat."

He figured it was going to be a dish to die for or rather die from eating, but part of himself decided to
let his taste buds decide how it would turn out. Anything would do as long as he didn't look like an
unfortunate child sitting out on the streets, the only chance of likely getting food was a sheer miracle
or a stranger. While the Kurta despised how much his life has changed he knew things could have
turned out much worse...

"I was told not to say this to you, but apparently, some of us will be going back to our home in
Meteor City soon." Kurapika was certainly not expecting that development, so instead of seeking out
the next pair of eyes, they were going on a detour to another place entirely. He also took note there
was less noise going around although he figured that was because some of the spiders were still
asleep.

"Meteor City? You mean that is where the Phantom Troupe was born?" He heard rumors back when
he first investigated details about the criminal organization, but from what he learned and everyone
said that place was a home for what the world considered trash and garbage.

"Not just born that is my hometown along with a few other founding members including our leader!"

'I just hope they don't want to send me there...' His said to himself as he continued following
Shalnark.

Unless his clan's eyes were somewhere in that city there was no way he would willingly visit such a
place. Finally, he came into the basketball court where Machi, Kortopi, Bonolenov, and Nobunaga
were enjoying a nice early meal of rice and noodles. The others were just getting up a while ago, so
it was only the six of them at the moment which Kurapika was somewhat happy about despite having his most hated samurai in the room.

"What are you two brats standing there for not sitting your asses down already!" The Kurta was surprised he was being actually welcomed by the man who vowed to have Kurapika's head on a stick just a few weeks ago. If he had the strength in him Kurapika would test his luck by dumping the food made on Nobunaga's head, but instead, he sat down with the rest of them submitting to his hunger.

"Does he know why our leader is not present yet?" The copy-maker of the group just outright said trying to understand how he would react to the news, Bonolenov responded by giving the smaller man a light punch on his head.

"That is what we tried to avoid saying this early, Kortopi!" The smaller spider was not exactly known to keep his mouth shut about secrets like that. As the bandaged man was glaring at the peeping eye on the Conjurer's face.

"What's going on here?" With a raise of his eyebrows, Kurapika wanted answers from someone; the group was not exactly the best at keeping secrets from each other compared with people that were not affiliated with the brigade. Machi decided to get things over with summing up what happened in a simple sentence.

"Chrollo is going to convince Hisoka not to kill him."

Kurapika had to listen to what she explained a few times, running that sentence in his mind over and over to fully grasp the concept of what the head spider was doing today. Instead of yelling, screaming, and throwing his bowl at someone he simply glared at everyone in the room.

"Why didn't any of you stop him? Don't you care he might get killed by that perverted clown!" He knew while part of his soul would feel at ease with his death, the conditions of the Judgement Chain still wrapped around his own heart could ensure the demise of the last Kurta remaining in this world. The man who vowed to kill the spiders was starting at each of them in amazement by their lack of concern for their leader's safety.

"Chrollo, he told us to stay here and keep an eye on you. Besides, it's not like he's alone Kalluto's gone with him since his older brother will be at the meeting."

He was flabbergasted they would assume that having one person with him could stop that maniac, and if anything it could be a trap set up by the Zoldyck family. There were just so many things which could go south for Chrollo and Kurapika could hardly keep control of the chopsticks in his left hand.

"Boss can handle himself. We trust him and he knows we will do fine by ourselves every once in a while."

The blonde was beginning to question how loyal Machi was to this man, but his thoughts were quickly changed to eating the food prepared for him to eat while Shalnark went over to get a few drinks of water for everyone. With everyone else chowing down Shalnark was starting to believe that Kurapika was slowly accepting his place with them. He certainly would not call himself a spider yet, but he was no longer ashamed of doing certain things with the group.

'Perhaps he should go with us to Meteor City, and see how our lives began before the Phantom Troupe.' With a sigh, the tech-support member of the wanted fugitives got back to help with preparing the rest of the breakfast. The former hunter noticed the bandages wrapped around the samurai, which hid the battle scars and wounds he got fighting a Divine Blade...and only getting in
one good attack on the elderly man.

"Tch, listen here chain brat if you're done being a lazy bum I need a sparring party for training and I think-"

"Are you ignorant or stupid, Nobu?" Machi hoped her partner was not seriously considering reopening the wounds she had to stitch together, the both of them would rack up quite the bill if they attempted doing any kind of physical activity let alone sword fighting. The hot-tempered spider was about to lunge over toward the ninja when Bonolenov stepped in knowing she had a good point.

"Unless you want to die from blood loss which I wouldn't mind you shouldn't even touch that stupid old sword of yours."

"The only way I'm going to let go of my blade is when I die, and if anything I will drag my weapon into the grave with my deceased corpse!"

Huffing in annoyance, the both of them went back to their bowls to finish eating as Kurapika began to wonder what he should do until Chrollo returns from the summit. Technically he could be living his last hours on this planet if the conditions of the chain binding its targets were broken with the death of either man. He could be upset, angry, saddened, and or depressed his life was now hanging in the balance with no way of knowing how things will turn out. Then again without their leader, the rest of the spiders would likely disperse likely never to unite again.

'Everything they worked for would be gone...could they even do anything else besides work in the Phantom Troupe.'

He knew it would be difficult for wanted fugitives to have a chance at a normal life, but the idea of gleeful murders trying to act like normal people again seemed impossible to imagine. He was taken out of his inner thoughts when the pink-haired spider called out to him.

"Boy, how do you feel about doing some training with me instead of "professional" samurai over here." Machi Komachine thought Kurapika planned on retreating into his room, the books he had also would be an excuse to not hang out with the others and she was interested in learning more about the Kurta. She held no grudge against him along with some of the other members, the overall goal of being a thief was more important to feel like getting revenge for the loss of one of their own as Chrollo has shown over the month.

"Hold on I thought you said I should not be doing any kind of physical activity with these stitches in my body?"

"I believe you are a pretty smart boy, you were told that you shouldn't be risking injury with someone like Nobunaga watching over your condition. I know how to keep those nen-stitches in place better than anyone else, Kurapika." Considering how much she was getting paid to keep his body in good health by her leader she was going to do a damn good job of that. Looking down at his now empty plate he knew that he really couldn't do much else besides reading some more, and the weight of boredom might crash down later giving him few options for activities.

"What did you have in mind exactly?" As he was about to get up Shalnark gave him a small glass of milk not wanting his meal to go without the item he prepared himself, so he could get a possible thank you out of the young man he's grown fond having conversations with over the weeks. He began to give Kurapika his best puppy down impression to seal the deal.

"Don't leave just yet I want to hear your opinion about this meal...considering well someone made it."
"The rice is pretty bland are you sure that this dish isn't expired, Shalnark?"

"I WASN'T SPEAKING TO YOU NOBU GODDAMNIT! Please just give me your honest opinion after having a sip of that milk Pika." He knew he wasn't that great of a cook yet he did try his best today when he asked Machi for help in getting the rice and noodles done just right, and if he could please his friend then the work would be worth the lack of sleep.

"Well I don't feel hungry umm thank you?" He was unsure how to feel about it just as long as it kept his stomach full he didn't care how it tasted to him. Shalnark naturally was dancing around even if he hadn't gotten a detailed compliment on his cooking.

"Oh! You! Are! Most! Certainly! Welcome!"

Shalnark's cheerful dance made Kurapika pause his thoughts entirely for a moment.

"...Yeahhhhh..."

Kurapika was worried he might have broken Shalnark at that moment seeing him almost pass out in joy. As the other spiders woke up to get their own meals the aloof ninja told him to meet her in the weights section of this gym they were borrowing for their current base of operations. Looking around Kurapika observed the many different options to get your body into good condition, but he was already physically prepared for fighting making him curious about what she had in mind. Instead of a few dumbbells in hand, there was a web of nen-string in her fingers.

"I know you're pretty good in physical fighting, but I want to see what you are capable with that nen of yours along with those crimson eyes."

"These chains are something you've all seen before and I don't think you need to be reminded that I can't keep using these eyes otherwise I'll end up back in bed." She shook her head, her hands moved around changing the shape of the web now forming the image of a spider. The quickness, agility, and speed that her fingers moved during that process made it nearly impossible to see with the naked eye.

"Even if you know how your abilities work there are ways you can unlock new assets with your own nen through experimentation. Nen can be understood, but never truly mastered despite how much you train. Years, time, and effort can help you see brand new horizons unexplored by your mind since only you limit that untapped potential." Kurapika was surprised at this admission, the idea he could learn and develop new skills to enhance his Conjuration beyond his current scope was surprising.

"Could the same be done for all types of Nen-users?" She nodded admitting she herself still has not mastered her own powers to their fullest.

"Indeed, boy. Chrollo himself is still having to adapt while understanding the limits of his own powers. He doesn't tell me since the spiders are meant to discover about each other's talents on their own, but since we all got a glimpse into your memories along with research on the Kurta clan I've been waiting for an opportunity like this."

"Stop calling me boy. It's Kurapika. Can you tell me what you get out of helping me?"

Kurapika couldn't trust any of these people regardless if they genuinely wanted to help him or not.

"You're part of the Troupe or will be, which means we support one another meaning I figured that you could learn how to control yourself...after what happened during the last auction raid."
The memories would never leave the minds who watched the pacifist nature regress into nothingness, which left the young Kurta in a state of blind malice lashing out at everything in his red-eyed sight. While it was a sight to look at Kurapika had no skills or professional nature with his chains, his hands simply moved around to choke or slash at whatever poor sap was in his way. The most disturbing part was the fact he never came after the spiders instead only laughing as they observed the chaos he unleashed that night.

"So, you're doing all of this in order to tame me?"

"Despite what you've seen from us I don't needlessly create slaughter there is a certain level of...restraint in my movements. My goal is not to control you rather teach you to keep control of yourself."

He knew just by how calm she acted that statement was correct, the most emotionless member of the Phantom Troupe Machi rarely expressed any real emotions besides her apathy stares and dry remarks. He figured if anyone was going to teach him out self-control it should be Machi. He had some concerns about what made her decide now was the best time to start, yet he couldn't really do much else around this place.

"Alright now just conjure those chains."

"Hold on I thought you said that my body should take it easy for a while!"

"I'm not asking you to do much Kurapika, but in order to help I need to see the steel you use in battle. In fact, I only need you to do a few things with your right hand and arm but not the rest of those limbs."

Part of him was considering taking those chains around her neck, place her body in a Zetsu state, and just enjoy Machi's final moments of breathing air through her lungs. Kurapika knew it was this kind of struggle that was sending his soul into madness when the medical ninja noticed his head move down she figured he was in the middle of a mental debate with his mind. He looked right into her cool eyes as he didn't reply; he projecting his chains without question.

The chilling sounds of Kurapika's chains were echoed through the room as Machi saw the different styled chains now hanging from each of his fingers, the cold steel joining together forming the perfect arsenal against spiders, detecting items, and giving out certain commandments on a person's soul. She knew any one of those tools could bring harm to herself, so she asked him to reveal the ones that are not lethal against spiders.

"The Dowsing Chain along with my Holy Chain and this regular chain don't possess any limitations besides the fact my abilities are stronger in my Specialist state." She has seen those used before knowing that he was talented in having different usages with his Nen, but she wondered if he could battle without those chains.

"Can you use other weapons like knives, swords, and that Bokken you had during the Hunter Exams along with those other steel weapons in your possession?"

"Honestly I don't like more lethal weapons if I don't need them in a fight. Believe it or not, I've hated the idea of using any kind of firearm since I tried to remain as pacifistic as possible." His agenda against the spiders was something he didn't to consume his life, but it was only when he met people like Gon, Leorio, and Killua...Killua that he managed to have a lighter mood with his life. As the days went on by he began to remember how lonesome his days were back when he was fully committed to avenging his clan.
"I don't blame you handguns are much too noisy, but if you're in a situation where you can't fight without your chains it would be wise to come prepared with a second option. Now then I want you to send out the chain you can use to attack me without limitations placed on it."

"Are you sure? I don't want the others to think I tried-"

"You're not going to lay a finger on me even if you try, rookie." Her smirk only made him determined to prove Machi wrong, his right hand quickly moved to strike her on the chest, but she easily moved her nen-strings around the chain trapping it within the web. He knew she was quick but to have his chain stuck in this way was surprising to watch, he attempted to move the chain back only to find himself unable to pull back.

"These strings aren't too hard to cut, but they seem to have a good hold on your "strong" chains, boy."

'She's trying to motivate me...or she's really mocking me just to have fun.' Either way, Kurapika began to get serious, his other chains came out which made Machi widen her eyes as she was not expecting that. Letting go of his hand she moved out of the way he managed to wrap the chain with his limitations around her leg.

"I thought you weren't going to use that chain Kurapika!"

"You forced my hand, but I was going to harm you with it!" At least that's what he said while his inner mind was thinking about doing the exact opposite once she was under the effects of Chain Jail. Dragging her toward him the darker intentions of his actions were beginning to manifest as was something new which repeated itself over and over again. While she attempted to break free of his strong grip Kurapika was losing control of his mind under the command of Illumi's needle.

'Find Killua...bring him to us alive...' Kurapika let Machi go as he closed his eyes, the command was something he didn't understand or why he was suddenly thinking about his friend. The ninja knew his mind was in a state of flux, her hands moved around to seal up his hands keeping him from using his chains until she allowed him.

"What...what is happening to me?!"

"I don't know you tell me, Kurta." She stared at his face watching the conflict within himself, but there was not much she could do to help calm his mind. She decided to let the situation play out watching Kurapika regain control of his sanity. The former blacklist hunter knew that after what he could have done to her he could really use her kind of help.

"My soul is tearing itself apart, the dreams I keep having involved a forest dripping with blood, and my friends taunting me about staying around the Phantom Troupe. Honestly, I've never told anyone about these dreams not even Chrollo because I thought they would have stopped by now." Perhaps the key to understanding this problem was through his nightly terrors. The pink-haired spider agreed that whatever is troubling his mind could involve the vivid dreams.

"You might need more help than just me with this problem, boy. I don't know which one of us can handle mental issues besides well a doctor, but perhaps Pakunoda can help you talk about this or Shizuku."

Machi suggested, but Kurapika didn't want to hear anything from that girl if she was as dumb as a brick like some of the spiders told him about her.

"Don't the assholes like Nobunaga and Feitan consider her just some airhead?" The conversation he
had with her suggested that was not the case, but he didn't know if he could trust her not to go blabbing about his personal matters with the spiders who would take advantage of that information.

"Well, you can also talk with Shalnark if you feel like speaking to another guy will help ease any concern."

"Ugh don't think I'm some kind of sexist pig, Machi. I don't have a problem speaking with girls it's just..." It was just everything else about that instilled fear like the idea of loving a female, possibly having a family, and spending the rest of his life with a woman. Machi had a rare smile on her face watching his cheeks turn slightly red as he was slowly admitting he was shy around the opposite gender.

'Heh, this boy is pretty honest and cute about being shy. Unlike Hisoka, he might be completely innocent when it comes to the matter of romance let alone lust and love.'

"I don't know why I'm acting like this around a murdering criminal like you. It's n-not like this means that I l-like you either okay. Ugh!"

"Kurapika, how old are you exactly?"

"I'm 17 years old, and I will be 18 when next year comes around that is if one of you spiders don't kill me..."

"This is how kids like you react, the hormones, dating other girls in school, and learning about the opposite sex is perfectly natural for someone like yourself at this period in your life."

"I'm not some normal young adult in his final years at high school. You and your friends took that away from me." He never got the chance at living like a normal child, with a loving family, and only being worried about being good at schoolwork all because of the spiders. Kurapika wondered if that is why he was no longer so hostile toward them compared to the first couple of days, but could it also be that he was still hoping there was a way out of this arrangement.

"Don't be so certain about that while we don't behave like others it doesn't none of us have human desires. Also, you still have your life ahead of you trust me."

"Is that why you're following Chrollo Lucilfer? Are you looking for a purpose like Shizuku, is it loyalty like Nobunaga, perhaps your reasoning is faith similar to Pakunoda, but maybe it is something else completely..."

"I...cannot say really we just meet in Meteor City and I've been working under him ever since that day. I was simply adrift with nothing really going on until I met him in that landfill." Machi was aware that wasn't much of an answer then again she figured she was being defensive considering this was their first real talk after they've left Yorknew City. He had to admit - this chat was intriguing to him, which made Machi's sudden tightening of her strings rather painful. Holding him up with her threads she placed a hand on his cheek in a chiding fashion. She wondered if she was becoming like an older sister to the young Kurta.

"Don't think you're getting out of this exercise with this small talk. I'm not done "teaching" you quite yet, rook."

Before Chrollo would return she vowed he would learn new ways to fight in combat no matter how much Kurapika complained about being so hard on him. Nobunaga laughed at the sight of the Kurta being tangled up in her strings, which made Shalnark remind the samurai about how she kicked his ass with those "girly threads" a few times during training battles. The remark also gave him the
motivation necessary to become strong enough to claim the lives of the Divine Blades who've humiliated him in defeat. If Nobunaga wanted to remain a spider then he would need to become stronger and better.

**Toredo City Hall**

Hisoka knew this place would be the perfect setting to discuss politics, battle planning, and finally get the exact date of when he could finally kill Chrollo Lucilfer in a real fight. Questioning a few city council members, Hisoka learned he came at the right time since tomorrow would be a huge debate on what to do with the growing criminal activity on the streets, he added to the list of crimes by cutting the men's throats with his playing cards. From what he's learned about politicians they killed people, not with weapons rather through words and laws.

"Ahh, what a lovely sight you've given me today, Hisoka." Illumi removed any other stragglers still within the building along with Kalluto walking into the main office on his right. The performing clown began to sarcastically clap and bow when he saw the lack of blood on their clothing, the men knew how to kill without ruining their clothing or leaving much trace evidence for the authorities. As he plopping himself in the chair enjoying a day's work, the Zoldyck brothers looked at the pictures hanging on the wall showing off many of the council members now dead because of them.

"I only wish the mayor and hired praise men were here; unlike most of this lying trash here I would love to meet a pathological schemer like this mayor."

"What makes you think he's not as much of a coward as these people. Between their apparent sanctions on the low-market districts in this town, and the stories about their mayor promising to bring prosperity back into this city by affiliating with the Mafia, Triads, and other major black market organizations I don't find Truman all that interesting."

"Illumi, you've got to hear this guy talk! I'm impressed by his silver tongue even when it seems like he's no different from other politicians who are really just criminals working inside of the law, but the best part is the fact he's managed to get re-elected once again only losing by a few votes."

"Well, not all people are like that Hisoka." Kalluto knew it was rare for people to see men with power who do honestly care about protecting the public, but when he grew up he's met a few lawmen and officers who broke the mentality people have for the police, which this city demonstrated through music, protests, and graffiti over the walls. They haven't come here to discuss those matters, however, but Chrollo apparently was going to be late to this party leaving them a few minutes to themselves.

"Hmm so tell me Kalluto, the Phantom Troupe has taken you in a few days by now and I was wondering are you ready to kill one of them yet?" Hisoka knew unlike himself the professional assassin might have less restraint when dealing with their antics. Shaking his head to the question Kalluto brought out some paper showing off the paper designs he's made each one resembling the brigade.

"Sure a few of them are simply morons, but there are some within the Troupe whom I wish to understand more mainly that Kurta..." His hand went over to the paper chibi model of Kurapika, the boy wondered how he was doing without him or Chrollo monitoring the rest of the spiders.

"I'm sure you do brother, but you must remember he's our pawn to keep the group in check while Hisoka gets what he wants as will our family once Killua is brought back to our mother."

'So, that is your endgame then? What a twisted plan of using the boy's desire to reunite with his friends against him Illumi.' Hisoka had to smirk realizing what he likely did with one of his golden
needles. The potential battle with their friendship likely being on the line was very interesting to him, and the fact he's never gotten a battle with the last remaining Kurta left in this world made him a valuable person to Hisoka.

"Tell me what do you wish to do once you've gotten that deathmatch with Chrollo? I know you're still looking to fight Gon one day, but there has to be a bigger goal for a schemer like yourself...

"Hmm. I wish I could tell you the answer, but in truth, the future for me is uncertain once all my dreams come true." His greatest moment won't come until he can enjoy the thrill of seeing the full strength of that boy, his efforts to ensure that such a fruit ripens will be worth the wait. Hisoka knew his antics were simply to pass the time, but in a way, he appreciated having a few side-projects like the Phantom Troupe, Zoldycks, and Kurapika to play with if he was bored. If he crushed the bugs once he killed their boss then he would seek out new kinds of prey like other hunters since he's managed to pass the exams.

"What will be your next move Illumi?"

"I'll be returning to the rest of my family on Kikyo's request while Kalluto will spend more time with the spiders."

"Oh, well good those people will teach your brother new fascinating ways to slaughter people like your family desires!"

Footsteps broke up their conversation as they realized who's Nen had entered the building, the very last person coming for this small party of killers. Instead of wearing a disguise Chrollo showed up in his old costume not wanting to seem like a stranger to everyone here. He also stopped off near a department store to pick up a few supplies for tonight should things go well after this meeting. Waltzing into the wrecked boardroom he looked at the faces who would be witnesses to this summit along with possibly keeping the peace.

"Chrollo, fashionably late I see then again you could be signing your own death warrant just by showing up."

"Hisoka, and I see you've brought help to make sure you don't get into a fight you might not win."

The usual banter between these two was to be expecting as Illumi wondered how long this teasing would take since it was clear they were simply toying with one another with their taunts. Both of the predators were stalking each other, getting a good feeling about their future confrontation, and trying to see who had the edge between them.

"Gentlemen I believe we should get on with things before more pests show up to die. Now then I believe the two of you wished to come to an understanding of your values on this "fight" being arranged is that correct Hisoka and Chrollo?"

"Yes I believe can formulate the proper battleground, time, and date along with any minor details Chrollo. Sorry, forgive me for believing that your subordinates were simply minor details."

"Don't worry no offense is taken considering you were a "minor detail" before leaving so suddenly without even a proper goodbye."

'I see this is what Illumi spoke about earlier, the art of trash-talking is most strange.' Kalluto knew how to act prideful yet he never was that good with verbal jabs like the ones being displayed through Chrollo and Hisoka, which he would take note of if he needed to dish out a few insults to the likes of Nobunaga.
"No matter; a little verbal warfare never harmed us before - oh, by the way, tell me how is Uvogin's replacement doing, Boss?"

"Kurapika, he is doing remarkably well actually compared to my early expectations of his growth. He's certainly never going to be a real stand-in for someone like Uvogin, but he does not need to be when the Kurta is already rather special in his own way. If you wish to perhaps I can arrange another meeting with you and him in the future as I know you enjoy having the chance to fight unique opponents like myself."

"That is true, and such is the reason I've called you here to keep you from running away from me like you have been ever since Yorknew. Hide behind your excuse of searching for the very eyes you stole in the first place, but I believe it is time to determine which one of us will survive my second greatest battle to come!"

"Let me guess you're considering me second only to Gon what an honor..."

Hisoka just smiled, his hands began to shuffle around the playing cards now holding drops of blood over them. He did consider this upcoming duel with Chrollo to serve as a great game of both physical and mental chess, the both of them knew how to perform in both areas, and part of himself had some doubt about emerging victorious over the head of the Phantom Troupe. This small concern buried deep in his mind only made his lust for violence against Chrollo all the more exciting.

"I'm assuming you have already chosen where you wish this battle to take place then."

"Indeed, but you will need to become a Floor Master before this can happen, "Boss". I'm already sure you know about Heavens Arena don't you?"

"A "neutral" site that does make sense along with hampering me since I will need to technically become an "official" hunter to even fight in that building."

"Chrollo knew Hisoka was trying to stack the deck against him, and he expected the next limitation would be none of his spiders could get involved during the fight."

"Not to worry I'm not that cruel you will stay out of the spotlight of the higher-ups, and the Zoldyck family will take care of everything else since you're keeping their youngest safe and sound."

"Consider it our thanks for helping groom my dear youngest brother into a fine killer." Chrollo understood business came first for their family over anything else, it was the reason Zeno and Silva didn't take off his head when he had to fight them in Yorknew after all.

"Well, I suppose that does sound fair but there is another problem. The reason I've been attempting to entangle Kurapika into my group is that...my life depends on it."

"Explaining the details about the Judgement Chain wrapped around his heart, the conditions he requested for the both of them, and how both of them could die if Chrollo gets killed by Hisoka the situation took an unexpected turn."

"I see...if I were to fight you then the possibility of facing that Kurta in your possession could be lost. Tell me if you believe he is capable of fighting someone like myself seriously?"

"He's certainly not on your level...as of now, but if you give him enough time he might end up matching you someday much like your investment with Gon will take its time."

"There might be something we can work out then, the visit to Greed Island gave me lots of things to study including the craft of nen-exorcists one of which I've gotten the chance to meet. Now, if Kurapika's commandments can be put into place then it's not that much of a guess to assume with the help of an exorcist they can also be removed just as easily. You know if I didn't know better I'd say..."
you did this on purpose to avoid fighting me once again." The clown giggled at the suggestion of Chrollo potentially getting himself killed just to avoid losing to someone like himself.

"If only I could believe that was the sole reason, but Kurapika has managed to peak my interests with his potential much like Gon has with you, Hisoka. That could be why I'm willing to bet everything that I have for the sake of seeing those possibilities come to fruition." The mastermind of the spiders was amused about the obvious parallel between them and their chosen hunters.

"I suppose it would be unfair to rob Kurapika of that chance to become strong enough to be a worthy opponent. I'll tell you what in a span of 6 months I wish to fight Kurapika in a real fight once you've given him more time to train and like to hunt down more of those red eyes. If he can prove his worth then I'll remove the Judgement chain around your hearts, but if he proves a disappointment then the both of you will lose that gamble you've made and die..."

'All or nothing then. I suppose I have to put everything I've worked for on the line.' He knew the man was a dangerous opponent, but on the other hand, Kurapika was still an unknown factor.

"That sounds reasonable. In six months we will reunite in a location of my choosing if that is fine with you Hisoka."

"Certainly you have made quite the bargain here, so I hope it doesn't blow up in our faces."

"I hope the same with your project with Gon." Chrollo knew Hisoka wanted to just get the fight over and done with here and now, but the prankster did enjoy putting on a show in front of a live audience and not just two brotherly assassins. Illumi had one last thing he wanted to ask the phantom thief before he left town.

"Do you know if you'll come across Gon and his friends sometime in the future?"

"Are you asking me to capture your brother for you? Then again considering Kalluto's reason for entering the Troupe do you really wish to know what you already believe my answer will be to you, Illumi?"

"I simply wished to hear it coming from your lips old friend that which isn't that hard to do, really."

"We will be in touch then...Illumi...Hisoka."

"Oh, do tell that Kurta boy I said hello will you!" With a smile hiding back disgust against the traitor of the Phantom Troupe Chrollo simply nodded before leaving with Kalluto in tow.

"Hisoka, do you think Kurapika has a chance of succeeding with Chrollo Lucifer's challenge against you?"

"I can't really say Illumi, but if he was once a close friend with Gon then he must have some kind of talent from what I've seen out of him during the exams."

The older heir of the Zoldyck family knew the Scarlet Eyes alone made Kurapika invaluable to many people, but his techniques seem to be unpolished in the mind of the professional killer not to mention the limitations he's set on most of his chains. Hisoka thought differently, the effort he's put into his abilities made them much stronger against their intended targets, but with Chrollo's influence, that strength could easily weaken if he was fully converted on the side of his sworn enemies. With the small pyramid of cards finished Hisoka pondered what his next move will be against Chrollo.

"I suppose you wish to finish your business with the Phantom Troupe leader before moving on to the Dark Continent. It would not surprise me to hear about Pariston Hill bringing along the Zodiacs for
the exposition to oppose Ging. With his clout and power within the Association Netero might have to step down or confront him once they arrive on the continent."

"Yes, the unexplored world that not many humans have come back from visiting. The perfect breeding ground for powerful opponents that I can fight to my heart's content."

"I wonder if the beasts on that land should be afraid of you instead of the other way around..."

With the hours ticking by Chrollo began his trek back to his followers, the news about their future trip to Meteor City might seem like a detour, however, the head spider needed to return home. Too long has the young criminal been away from that junkyard he loved so much, but his newest ally never visited there along with Kurapika so they will learn about where the Phantom Troupe began. The origins of their beginnings have been a mystery to everyone not involved with their small organization. So, in preparation for this event, he wanted to have a good meal for tonight before that Chrollo needed to know something about the youngest member of the Troupe.

"Tell me Kalluto, do you know how old you currently are?"

"I'm 10 years of age sir, but do you mind if I ask why we are about to steal from a pastry shop instead of a food market." When he was told about this plan the newest spider wondered what his leader was scheming in his head. With a small smile, Chrollo knew his newest subordinate was never going to guess what his intentions were with this place.

"While I might not know when your birthday is we should celebrate things with a nice cake none the less. Do you have an idea about what kind of taste appeals to Kurapika?" He knew while the boy was very young for an assassin Chrollo realized Kalluto would have a long time to grow and mature in his group, but that also that means he would need to make good friends with people like Kurapika Kurta.

"Umm...that is a good question. Kurapika might be willing to try out carrot cake if you get it for him since I heard him say that to himself, and as for me I wouldn't mind cherry-flavored stuff - but why exactly are we celebrating?"

"Anything you can think of but for myself: the joy of being alive and experiencing the wonders still left in this world!" Kalluto was taken back with the sudden emotion in Chrollo's voice. Even with his age, the Zoldyck thought he was trying to prepare for his possible death when he finally confronts Hisoka in battle; the unusual happiness in his face also could mean this was him embracing his demise. Of course, Kalluto knew he shouldn't underestimate the mastermind behind the most notorious gang wanted, so the other reason could be he was happy that he would be returning back home.

'Home is where the family is...right?'

Kalluto didn't question himself further as Chrollo asked him to find other good treats for the rest of the gang once they made their way back to the spider's temporary base of operations. Another day...the leader of his group of fugitives was given another day in this world to consider his future and each choice he's made thus far, and how many decisions he will make in the future...
Act 8: Junk X Yard

Chapter Summary

The spiders move off to the land of their very origin while Kurapika discovers the rise of a new species. One that could threaten everyone living outside of the undiscovered land known as the Dark Continent. The danger soon to be known to the world as Chimera Ants.

Act 8: Junk X Yard
Toredo City's Downtown District - September 23rd -

As night fell down over the city the spiders were finishing up their activities in the recreational areas provided by the empty gym they were hiding out in before they left the city. Pakunoda was called in by Machi when she felt Kurapika couldn't handle any more physical exercise, so she decided to let her handle the mental part of the workout she wanted him to receive considering she was one of the sane enough spiders who wouldn't try killing him when they were alone.

"Kid wasn't half-bad at working out with me, but he's got some mental issues going on inside the Kurta's fucked-up brain."

"That "fucked-up" brain is thanks to your actions against my clan and friends!"

Huffing out in exhaustion Kurapika's limbs were hanging down like noodles, but he couldn't deny he felt different than when he began this special training with the nimble pink-haired ninja. The knowledge she also taught him about finding new ways to use Nen-abilities gave him inspiration about how to move forward in his life.

"Will you continue to give him these kinds of lessons, Machi?"

"While he complains a lot he does not to train with me in the future, so I can only hope we pair up more often when we split ourselves up." She was grateful the Kurta seemed less hostile with her over the hours they spent learning about one another despite the pain she put him through with her workout routine, and despite his body looking tired she could feel his Nen had undergone a small, but noticeable change when the session was done.

"Take a 5 minute break, kid. I've got something to discuss with Paku in private."

Her icy eyes watching the tired blonde make his way over to Franklin for some water allowing her time to discuss what to do with Paku's help. Chrollo's idea was to help make Kurapika more relaxed around the rest of the gang in order to help him accept being a spider, but his agenda to kill them was a major problem along with the possibility of his friends looking for Kurapika.

"He isn't trying to kill us all the time, and yet his morality is still fighting with this new mentality he's gotten ever since the last raid. I don't know how I can really describe it's like he's struggling with two sides inside of himself." Pakunoda figured it could be his conscious was destroying itself because he was beginning to not hate the Phantom Troupe liked he used to before all of these circumstances happened.
"That's why you want me to talk with him then unless you had something else in mind?"

"Think you can extract a few memories for Boss to see when he gets back?"

"You think he's been hiding something behind our backs, Machi?"

"More like he's being a prideful idiot with the issues he's been dealing with, and he just can't bring himself to ask for our help."

She knew he could be hard-headed like Nobunaga when he has personal problems he refuses to let anyone help him deal with since in his mind he should be able to solve it by himself. It could be another similarity both men had about each other despite their own personal issues with one another.

"I'll see what I can do, but we can't risk making him get suspicious about us considering we're likely some of the only spiders he's grown to tolerate being around right now."

"Yeah I know that Paku we shouldn't piss him off, but Chrollo's investment in him is strange to me. Boss has never put as much time and effort into a project like keeping the Kurta in our group."

"He must really believe Kurapika would make a valuable asset to the Phantom Brigade..." Pakunoda saw the young survivor talk with the giant man not knowing what they were speaking about from the distance away from the other room. She would have to listen to Kurapika conversating with the other female spiders, and if the guys treat them with some respect, unlike Nobunaga and Feitan who seem to constantly mock them. She wondered what Kurapika was asking Franklin wondering if it was some kind of interrogation by the Kurta.

"Why do you want to know are you really gonna ask one of them on some date or something?" Kurapika simply took the water out of Franklin's hands hoping the man didn't catch the blush on his cheeks or the lack of a response. "Absolutely not! I just want to know more about Pakunonda, Machi, and Shizuku. If I'm forced to stay here it would be in my best interest to learn more about my enemies..." "If that is how you feel." Franklin knew that was more to that answer, but he didn't want to press the issue with the volatile nature of Kurapika's mind. With Machi's role done she decided to talk with Chrollo on Pakunoda's phone to get an update, so Pakunoda was left with the blonde who had lots of questions on his mind. Unlike the majority of the spiders she actually could just extract his thoughts, and with that in mind he felt like he might as well tell her about his dreams.

"I'm supposed to be better than this, than him, and here I am ready to go on another crime spree or even kill more people just to get my hands on those eyes..."

Kurapika quickly drank the glass of water in order to control himself with his emotions running rampant. The image of his clothing, the state of his mind, and his actions resembled nothing like the hunter who sought to finish the business started by the very killers he was staying in this crime-driven city. He could imagine a neck chain was put on his body, and the chains he used were binding his limbs into following behind Chrollo Lucilfer like a tamed pet.

"Why is it I want to kill everyone last people here...but at the same time I can't because I need you all to stay alive," Pakunoda asked him to sit down because he was working himself out just by walking through the room during his rants about being a hypocrite. She was grateful he did take her advice, he managed to relax in a chair while continuing to speak about the visions during his sleep; the unconscious mind was being very active the past few days compared to when he is awake.

"Those dreams might be coming from your conscious speaking to you while you're asleep, the other reason could be when you had to kill those people at the auction the guilt brought about nightmares that are making you relive those events."
"Do you have a real P.H.D that would support that flimsy theory?"

"If I was a doctor then I wouldn't be stealing things just to survive. Despite what it seems like I can't just buy a fancy home, live in a peaceful neighborhood, and retire with all of my allies in the spider or the Boss himself." The younger fugitive thought with those kinds of looks and brains she could have the opportunity of living as a normal person, for he was trying to understand what could make her so loyal to Chrollo that she would have given up her life for his sake.

"If it makes you feel any better you're not the only person with dead parents, Kurapika. My father was your typical womanizer who loves to cheat on my mother, and he left her when she was "too rugged" for his tastes. It was not that long before I lost her in a car accident when I was starting out my teenage years, but I'm not trying to earn your pity by explaining this. Each one of us couldn't find something to make our regular lives mean anything, so we sought out someone who could help us find a purpose of making us live."

Her sad story wasn't anything he would play the world's smallest violin during her speech when compared to the hell his is still suffering in with these criminals.

"You wanted to find meaning...by killing and stealing things? You seem bright, so why not get a real job instead?"

She shook her head at that comment, the mere idea of taking things or slaughtering people didn't sit well with her thoughts about her life. It was much more complicated than a simple concept like Bonnie or Clyde. She truly had faith in Chrollo's vision of a group of people who didn't care about the rules placed in society or the limitations made on a person's actions.

"To have freedom in this world besides living the life of a normal person with a weekly job or as a simple-minded hunter. This is quite an envious goal, yes, but then again I'm simply a human going by her human desires. None of us are perfect, and yet I won't take back any of the actions I've done throughout my life. I'm sure you would say the same thing in regards to killing Uvo, right?"

"...No there is a regret that I have...trusting and reading about my own fortune..."

She remembered that night when she looked into his memories realizing if he didn't accept Chrollo's offer he would have likely succeeded in binding his powers, and she would have likely just sacrificed herself to help the others get revenge against the Kurta. Events seemed to have favored the Phantom Troupe, but Pakunoda knew it was not going to be like that all the time considering they lost a limb in Yorknew.

"Things could have ended up much worse, the friends you care so much about could have ended up at the mercy of someone like Nobunaga if you didn't surrender yourself. Those reasons along with many other possibilities can give you the strength to live on."

"I don't want a long-ass lecture from someone like you..."

"This is not a lecture rather a therapy session. Then again the "office" could look brighter than this dreary place..." Kurapika was surprised by the joke Pakunoda made about the setting of this room they were using for this conversation. A knock on the door revealed Chrollo Lucilfer walking in with two plates with orange cake and cups filled with juice.

"I hear you've been having a good talk with one another which I'm glad about, but there isn't any way I can let these slices of cake go to waste."

"Boss?"
"There is no way I'm going to eat-"

"I've gotten carrot cake, and this is grape juice Kurapika. Believe me, I HAD to go through a lot to get this meal for us tonight."

"...Damn you Kalluto."

The smiles on both Pakunoda and Chrollo were evident as Kurapika reluctantly accepted the food provided for everyone at the abandoned gym while most of the spiders were just happy to see their leader back in one piece, the worst fears plaguing them were now gone as Kalluto was offering everyone the same kind of cake and drinks they stole from the pastry and food shops nearby. The celebration was underway as each of the members of the brigade was singing the praises of their leader accomplishing his goal, yet, another successful venture despite knowing what their traitor was capable of doing for his sake.

"I knew Boss would come back, and I'm hoping he gave that bastard clown a few punches in honor of Uvo!"

"You do realize that was not the point of their meeting, Nobu. Then again after getting your ass kicked I suppose you would be willing to watch someone else actually fight a real battle." The duo of Nobunaga and Feitan were at it once more, Bonolenov had Kortopi remove a few of the bandages around his mouth to enjoy the meal, Shizuku only felt like have a small piece of cake, and the rest of the group was digging into the special dinner brought to them by their leader.

"I've already explained this over the phone with Machi, but our next destination is going to be where everything began for us back in Meteor City. There aren't any Scarlet Eyes there, some new treasure we must seek, and really the only reason I wish to return is rather simple I've gotten homesick..."

"Boss, are you sure that is a good idea? Kurapika only wants to regain the items belonging to his clan, so I don't think a detour like that would do much for his goals..."

"That is perfectly understandable Shalnark, the fact you're willing to offer up comment about his thoughts on this matter is also surprising to hear." He smiled when the computer expert ruffled the back of his head acknowledging the fact he's beginning to get along with Kurapika to a small degree. The Kurta was not thrilled about this news as he was glaring daggers at the mastermind behind this criminal gang who simply ignored that stare. He had to get Kurapika to understand this trip's meaning and why it was important they leave now rather than later.

"Hisoka wants to battle you, the fight he wants is so important that he also wants you to become a Floor Master? This has to be some kind of trick by that clown!" The samurai knew a prankster like him would easily manipulate things to his advantage, which Chrollo saw in a different aspect of his future opponent removing all obstacles standing in his way.

"There is another caveat to this arrangement, the next battle he wishes to have will be against you Kurapika."

"..."

The blonde said nothing as he just waited to hear more about what was discussed between them before running over to choke the spider's leader by the neck. The other spiders were actually sticking up for Kurapika, the fact Chrollo agreed to those terms without asking them or the Kurta didn't make them happy.

"If Kurapika can impress our traitor then he will give me a nen-exorcist who can remove the
limitations placed on the both of us, or if you disappoint him we both will end up dead."

"WHY DID YOU AGREE TO THAT!?!" Both the Kurta and his subordinates shouted at the same
time nearly busting our Chrollo's eardrums. Waving an invisible white flag the leader of the group
wanted to explain his intentions before his followers began to beat the tar out of him. He explained
that he believed Hisoka would see the same thing he saw in Kurapika, and with the gamble favoring
him they would be free of the chains wrapped around their hearts.

"Then the chain bastard will be free to leave or kill us whenever he wants!"

"The opposite would be true, and you seem to undervalue the time we've gotten to spend with the
last remaining Kurta. You wish to reclaim all of the Scarlet Eyes don't you Kurapika? That goal will
be much harder to reach without our help won't it?" The blonde refused to reply rather focusing on
the sole fact he was being forced to fight someone he feared and hated almost as much as Chrollo
Lucilfer.

'I would be free of the commandments placed on my body...or would it just be a gilded cage?'
Should he could run back to his friends, escape from this lifestyle, and perhaps return to being a
normal hunter instead of an avenger. Still, the rest of the eyes along with the spiders would be left out
in the world perhaps escaping from his grasp forever...

"Keep your friends close...and your enemies closer." Kurapika's eyes shimmered red as he knew that
either way he would need to sacrifice something important to him. Then again if he was being forced
into going to Meteor City his current objective would be side-tracked, for the time being perhaps that
would not be a bad thing considering he was not ready to kill more people. Sighing in defeat
Kurapika submitted to the sweet taste of the cake Chrollo clearly got as a bribe.

"We will be doing a two group split during this trip: Me, Pakunoda, Machi, Phinks, Kortopi,
Franklin, and Bonolenov will be seeking out another pair of Scarlet Eyes during our travel to Meteor
City. As for the other team which will be you Kurapika, Nobunaga, Shalnark, Shizuku, Feitan, and
Kalluto as you will simply be heading to the city."

"How will you find the next pair of eyes...and why are you going out of the way to get them?"
Kurapika couldn't understand this sudden act of "kindness" by Chrollo after being used as a poker
chip in a game between him and Hisoka. Kalluto knew exactly how the head spider would uncover
where the next pair was being kept.

"Consider it the debt being repaid by the family Kalluto came from, the deal did say they would help
me become a fighter in Heavens Arena. Asking to find out who owns the rest of your clan's eyes is
not that big of a request to the Zoldyck family." The arrangement made sense to all of the spiders
including Kurapika he realized Kalluto's purpose in being here was more than just serving as a
member.

"I still don't like it, but if those assassins keep their word to help you then I suppose it wouldn't hurt if
you became stronger. You never could do so well in arm-wrestling if I'm being honest Boss."
Nobunaga still was upset the "prissy" blonde was getting his way in how the Phantom Troupe
operates. At least he would be able to seek out someone who could help him improve the way he
fights with his sword considering how badly he was hurt last time.

"Can we at least spend one more night here? I mean this trip will be much longer than when we got
here from Yorknew." Shalnark wanted to enjoy one last night with his "family" before they broke
apart once again. Chrollo agreed yet they would need to depart early in the morning to not waste too
much time here, so they could gain as much ground as they could with their new priorities.
When the Kurta woke up early before everyone else he took off the training gear of his clan, placing the bright clothing into his bag. Finding a mirror he began to remodel himself before everyone else was ready to leave.

Kurapika was back in his red and black outfit fitting his current status as a stolen treasure, but he no longer was that bitter about the situation he was put into by his worst enemies. He's also grown fond of the new look he's made for himself as he was putting the red earring back on his right ear completing the image. He figured he's got a little vanity from spending so much time with this group.

'I only hope that coming back to my friends will stop this transformation I'm going through...'

That and the bloodlust he was developing due to the actions the spiders took during their crime spree. He could barely recognize himself as he gazed into the mirror no longer resembling the blacklist hunter he became when he left off that boat ride to the exams. He could have smashed the image being reflected himself, but the sight would never leave his eyes or memory.

"Here I thought you hated that kind of look red-eyed brat..." Nobunaga was giving off his best I wish you were dead, his eyes looked at the scarlet glare he was given in return. Not only did he have to restrain himself during his travel to Meteor City, but the fact he would need to "accept" being around the man who took away his best friend among the other spiders was hard to swallow. Franklin actually offered a suggestion to just deal with their turmoil now instead of letting it interfere with the traveling, so the samurai decided to act on that advice.

"Are you here to insult me with vague threats or do you really want my head on a silver platter today..." Kurapika knew the samurai was quick to the draw with his blade meaning he would need to remain on guard until he leaves or decides to fight him.

"We've been ignoring each other for too long, and now we finally have the chance to end our feud."

"You mean you're finally prepared to kill me then?"

"Hardly I would rather enjoy watching you suffer living with us at this point, the way I want to settle matters is by the methods of the Phantom Troupe. You and me, one on one, mano a mano, the challenge will be arm-wrestling!" Kurapika almost burst out in laughter after the build-up given to what seemed like a schoolyard game compared to the duel he expected to have with Nobunaga. The samurai, however, took this request seriously even bringing in a small table they would use to have this contest on, the gesture fully understood by the Kurta.

"Y-you must be joking about that aren't you?"

"There are two ways the spiders deal with personal matters: either with decide with a coin flip or settle things with arm-wrestling. Those are the rules, and I will follow them like Boss wants me to do even when dealing with you...chain bastard."

"So, that can't mean you want to really challenge me to-"

"Do you want to reclaim what is yours, Kurta!?"

"I want it enough that I'm willing to keep myself from killing you, samurai!"

"If you do this, whatever our leader expects you to do in the future, you might as well consider yourself a spider already, bastard!" With a growl, Kurapika placed his arm down ready to shut up this man before he could say anything else. Smirking at the response given the samurai locked hands
with his hated nemesis, the mutual feeling of disgust was apparent on the face of Kurapika.

Quickly the both of them put all the force they could muster despite their injuries into overcoming the other man, pride was giving them both added strength in this "battle" of enemies. Nobunaga was imagining Uvogin rooting for him in the corner of the room, his eyes were beginning to leak out more tears remembering the good times he had with the strongest spider out of the bunch. Taking away at the prime of his life, the very killer of this man was now locked into the closest physical combat Nobunaga could get with him.

"You don't know how much he meant to me, Uvo. He was someone I considered like a true friend, the people we killed together, the stuff we took during heists, and the memories we shared with each other those times were the best moments of my life!" Kurapika certainly felt the anger coming out as he was now losing the contest against Nobunaga's strength as he was trying to keep his arm off the table.

"Here you are given membership so easily even after killing Uvo, the fact you've been allowed to survive this long is an insult to me, and now you're going to have a chance to earn your freedom out of your own power, and you still want to bitch and moan about your situation!" He couldn't stand the preaching nature Kurapika had despite murdering several people just a few days ago.

"At least I still have some kind of soul, which makes me a better person than you who could care less about murdering an innocent person to get some money or jewels. With enough talent, you could have a real chance of doing something legally or if you had to kill something you could do it as a hunter!"

"Like they're better than us, the only thing separating official hunters from wanted fugitives like us is legal doctrine!" The samurai was biting his lips as he suddenly was on the losing end of the battle, his heated discussion with Kurapika distracted him out of the game he was still playing with the young teen, that momentary lack of focus might cost him victory.

"My battle with you has only started - this contest is merely the opening salvo, even while I might tolerate being next to you don't think I won't try killing you in the future if given the chance."

"Then you better hope I don't kill your precious leader before that moment..." Nobunaga looked into the crimson eyes of the clan he thought that he destroyed along with the other spiders, and for a single second he believed each one of those deceased people was staring at him. His grip weakened under the pressure of looking at the wrath of the deceased clan's final heir, his arm fell onto the table signaling his defeat. Kalluto cheered on the victor being amazed by his mental and physical durability.

"This was the first time I've witnessed this arm-wrestling game, but I must say it was rather enjoyable."

"Shut up newbie! At least he's been here longer than you, and I could easily break that frail hand of yours!"

Realizing he was once more humiliated Nobunaga stormed off to vent his rage on a wall or any random item he could find in the gym. Kurapika simply wanted to relax before they made their move to leave the city, which meant sticking with the spiders that were not exactly on his list of tolerable ones besides Shalnark, Shizuku, and funny enough Kalluto.

"I'm glad that you will be the one going with me to where my mother came from. This trip will be most intriguing!"
"Your mother was born in Meteor City?"

"Indeed, the matriarch of the Zoldyck came out of a junkyard if what my brothers and the other Phantom Troupe members have told me is correct. Rather ironic that such a woman like a mother who prides herself on being higher in class was born in what many consider the place where unwanted people flock to live in." He knew she would have slapped the saliva out of his mouth by merely speaking that sentence. Being away from her influence gave him the will to begin talking about her in a non-flattering light with his new freedom.

"Do you plan on going back to her eventually or have you severed ties with most of your family?"

"A little of both actually. Despite still loving my brothers, sister, and house butlers or maids back home the truth was they were sheltering me away from this world, the reality I would need to face in order to become a true assassin." The ambition of hearing someone his age wanting to become a professional killer was sickened to hear, but Kurapika no longer had much of a moral high-ground to his name.

"Killua...do you think he approves of your decision?" He asked this while there was a voice echoing in his made, the face continued to repeat that name over and over. Kurapika never had this happen to him before, and he felt like he knew who was speaking to him in his mind.

"No, but at this point, I only want to find him...like you do?" He noticed there was some sweat pouring down his forehead as the discussion on his brother continued.

'Am I becoming so obsessed with finding my friend I keep hearing his name or was it something else...' Kurapika knew his mental state was fragile, but he didn't feel like his usual self after he woke up yesterday. Kalluto also could tell there was an issue bothering his closest buddy here, which meant he needed to change the discussion onto a new subject.

"Uhh, who do you think is the prettiest spider?"

"Why are you asking that?"

"I'm just curious about...err your tastes."

"What do you need to know that for exactly...wait you don't mean-"

"Forget it! I shouldn't ask that when we only know so little about one another, so please forgive my rudeness Kurapika." Kalluto hovered a paper fan over his mouth covering up his shame, the Kurta put together what the Zoldyck wanted to know and he also felt his cheeks burn up at the thought. The cheerful sounding vacuum user noticed the both of them chatting before they left and wanted to see why their faces looked like as two tomatoes.

"Are the both of you sick?" She didn't understand the fact they were speaking about her hence their reactions of shyness when she looked at both of her partners for the upcoming trip.

"Nothing is wrong with me and Pika! Just nervous about this trip since we've both never visited Meteor City before now!" It wasn't a complete lie, but Shizuku knew there was something going on between them. Adjusting her glasses she looked closely at the both of them before putting a finger under her lip.

"Are you both upset with me?" They quickly thought she was hurt by their words, the duo quickly apologized for making a big issue over their talk about spiders being pretty which she finally understood. Shizuku promised she would not tell a soul if they explained why do they talk about the men and women in the brigade like this if Kurapika was supposed to hate them all. The blonde
couldn't really think of a good answer, but Kalluto had a theory about the Kurta beginning to warm up to the idea of being a real member of the Phantom Troupe.

"It would seem that slowly, but surely he's no longer seeing them as an obstacle to his future goals..." Kalluto whispered to himself when looking at the scarlet-eyed man who was opening up to his captors about himself with each passing day..

"Well, hopefully, we can all keep from killing each other because that would be a really bad thing."

Shizuku remarked while staring at the blonde traveling companion.

"Yes...I'm sure all of us dying would be an umm very bad thing," Kurapika once again was left speechless by her comments; sounding full of both wisdom and ignorance at the same time. With everyone up the split was formed between both groups, the two units moved quickly and made sure no one was tracking their movements throughout the street sides. With heightened speed, a few of the spiders were producing a flash of color that in the eyes of a normal person would only have seen a blur of wind move past them instead of a wanted fugitive.

"Keep up newbie I actually think the chain bastard is moving quicker than you are." Nobunaga was impressed with the speed the Kurta could produce even while healing the wounds he was still suffering from, but with the help of some rest and his healing chain he didn't look worse for wear. Their current objective was to get out of town, the few rest periods along the way were not that far away, but the goal was to reach a ferry ride to get close to their final destination. The idea was to make it there in less than one month of time, but a delay could mean it would take a full 30 days if something went wrong.

"Be a little fair Nobu, the idea isn't to make this a race to determine who is the fastest out of all of us..."

"Exactly I would be the winner of something like that Feitan."

"With the way you trip over yourself, the place you would be is right behind my ass dead freaking last..."

"Here we go..." Shizuku knew their bickering would only lead them into actually racing one another just to prove they were the leader of this pack of spiders. While they charged off to waste energy Kurapika and Kalluto stayed with the other spiders left in the dust.

"I swear those two can hardly get along then again Feitan usually can't stay on good terms with any of us." The tech genius sighed in defeat watching them move further down the street. Unlike Kalluto and Kurapika Shalnark didn't give as much effort into his training abilities since he believed his Nen-abilities would make up for any flaws in his physical state. With the power to control a person through Black Voice he usually had little trouble with fights, and if the worst came to pass he did have another trump card in his favor.

"Why is Chrollo determined to make me visit this place if I'm supposed to fight Hisoka? It just doesn’t add up to a logical plan or reason." Kurapika was questioning the motives of the head of the spiders not finding any good answer that would come out of his head. He wondered if any of his "partners" had a good idea about this reasoning. Unfortunately, they were left in the dark about his intentions just like Kurapika had been, the revelation about their lack of information made the Kurta feel defeated. In order to understand anything he would need to play into Chrollo's game and whatever it might entail for him.
'Further into the web...' He would go to discover the truth about his fate.

- September 25th - Kanto Forest

As the winner of the "race" for dominance, Feitan declared himself the leader of their small group, which in his mind entailed he would decide when they took a break, took a piss, or when they got something to eat. Naturally, they ignored his orders just picking when they would do all of those things getting under his skin very quickly with this disobedience. With the campfire burning near his body Kurapika made his catch of the day with fish in the lake near the forest they entered last night, but Feitan demanded first dibs as the head spider.

"I'm your current leader or Boss, so the head honcho wants to get the first crack on this fish."

"Then why don't you go fishing and get some "Boss" like I did with Kalluto, Shizuku, and Shalnark!" Despite having issues with those people he listed they did go along with him to the pond for tonight's meal, unlike Nobunaga and Feitan who only ended up getting a rabbit. The Kurta was grateful about his decision to get fish, the moment he was reeling in his food now cooking on the stick reminded him of the life he used to share with Gon, Killua, and Leorio. Even with the argument between Shalnark and Kalluto about the great outdoors he was at peace during that period.

"Tch, you know we share everything we take including dead animals. Now you better let me eat some fish or I'll consider removing that girly hair."

"Perhaps you would not mind eating a few bones then or perhaps the eye, Nobu." Kalluto cracked with a smile under his paper fan.

"Shut it, kid! Don't stand up for the "ugly-ass duckling" out of the Phantom Troupe." Nobunaga tried grabbing the fish only to end up burning his left hand in the process, his right one reached out for anything to ease the pain while Feitan was rolling on the ground in laughter. Scoffing at the notion Feitan and Nobunaga could be on the same side after that Kurapika simply went back to his meal while the others were impressed by the catch of the day.

"Once again you've managed to surpass my expectations not only with cooking but the art of fishing! Kurapika, where would we be without you!"

"Off stealing something in another part of the world oh wait." Kurapika rolled his eyes at the remark by the other blonde in their group aware they would remain a band of ruthless thieves until they were dead, but part of himself was admired by their determination to stick with their goal of following Chrollo so willingly. With their lives always being on the line during a raid or heist they never have much doubt in obeying him or questioning the actions they commit to his request.

'They are like a small army following their general into battle.'

"Hehehe! That's a good one Pika even if that's true about our usual routine. Then again we don't always steal things because we usually attempt to donate items to Meteor City or black market organizations."

"Like with the Scarlet Eyes?" Kurapika figured that would be the case if they needed to hunt them down, however, the fact these criminals actually gave away things was surprising given the usual motto of a thief. While the Phantom Troupe were not like Robin Hood they did care about the citizens of that place more than other cities across the world.

"The people of that place have done more for us than anywhere else...the natural thing would be we return that kindness whenever it's possible," Feitan admitted he was looking forward to seeing
"Wow Feitan saying something nice that's a rare treat to hear..." Shalnark ignored the killing glance given out by the "leader" of their pack as he bit into the fish he was eating, watching the campfire burn up making warmth and heat for the night.

- September 26th -

Kurapika was questioning how he ended up agreeing to go along with this "scavenger hunt" in the forest beside the possible idea of getting away from the spiders if only for a while. Then he ran into Nobunaga who was celebrating his victory of getting some "good" berries, which Kurapika wanted to say were indeed healthy, but if the others ended up getting poisoned just to satisfy his sadistic nature he would be sick with himself. The samurai was not the brightest bulb, so when he argued Kurapika was tricking him the Kurta had to explain that if he inspected the berries more closely he could see they were not colored in a normal way.

"That could just mean they are really good!" He knew the man was only trying to contribute so he told him nuts on the ground could work just fine for a food resource while Nobunaga saw it as chump change.

"Tch, I'm going to get me fish today which will be bigger than all those little ones you got yesterday!" The gauntlet was thrown down as Kurapika just focused on building a camp for the night further into the forest they needed to travel in along the way to the ferry boat. Besides the usual fire pit location, Kurapika decided to make use of a tent stolen to use during this trip. He would still lie in his personal bed bag to sleep by himself, but at least the others wouldn't complain about the cold air tonight.

"Here you go Pika. I managed to find a river of water we can drink." Shizuku's clothing certainly looked like she was in a bed of water, but the issue has she only had a small bucket of water. Kurapika also knew they would need to remove all bacteria to drink it, the goal was to eat everything they could before tapping into their limited reserves.

"Shizuku, tell me you didn't walk here in that wet shirt?"

"The water brushed against me...I don't really wear a lot of clothing." The frown on both of their faces was clear, but Kurapika wasn't that heartless in nature hence why he let the girl change into his Kurta outfit for the rest of the day. He only wanted her to make sure she wouldn't get it too dirty or damaged unaware he was looking right at a naked Shizuku when he tried explaining that to her. He became filled with fear of being sucked into her vacuum, and the last moments of his life would be trapped in a dark void with nothing around to see.

"I'm sorry!" He quickly fell on the ground, his hands were covering his eyes hoping to remove the image of a pale-skinned female, dripping wet from water pouring down her body, and completely oblivious about why Kurapika was feeling guilty about seeing her in that state. Kalluto walked into the camp when he was finishing scouting the area they would need to head in only to see his buddy hiding behind a tree, and Shizuku observing him in the white clothing that belonged to him. Kurapika remembered Machi telling him about hormones possibly affecting him while Kalluto didn't say anything when Shizuku walked over to the shivering blonde only to take hold of his face gently with her cold fingers.

"There you go Kurapika, I think you could use a pair of glasses." He opened his eyes only to see his vision had gotten much wider, the glasses now covering his face allowed him to see more clearly the girl looking down at him with a curious expression. While words had been exchanged between Kalluto and Shizuku about Kurapika, the former noted the latter had left a lasting impression on the
young Kurta after today; the moment was quick, and yet, Kurapika would never get that image out of his memories...unlike with Pakunoda.

- September 28th -

Feitan was walking with confidence in his steps, the winner of the scavenger hunt was now leading his pack through the woods feeling assured he was once more on top of things as the leader. They were ahead of schedule in getting through Kanto Forest to their next destination. He was absolutely sure...completely positive...totally certain...

"Kalluto, where are we supposed to go next?!"

"I don't know you didn't give me the map I just looked at it. Nobu, you had the map last night."

"Yeah, but I don't remember what I did with it. The only paper I used was something to put my meal in to eat..."

"You honestly could not have eaten it...right?" Shalnark was going to scream if the trail they were meant to follow was inside the samurai’s gut. Kurapika was prepared to punch it out of his guts, the reason he was saved happened to be Shizuku who was actually using the map to clean off her glasses after getting them dirty. Feitan snatched them up hoping the ink wasn't ruined after getting abused.

"Wonderful now the pages are wrinkled, the ink is drier than normal, and I can't understand where we are or where we need to go next."

"Give me the damn thing!" Shalnark took hold of the map, his brain thinking it would understand how to interpret the directions better than Feitan. He bumped into the others who seemingly stopped in their tracks which left the genius confused.

"Look, guys, I know we might be lost here but-"

"No...I smell and blood." Feitan thought he got a scent of it earlier, so now that he was looking at a forest area covered with blood and remains confirmed his suspicion.

"Do you think this is a bear's meal?" Shizuku wondered if she could clean up this mess left by the animal with Blinky.

"Perhaps it was a group of bears...or maybe it was someone's kill instead." Nobunaga drew out his weapon in case the killer came back to the scene of the crime.

"We aren't alone here..."

Kurapika knew this could be the work of a person or beast, and whatever it was the thing was not far away meaning one thing. He might be forced into taking another life adding to his increasing sins and crimes he would atone for before his end. Looking at the other spiders getting ready to kill he knew that the Kurta would need to fall in line just to save his own skin...he was losing himself more and more into the role of being something he hated more than anything.

- September 29th - Kanto Forest

The small gang of fugitives went further in this forest region. The difference between a few days ago compared to now was the group became tenser, they've been looking over their shoulders often and trying to feel any source of unknown nen that would confirm their suspicions. While this trip certainly was not a friendly hike through nature the spiders were now ready to fight whatever was
lurking in the shadows in these woods.

Kurapika was in the middle of soul-searching wondering why he didn't get plagued with another dream or night terror like before in Toredo City. Was his conscious asleep instead or did he lose his sense of mortality? He's lost so much of his identity that idea would not seem that impossible to believe these days. He certainly felt more like an insect than a person right now. That would also mean the number of people his chains were meant to kill would include himself...

Walking away from the others Kurapika was looking at the stream of fish moving through the water, his thoughts of sadness and despair were fading into the air, and he wondering if taking a dive would be a bad thing...yes it would he refused to take the cowardly way out of this hole he's stuck in.

'I will break out of this deal, the first step is to finish this stupid field trip and get to Meteor City.' That goal was being hampered by the size of this forest compared to the last wilderness he needed to get through with Chrollo as his only partner. He wasn't sure if he preferred his company over his subordinates, but he did feel safer with the head spider going along with him. That does not mean he could not stand being around any of the spiders which he felt was wrong to imagine.

"Heads up everyone there seems to be a huge stream of water in the way we need to go next." That bit of bad news was yelled out by Shalnark, the most intelligent spider remarked as Nobunaga thought they could just simply walk past the bed of water not realizing how far the river flowed. While it was clear they could move around the river it could mean another day of travel or two, which all of the group wanted to avoid.

"So, a little water never hurt anybody we can all swim right?" The lack of responses to the samurai made that idea unpopular to follow not to mention what could go wrong by heading into that liquid, and the unknown dangers lurking within the river. Kalluto believed they could do better if they got high enough to see where they could go to get past the water. They discussed looking for higher ground and tall trees for a good vantage point, so they all "volunteered" Nobunaga despite not wanting to fall down at such a huge distance.

Eventually, they managed to find a place to look at how far the river went for, which turned out to go down quite the distance making it difficult to find another path around it.

"My sword could just chop down a few trees allowing us to cross without stepping into the water."

"First off you will need to chop down a big tree just to get across this river, and secondly look at the speed of the water chances are the "bridge" will get swept away in the water."

"Big talk from the guy who can only win a fight by sticking those little needles in the back of people's heads! At least I need to fight with my sword in combat. Don't piss on my head and call it rain!"

"Did you miss or forget the last time you fought, Nobu? Oh yeah, that old man made you look like a novice warrior at best!" Nobunaga's face went so red everyone thought steam would blow out his nose.

'Why don't I toss you into the river, sparky! That stupid electric phone might kill all the fish in this bed of water!'

"I swear I will fling that sword into the woods so that you won't ever find it!" Kalluto was enjoying this infighting between fellow spiders, the other blonde Kurapika was ready to punch them both to silence their yelling. He wondered how these guys could get alone if these arguments happened a lot. He looked up at the sky looking to bring peace to his mind, watching the birds fly above not caring
about the bickering happening with the criminals.

"We don't we fly into the sky?" Shizuku observed Kurapika watching the hawks soar above them realizing what he must have been thinking about at the moment. Shalnark slapped his head at the suggestion of simply growing wings, rising up into the air, and looking for another passage through the woods.

"I'll climb a tree so that will shut everyone up..." Kurapika figured it would also give him a few seconds to pretend he was alone here. He could also try finding something else like the nearest landmark was in the distance to help figure out where they were in the forest. Kalluto asked him to talk about what he can see due to the nature of his nen-ability of listening to people via his paper dolls.

"Remind me to ask how long you've been robbing me of my privacy later, Zoldyck."

Kurapika decided the best way to climb up was by reaching for the limbs on the big tree he managed to find near the river but in place of a regular grappling hook he used the non-restricted chain on his hand to make a persuade-grappling hook of his own. The spiders were impressed by how resourceful Kurapika could be in moments like this. He knew being this high up could lead to danger, but compared to the trails of the exams this was like a walk in the park to the young Kurta.

"Nothing besides trees and that huge stream of water...hold on is that a beaver dam?" His eyes couldn't help seeing the strange obstruction made to the left of his viewing sight. If there were beavers in the area, then it had to be a beaver dam that he was now looking at meaning there is a way to cross the water after all.

"Kalluto, tell the others I can see a huge bridge made out of wood and mud like from beavers just a small distance away from us."

"Beavers? I've never heard of these animals!"

This was actually the first time the youngest Zoldyck was actually in the wilderness by himself, his life was almost sheltered in a house and never getting much of an education besides the art of killing. Thankfully Shalnark knew what animal Kurapika was speaking about, and giving credit to the second newest member's knowledge of the forest life. Nobunaga while admitting Kurapika was being resourceful is someone he could never consider one of their own no matter what...

While Kurapika made his way down the other spiders moved to find the huge dam which their red-eyed "ally" spoke about earlier. The huge animal-made bridge was seen by the group, the way across this river thanks to one of Chrollo's most prized possessions. The odd thing was there seemed to be no kind of animal running around the thing as was noted by Feitan and Phinks. It could mean they were sleeping, hunting, and or they were hiding from something.

'The law and nature of the outside world.' Nobunaga knew there were beasts that could rival humans despite not having dominated cities, weapons, and technology like the mammals have done over the last century. There was still much of the world left undiscovered by men, and the dangers that await in the darkness of the unknown. As the spiders moved across the water their noses got a scent they all knew all too well; the beautiful sight of this forest was hiding the smell of fresh blood belonging to defeated prey.

"Be ready to kill..." Feitan said with a more serious tone than his usual dry voice as they were waiting for Kurapika to join them on this bridge. As they were getting on the other side they thought a noise was made in the bushes near them. No one believed it was simply the wind moving, so they all empowered themselves for an upcoming battle. The Phantom Troupe usually expects the worse
case situations to occur before any amount of good fortune. Kurapika was ready for some jump scare to occur, but as they looked over the bush it turned out to just be the wind making the noise.

"Why on earth are we intimidated by the wind! Aren't we the infamous Phantom Troupe...and Kurapika. The reason we've gotten such a reputation is through our methods, ideas, and killing! None of us can be afraid of something we don't even know is here right?!" Nobunaga didn't wait for a reply, his body was already moving further ahead of the pack. Feitan knew the samurai was pride, yet, so stupid enough to allow his emotions to sway his actions too quickly. Moving to follow in his tracks he knew better than to underestimate the dangers a forest can provide.

"Kid, you've got some guts performing the crazy shit you've been doing with those chains and eyes of yours. I wonder if that is why Chrollo has invested so much time into your efforts." Phinks knew while most of the Kurta he killed were not anything special there were a few exceptions, just because he looked down on most of the weaklings in the world didn't mean he never respected their spirit or desire to fight back against unbeatable odds. He admired Kurapika's determination and defiance even when bundled up next to his worst enemies.

"I don't need your approval, Phinks." He still couldn't swallow down those kinds of compliments since they were out of the mouth of a thief, and slayer of his clan. Although he couldn't claim he was not a criminal in his own right anymore with his continuing descent into a whole new style of living.

"So, Zoldyck kid I've got a question for ya! Do your brothers take you out of that big ass manor your family lives in like this?" Phinks spoke with not much subtlety over the wealthy of the Zoldyck family.

"No besides going with my brothers on a mission I never usually leave the mansion. Most of my early years were spent in Kukuroo Mountain with the family butlers."

Compared to his younger years being around a group of "underclass trite" as his mother would put it was quite a shift in culture, but to fulfill the promise of a reunion he would endure whatever life throws at him out of the comfort of his mother's touch. He didn't even mind facing a huge giant monster ready to devour him in a split-second, which just so happened to be starting at him along with the other spiders in a deeper section of the woods. The combination of two different animals into one new beast stronger than most predators: a chimera ant.

The group felt the sudden rise of foreign Nen, the creature was merely teasing its chosen prey by alerting them to the monster's presence. Either they would be simple meat to devour like the beavers, or they would prove themselves as worth sacks of flesh that would make a fine dinner for its stomach. The spiders moved into a circle formation not knowing when or where the stalkers would make the first strike, but they were clearly being hunted in the dark shade of the forest. Kurapika noticed the source of the killing intent was something he's encountered before with Chrollo.

"This feeling...it reminds me of that strange creature near Yorknew City. The mixture between two completely different species was the more bizarre thing about it almost like a fusion of monsters."

"A chimera-like animal then?" Shalnark studied his share of books on many kinds of predators, but chimera monsters were thought to only exist in works of fiction, not reality.

"Quiet. I don't care if we're fighting a monster in Greek Mythology or some other weird shit. None of us are going to die today except perhaps you, Kurtar." Feeling a leer on his back from the second newbie in the group, The "leader" noticed that smell of death was stronger than before, his nose was following the horrid stench preparing to find a dead body or two. Nothing could have prepared him for the sight of nearly 20 piles of flesh and bone that were the remains of over a dozen beavers, the pack of animals who stood no chance against the beast lurking in the cover of darkness.
"That's a big mess to clean up." Shizuku blinked as she observing the bloody remains of the animals who made that bridge for the spiders to come across, she didn't even seem phased by the implications of what they were dealing with now while looking at the chewed up corpses with their skulls cracked open, a pink fleshly organ likely their brains were peeking out, the other ones were mostly just bones.

"Shizuku, do you even understand what that huge pile of bones means for us?" Shalnark gave a huge facepalm remembering how far away she could be at times.

"Shut up! Whatever this beast is we just got a glimpse of what it has in store for us all!" Feitan got his umbrella ready for when this predator would make the first move. Kurapika got a look at a shadow moving next to a tree, and what he saw shocked the Kurta.

"...It can't be...a spider?" His eyes were beginning to shimmer red as he disgusted the figure which moved slowly around with thin, long, and tall legs attached to something bizarre for a spider creature.

"You're talking about us, kid?" Phinks was unaware of what Kurapika really meant until he noticed the spider webs that were made on some of the trees. Indeed, the group has stumbled into the heart of a spider's nest...or what they believed was that kind of insect. In truth, it was the limbs of a spider, but the body had the shape and structure of a tiger. A mixture of two different animals, the combination proved to make a deadly predator along with the first Chimera Ant the Phantom Troupe has encountered.

"A tiger?!" Kalluto had to jump out of the way as several limbs moved down near his location, making an attempt to wrap up its new meal in a string of webbing. Like a spider, the creature does intend to make a cocoon for it's chosen prey. Now, out of the veil of darkness, all of the human spiders got a look at the snarling hybrid beast.

"What."

"The."

"Fuck."

"Is...

"Move out the way!"

Kurapika yelled out as the strings being shot at them, his chains moved around to cut up the webbing before it could touch his body. Phinks was having the most trouble because unlike the others he had no way of stopping the strings from touching him besides using his hands, so he simply dodged all the webbing that he could see while the others cut down the spider tiger's attacks.

"You know if we could actually get to strike back this thing is not really that difficult to deal with." Nobunaga suddenly felt a shiver go down his spine as he noticed something was crawling up his leg, slick and cold was the feeling he got from the small baby spider attached to his leg, sticking to him like a tick would get fresh blood. The spawn of the hybrid creature happened to be a female, which meant it also desired food to give to its children.

"There is no freaking way I'm about to become baby food! Kurapika, you've handled something like this before right?!" Shalnark asked while pulling out the antenna needed to use Black Voice.

"It was not easy, but yes we took care of that weird creature with the help of someone from the Ainu clan. This thing is nothing like that creature..." From its size, shape, and method of attack, he was looking at a different predator. Nobunaga attempted to hack off one of its limbs only to find his
sword trapped in webbing above his head, Phinks was trying to crush all the smaller spiders as they were trying to eat his arms, Shizuku was sucking them up into Blinky, Kalluto was dancing around to slice away the webbing, and Kurapika was trying to plan out how to kill this monster.

'Hold on if this tiger has the body of a spider...then I can just channel my hatred into it.' While it might be a wanted fugitive he could substitute this monster as a way to vent out his hatred, frustration, and hostility he's been keeping inside for quite a while now. The huge beast that was bearing it's ugly fangs, staring down at the Kurta who was ready to murder it first before it could take his life before it was his time. As it moved forward to kill him Kurapika asked for help to keep the others busy; Feitan wanted to finish off the beast instead of playing the support role.

"You're not stealing my spotlight, Kurta!" Drawing out his own personal sword he began to kill as many of the little babies that he could see crawling around the ground near his feet. The others didn't care who got the kill, just as long as the hybrid monster was dead.

Shalnark, managing to control one of the smaller spiders ordered it to attack the others thanks to the needle stuck in the back. The manipulator knew the other spiders would need to process one of their own turning against them, his intellect appreciated the irony in this situation considering what people call the Phantom Troupe.

"Spiders...killing spiders! The fucking irony just might kill me!"

He grinned at the thought of being superior even while fighting an unknown chimera beast or rather the spawn of said animal. He only got a glimpse of Kurapika trying to avoid the beast, his true intention was to free Nobunaga's sword out of the webbing in the tree figuring his chains would not be enough to stop this monster. He was so concerned with getting the weapon he was unprepared for the smaller bugs wrapping their webs under his feet sticking him to the surface. As if things couldn't get worse his chain was now stuck in the webbing near Nobunaga's blade, leaving him wide open for the chimera ant to devour.

"That damn boy is already getting into trouble!" Despite his insult, Nobunaga was unsure how to feel about Kurapika attempting to get back his weapon, the debt he owed to him for trying to help needed to be paid back, so the samurai made use of a unique weapon for him. A sharp, shiny rock that he threw so fast it managed to break the strings holding his arm before the beast took Kurapika into his mouth. Free of his bond thanks to unlikely help Kurapika tried once more but was successful in pulling down Nobunaga's blade.

"I didn't need to help, but at least now you're aren't owed anything from me..." Grinning he waited for the smaller babies to enter his field of radius, allowing him to use the full effect of his En to slice them down in one slash. With the annoyances gone all that remained is the pissed-off mother of such progeny. Kalluto stepped into the fray, moving in a dancing motion to began his assault on the spider-tiger combination. The beast roared out in retaliation which was powerful enough to knock the young assassin back into a tree and then used its long limbs to knock Nobunaga into the web nearby rendering him immobile.

"We can't do anything to this monster with these strings in the way!" Feitan knew they had to get out of this area if they wanted to do any real damage, but finding their way out would take sometimes meaning it could easily grab one of them while they were on the run considering how fast it was moving in battle. He could only assume the spider managed to have the speed and agility that a tiger usually displays meaning this was a formidable foe to fight...he was smirking in satisfaction about facing such a threat.

"Finally an opponent worth my time...Now, clear the way all of you or I'll remove your bloody limbs!" The self-proclaimed head of this pack wanted to fight this beast one on one. There was a
term to describe this feeling running through the torture specialist of the shadow brigade that was based on slaughter and the hunger for combat: bloodlust. Like with the samurai, Uvogin, and Franklin his violent streak was often brought out by enjoyment in a fight.

His weapon was deflecting the strikes made by the beast despite how fast it was moving, but Feitan was pinned down in one spot due to the webbing surrounding the area. Kurapika noticed this along with Kalluto who asked someone to help clear out the trees covering them.

"You need a forest demolition you only need one man for that!" Phinks whistled in satisfaction, his arm began to spin around to wind up the perfect punch needed to help clear out a few trees. Not to be outdone Nobunaga got to work in cutting down a few trees with his full strength, and Shizuku was busy cleaning up the remaining cobwebs sucking it into her vacuum. Kurapika knew the only chance they had to kill this hybrid was cooperation.

"Timber!" Phinks gave out another whisper as he managed to remove a few trees with a singular punch after enhancing his strength. With an open space they could move more freely, and Feitan realized what the others were doing behind him.

"I don't need any of your help, the fight is between me and-" He suddenly lost his sword as it was tossed into the air leaving him defenseless against the rabid chimera ant. He didn't have enough time to bring out his "secret weapon" and that could result in the forest burning which would make things worse. Before he could get really get worried a series of paper came in front of him, the sharp sheets protected him from danger.

"This fight involves all of us, the Phantom Troupe."

Kalluto refused to allow this man's pride to undo him this soon, his eyes looking back at Kurapika who looked down to avoid eye contact. A loud, booming sound was made as yet another tree came down, but this time it was right on the backside of the hybrid monster leaving it immobile for a moment. Nobunaga smirked as he picked up Feitan's sword while plotting his revenge against this beast.

"I wonder how many limbs these swords can remove before it passes out..."

"Don't you want to study this beast, and find out how it was created?" The former hunter knew many people who would love to perform research on how such a being was made by two different species. He certainly didn't condone the brutal methods used by scientists on animals. On the other hand, the results provided through such research were very informative something Kurapika had to admit.

"Not really!"

Nobunaga wasted no time in removing a limb along with some hair on the creature with the swords in his hands, which made Feitan kick him in the chest to get back his weapon from his comrade. The beast was not dead yet as it was defiantly roaring out, but it could only do so much while stuck under the trees pushing it on the ground. Kalluto decided to follow Kurapika's suggestion, which meant observing it while removing the rest more of its limbs to keep the beast from attacking.

"Fascinating, the word chimera does fit this kind of animal, Logically the idea of a long-legged spider being fused into the body of a tiger should not be possible." Here it was defying all kinds of scientific studies, books, and theories. The Zoldyck and Kurta knew the Hunter Association would love to hear about this chimera beast and for a moment they considering just leaving it alone here.

"Like we care about learning whatever the hell it is can't we just squash this bug already?" Phinks
was gearing up to pound the head of the tiger/spider combination into mush. The purple-clad samurai couldn't agree more with the older blonde as he was just wanting to get to the ferry; so he was content to oblige his partner's wish. He wanted to move his sword into the skull of the beast, but couldn't since he arm was now being webbed up by the chimera's mouth keeping his hand stuck together.

"Even while immobile this beast can still pose a threat?" Kalluto couldn't believe how resilient such a monster could be even while in that kind of state, the chimera-ant was beyond anything he's ever seen before in his life.

"That's it we kill this fucking creepy thing now, any objections?!

Feitan no longer cared about Kurapika's opinion since Nobunaga once again was in trouble, his hands took hold of the weapon in Nobunaga's possession, and despite Kurapika's plea he took both swords into the brain of the hybrid finally ending it's life before it could get free from under the trees holding it down. Twisting the blades through the skull Feitan was ready to make a disgusting corpse out of this monster, but then he felt cold steel get wrapped around his arms as the Kurta reeled him back to him.

"What do you think you're doing?! This thing is something we should have learned about instead of just murdering it!"

"Why so you could feel better about yourself killer Kurta?!

"No! There might be other hybrids, and it would make sense we learn more about these fusions of different species!" Kalluto knew both men had a point about this beast, how they should have killed it before it escapes, but also learning more about how it behaves in case they come across more hybrids in the future especially with Kurapika's words about encountering one before. Still, it was natural there was infighting like this with the personalities involved within the spiders.

"Don't tell me you're about to break one of your own goddamned rules..."

"You mean Chrollo...and no I'm not about to get myself killed this soon." Growling out he let Feitan out of Zetsu state letting the sadist out of his grip. As the group managed to gather themselves Kurapika just walked back to the river in an attempt to escape this situation before his temper got the better of him. Running some fresh water through his hair the stench of fresh blood was still inside of his nose, the sight of the deceased animal was hard to remove from his mind as well.

"Just like before..." His red eyes were looking into a bed of water, just thinking about finding an escape from this life despite knowing it would make things worse if he was dead. He would have been able to enjoy this journey with Gon, Leorio, and Killua being the traveling companions. What he wouldn't give to hear their voices and laughter once more. Would they even want to hang around what Kurapika is slowly becoming under the influence of the phantom brigade?

"Ahh, there you are my pal!" Shalnark cheerfully called out to the kneeling Kurta, he was unaware of the mental calmness Kurapika was trying to seek right now. Realizing this might not be the best time he was about to leave until he heard the unwilling accomplice's voice.

"Wait! Shalnark, what do you think about Chrollo? Do you enjoy being with the Phantom Troupe?"

"Ohh you're trying to crack into my databank like a computer hacker," Shalnark spoke with a chipper voice hoping to lighten his mood with some humor. "I suppose I can tell you some classified information...for a small price!" He grinned at the surviving Kurta who turned away from his face.
"What do you want from me then?" He said with a quiet tone no longer caring about being angry when dealing with the manipulation being done to him by his "allies" feeling rather helpless about this ordeal.

"Not much," He sat down next to the Kurta, and for a moment he was expecting to get wrapped up in Chain Jail. "How about we just talk about things for a minute." The plan was to ensure Kurapika would not make another outburst like he did on Feitan who was ready to start a fight with him in the forest, well that and learn more about the Kurta besides all of the events surrounding the massacre.

"So, I don't know if you're aware but there is a certain unspoken rule in the troupe. We never tell each other about our Nen-abilities." The fellow blonde couldn't believe that was the truth. How could they possibly interact with each other during heists without prior knowledge?

"Yeah, but if we show off our abilities in battle or during a robbery then it's common knowledge for each of the spiders. Naturally, you're the exception to that rule thanks to that Memory Bomb." Along with many other personal details, Kurapika didn't want his sworn enemies to know, however, they might not know everything about him which gave him a small amount of hope.

"Pakunoda, has she tapped into your memories as well?"

"Pfft who hasn't she probed out of all the spiders present...then again I think she respects Boss too much to actually read his mind unless it was required. Same goes for all of us really, and even the decision of including you among the spiders didn't make us considering overthrowing him."

Certainly, they questioned his wisdom, but none of them wanted to remove him as their leader. Not that many of the members wanted the role as the new boss except for Feitan and possibly Pakunoda.

"I certainly can see why you trust Chrollo with that role if guys like Feitan are considered next-in-line for leadership..."

"Yeah, but hey I'm sure over time you'll learn to tolerate him and Nobu. Speaking of which have you talked with your other pals lately?"

"You know the answer to that." Kurapika thought Shalnark was either being stupid or making a bad joke about his friends. That's when he was given a piece of paper with a black pen on it.

"There are other ways you can send messages besides over a phone you know." He couldn't believe that he didn't think about that before, but then again he hasn't really had much time to consider the idea of using a mail letter. Of course, now there was another question popping up in his head about this odd benefactor.

"Why?" What could make Shalnark offer help despite knowing he could get into hot water with his boss. With a bright smile, the explanation was quick to be answered for the Kurta.

"No need to fret, just consider this as a peace offering. I know you still don't want to consider yourself a spider, and yet, I feel like you've done enough for the group that I should help you out with your own problems."

"...This must be a trick. You're just using me to find out if I've been in contact with my friends behind your leader's back aren't you?" He knew better than to believe this small amount of hope was a genuine sign of help, the fact he almost bought into the act showed how well Shalnark could fool a person like himself Kurapika thought.

"I don't blame you for feeling that way, but really I don't gain much from helping you if anything I would be at risk for getting myself into trouble. Although a reward of seeing you a little bit happier
could be worth it...oh phone call!" His attention quickly turned to his phone, which had an 8-bit ringtone in place to help give his phone style. Kurapika was covering his eyes before Shalnark finally answered the phone.

"Oh hey, Boss how have you been doing lately? Huh? Can you speak up I can't hear you exactly..." Before Kurapika could say more Shalnark walked off to continue his conversation, leaving Kurapika alone once again with the paper and pen needed to make a letter.

'What should I say exactly? Here I am guys come and save me? Look there have been some developments, and we can't meet up just yet.' Honestly, he wasn't sure what he could really write down that would help summarize things easily for his friends to understand. Funny that he wanted a way to communicate with his comrades, and now he was struggling with how to write down his first words.

'How will they even find this message?' He couldn't just mail it to them directly since he did not know where they were right now or how they could respond back with a letter of their own to Kurapika. Suddenly the idea of communicating with them via letters seemed impossible for him.

"Hold on...Kalluto!"

He realized the Zoldyck could have been listening to him with his paper doll unaware of the limitation Kalluto has on the range of his paper technique. He hid the paper and pen in his clothing, getting back up to quickly find the others in case they learned about Shalnark giving him the idea of pen writing his friends. He found himself arriving in the middle of another contest; an arm-wrestling between Nobunaga and Feitan with Kalluto serving as the referee.

"Who do you think will win between Nobu and Feitan, Pika?" Shizuku asked in a friendly voice hoping that her bet on Feitan will earn her some Jenny when they unite with the others, but Kurapika was confused about how this all started and why were they doing this now.

"I don't know either one minute they were happy about killing that hybrid, and then there was arguing about who should be in charge of leading us to Meteor City."

"Figures they would get into a fight over that..." Kurapika didn't care whoever won this, but he admitted to himself Feitan would be the better leader if Nobunaga's decision making in the past was an indication of him taking charge. That said he wouldn't trust either man with his life for any reason given their disgust for Kurapika, and that goes for the rest of the gang likely not to change in the foreseeable future.

"Well, at the very least we will figure out who is the stronger of these two spiders." Kalluto hid a smirk under his paper fan while listening to their outburst with that remark. He also wondered how they could survive during the remaining days needed for the trip if they were still having this debate about strength and leadership.

"There is only one man to take charge, and that would be me!"

Feitan yelled even while he was on the losing end of the arm-wrestling contest, his arm was close to the torn-out tree trunk being used for this contest. Nobunaga was laughing in triumph knowing that if he was the victor Feitan would never live down the disappointment, but suddenly he felt his arm being pushed backward with the battle now swaying in Feitan's way.

"Give up," Nobu hissed giving a nasty glare at Feitan while using his other arm to fully support himself. "Just give up and prove I'm the real winner here!"
"You can give up...on the fantasy of being a leader of any kind, Nobu!" The slam that no one heard besides the other criminals in the forest proclaimed Feitan as the winner, the loser was as red as a tomato with the embarrassment of defeat clearly visible on his face. Shizuku merely was happy she would earn some prize money for the bet made with Kalluto who remained impartial despite losing the bet. With a sigh, Kurapika was just ready to move onto their next stopping point when Shalnark ran up behind them with an urgent message.

"Boss...he needs us...to go to...Meteor City..."

"Okay...did you need to run all the way over here just to say that?" Nobunaga quipped in his attempt to forget about being humiliated a few moments ago by Feitan. Shalnark had to get a few seconds to catch his breath allowing him to tell everyone what Chrollo wanted his subordinates to relay to the others in the forest.

"No! We have to get to Meteor City. There's been something going on in the news lately, the reports are talking about strange kinds of animals creating a panic around the world. They don't know much but they seem to actually be...like that monster we just killed."

The atmosphere changed as they couldn't believe that the connection was now clear with Kurapika's story, what they just came across, and now whatever Chrollo was bringing up.

"You can't be serious about that right?" Nobu only got a head shake confirming the story was genuine about this rise of a new species; unknown and only now gaining an understanding of the world about their presence.

"You don't think they've gotten to Meteor City?" Feitan wondered if that is what Chrollo was concerned about over his conversation with Shalnark.

"He can't say, but whatever these hybrids are could mean something big." Even for an intelligent mind like his Shalnark was confused about how two animals could fuse into one let along several different hybrids.

"Sounds like it will be another mess we have to clean up..."

The four-eyes girl remarked making Shalnark laugh with sarcasm in his chortling.

"Hah! A pun about your Blinky vacuum that's...clever." A sigh from the technical expert came out as Kurapika processed this information. The world was still very much unexplored, and with beasts like the recently killed one roaming around it was about to become a lot more dangerous. That didn't mean he would give up on the chance to meet up with his long-distant friends.

"We're going to Meteor City hybrids monsters be damned...” He's already gone to hell and come back bundled with his worst enemies. He wouldn't let bigger bugs stand in his way of reaching his next set of eyes..or the promised reunion with friends.

- October 2nd -

With their trek through Kanto Forest over with they've managed to find refuge in a small town near the ferry needed to travel to Meteor City. The rest of the traveling through the wilderness was actually rather uneventful compared to the first couple of days. Around the citizens of this small town near the lake, Feitan's team would be getting through Kurapika was grateful to be around other people for company. Hearing the laughter of children running around in a game of tag felt rather calming to the Kurta who pretending he was simply part of a traveling group there were not wanted criminals.
"Come on and catch me, guys!" The cheerful little red-head called out to her friends as Kurapika was enjoying a meal bought for him by Kalluto, the senbei treat was actually pretty good for his taste buds. He wondered if his mind felt asleep that he could see the images of his clan running around the place like nothing ever happened to him. To have child-like innocence once more, washing away the traumatic moments that shaped him into the killing avenger of a deceased clan.

'What I wouldn't give up to have that kind of life...' Instead he was dreading the moment one of the spiders would let him know when they would be heading out to the ferry, his "freedom" was limited to this area with Kalluto's nen-ability proving to be a useful "collar" for the Kurta. Even if he wanted to run away he wouldn't get far, and telling someone about his situation wouldn't do him any good...he would need to see this through until the very end.

"Mister? Mister can we have some of that treat pleasssee!"

The scarlet-haired girl asked feeling her tummy rumble, they had gotten hungry with running around the town so much during their game. Unlike most children who likely would spend their time over a device or playing a video game console in the present, the children of Unika Town were enjoying the forest setting mixed in with the waters of the huge bed of water near their home. That being said technology certainly was appreciated by the children munching on the rest of the senbei given to them by Kurapika.

"Thank you!"

The Kurta certainly appreciated their manners in being given something as the children waved goodbye now heading home no longer feeling so hungry. In a way, the guilt in his soul about his choices felt less painful with that simple gesture towards the younger people of this small place. A hand rubbing through his hair revealed a grinning Phinks who saw what Kurapika just did for the children.

"Ahh ha! I knew some of our traits would rub off on you kid!"

"What do you mean like stealing and...umm messing with people?" The unwilling part of the infamous gang knew he had to remain in cover since the spider would easily kill any witnesses who knew about them still being alive.

"No, you knucklehead! I'm talking about helping others less fortunate than you like those half-pints. Believe it or not, we do give away the stuff we take if we can't find value in it."

"Like with the eyes..." The hiss following that reply was expected, but Phinks knew not to let the Kurta's feelings drive him away from that easily, the goal was to help him get more adjusted to being a spider after all.

"Look, kid. Moping around about events in the past will just ruin your whole future, and hell we don't even hold anything against your people it was just business nothing more."

"Business! What does...messing with people have to do with business!" Kurapika was ready to attack Phinks if he didn't give him the right answer.

"Boss, he had been given the order to make the hit by people nastier than him. Trust me, kid."

"Ordered?" Kurapika had not been given the full details about the massacre since his involvement with the killers of his clan, so this bit of news was shocking to hear from the subordinate.

"Yeah we don't know why they asked us to kill-umm make that happen, but the bottom line is you're still alive with the rest of your days ahead of you. Get a girl you know I'm aware of how you look at
Shizuku or perhaps you're actually eying bossman..."

"Don't even bring that up nothing is going on with me and her or HIM!"

"Kalluto said otherwise to us."

"...Paper throwing bastard." Either he was damned for having seen Shizuku naked on sheer accident, and or damned for not liking any of the ladies of the troupe being considered a man of "different tastes" by the other males. Then again the fact he had become friendly with any of them was horrifying to Kurapika's subconscious.

"Don't feel bad about it between Machi's cold nature with her slim form, Pakunoda's gifted shapely breasts, and Shizuku's youthful ignorance you couldn't find better babes anywhere else in the world!"

"That is not what a man should think about when it comes to the opposite gender. I thought you would at least consider the idea of a real romance..." Kurapika said disagreeing about what Phinks considered the best benefits of females.

'Even if you're too much of a monster to deserve one, Phinks.'

"Meh believe in whatever you want kiddo that is the perks of free will. Just remember to not get too cozy with the people here they would distract you from the bigger picture." With that, the elder thief walked away letting Kurapika disgust his words. How much longer what this journey take, would he gain back everything he's lost, and what kind of person he would be once it was over?
Act 9: Long Live The Queen

Chapter Summary

The spiders encounter the "superior beings" who recently made their nest in their land of origin. Now, the city of "trash" is at stake in the upcoming battle as Kurapika confronts her majesty, Zazan.

Act 9: Long Live The Queen

- October 4th -

In just a few hours the spiders would board the ferry needed to head to their next destination: Meteor City. Their priorities of being there might be different than simply teaching Kurapika about the birthplace of the Phantom Troupe. The recent news stories about the rise of the hybrids which had been dubbed "Chimera Ants" were becoming a higher priority than even wanted thieves like the shadowy brigade.

"I hear the rumors about them coming from an unexplored part of the world."

"Apparently they're not only killing humans they also have been known to feed off their victims."

"They say not even the best hunters around can stop these monsters!"

It would only be a matter of time before humanity considered these beasts as the superior life-forms in the world. The law of the jungle thrives on the idea of the strong devouring the weak. Naturally, the spiders didn't plan on falling prey to their own moral code of conduct, so while they were in this small town they were beginning to train for any upcoming battles with these hybrids. Kurapika, the only one who refused to prepare to kill again considering he wanted to learn more about these beings through research rather than killing them and moving on.

"Hey come over here guys look at the ants!" The scarlet-eyed fugitive was observing one of the children putting out some candy on the ground, the idea is to study a colony of ants coming for this treat. The Kurta studied about ants dragging food lying around to take back to their colony in order to feed their kind, and they usually followed the orders of their queen ant. Such loyalty to a queen seemed funny to Kurapika considered the structure of the Phantom Troupe and the fact both ants and spiders were both insects.

"Wow, bugs are so weird! Do you think we can burn them with a magnifying glass?"

"No, we shouldn't hurt them like that! That's a horrible idea to hurt other things just for fun."

"Pfft it's not like bugs have had issues trying to hurt people like us these days. Getting a little bit of payback would not be that bad considering how badly the hunters have been doing against those monsters!" The boy felt like if he could not become a strong hunter then why not get revenge in other ways, but the female child knew this would not accomplish much in the grand scheme of things not to mention she was more sympathetic for wildlife than some of the other kids.

Kurapika knew he should not really say or get himself involved with the children, they might begin
to ask questions or get curious about him and the other spiders in town. Looking at the group he saw one of the boys run off likely to get that magnifying glass, so he felt like stepping in just to soothe his conscious a little today.

"Can you all tell me something? Do any of you know what it takes to become a hunter? Has anyone from this village even gone to the Hunter Exams?" Not a single child nodded their head to answer Kurapika's questions. He figured that would be the response to his series of questions, the place certainly looked like a peaceful area with little conflict or news-worthy events happening here. Who would step up, he wonders? The innocent girl? Or the ruthless boy giving him a nasty glare of annoyance.

"Chances are if everyone here decided to enter the exams none of you would come back alive."

"Hey, are you looking down on me?! I'll have you know I'm going to become a strong hunter one day, and no one is gonna tell me otherwise." He was reminded of Gon's determination back when he first met him on the boat ride which changed his life. The gleam in his eyes could have been mistaken for how Gon acted making the Kurta lonesome without his friends being at his side.

"What about your people living in this town? Do they have as much determination as you to achieve such goals like that one?"

"No...they don't want to do much, but I'm different because the world is full of exciting things that I want to see!" Hunger for freedom out of this place it was both a strength and weakness; still, humans, in general, were imperfect with good and bad traits with each individual. In a way, those flaws made the more positive aspects of men all the more inspiring, and Kurapika wondered if that could be useful in the wake of this new species rising in power.

He knew there was not much he could say to convince the kid to consider giving up this dream, so he left him to continue down the path he wishes to take for himself. Walking into the small shack the other rogue criminals were enjoying a small lunch provided by their "services" they didn't involve killing things for once. No, the Phantom Troupe was coerced into helping out by Kurapika, the idea being they could not only seem like normal people by doing "normal" things like helping cut down some lumber for usage or cleaning up dust and dirt with Shizuku's vacuum.

"This sucks! Why do we have to act like a bunch of good samaritans anyway just to earn the approval of the slums living here." The other spiders found Nobunaga's comment rather hypocritical considering the nature of their group along with the backgrounds of most members, but Nobunaga was referring to the lifestyle the people had compared to the hustle of most of the cities they visit during their heists. Of course, he was more than willing to eat the food made for people living in "the slums" without hesitation.

"Nobu, I'm sure you can't be enjoying those rice balls that are made for the common folk right?" Phinks nearly burst out into laughter seeing the samurai almost spit out some of his meal. Feitan also loved watching Nobunaga biting into his food with anger written on his face, his mask was hiding the sake he was enjoying the meal. Compared to living out in the forest the past few days the gang much preferred this kind of life on the road, the fruits of hard labor seemed different than just stealing all of this to these fugitives.

"I will miss this place when we are gone, the people living here actually showed me a sea-shell they made for travelers visiting here. My siblings rarely visit places near the water so I have to say coming to this town was most exciting." The youngest of the Zoldyck brothers admitted while playing with his souvenir, and he loved the color of this certain item seeing a nice shine on the pearl white clamshell.
"You didn't even need to steal that item." Shizuku knew that being given things for free was refreshing than simply taking whatever they want or need, but the troupe still believed it was more fun and exciting to behave like thieves. As if reading the girl's mind Phinks remarked they might not have to worry about killing anyone here since they were treating them so fondly.

"This kind of lifestyle seems so goddamn boring..." Phinks sighed, downing another cup of sake to relieve his boredom while Kurapika was standing at the edge of the room looking at the many different decorations taken out of the sea. This shop was merely an example living near the water benefited this town, the food, the style of certain buildings decorated with fish or more shells, and the air having a unique stench compared to the forest and cities all the criminals were used to experiencing.

"Can't handle the idea of being a normal person?" Kurapika knew what answer he would get out of the older man, but he wanted to believe there could be a way to reach them, the hope of making them see how this kind of life would lead to self-destruction if only to keep himself alive long enough to get out of this arrangement.

"Please, you of all people should understand why this kind of lifestyle is nothing but an illusion to us." The conversation was cut short as they heard a female approach the shop with something in her hands. Anomi heard about what the "travelers" did to help out yesterday and being the kind person she was felt like thanking them in person.

"Oh, there you guys are I've been looking everywhere for you all." The basket continued a few treats, but mostly sweets for Kalluto and Kurapika whom she found the most enjoyable of the bunch. Keeping all the other spiders away from the goods by holding it up in the air she gave a polite bow as she introduced herself, her joyous expression matching her happy tone of voice.

"It is not often we get visitors like yourselves in these parts, so in the spirit of goodwill I've made this basket as thanks for helping us with the minor tasks we usually do to maintain this place."

"I'm sure this place looks rather quiet compared to the city, Miss Anomi. Do you mind telling me why are so many different kinds of fish or sea items being hung around this town?" The shut-in wanted to learn more about the ocean life besides what's he read in books back at the family mansion, which Anomi was more than happy to provide for the Zoldyck. The rest of the group simply wanted the day to be finished so they could finally make their way to Meteor City mainly out of the risk of their cover being blown.

"Amazing! You're telling me the whole town used to be near a huge kingdom in the past only for it to get sunken underwater!"

"Well, the rumors and legends have told us about this. Apparently, it might be due to a certain shift in the world's continents along with that strange unexplored continent."

"Is the Dark Continent really that mysterious?" Kalluto knew about that place by word of mouth from his brothers.

"Absolutely, the fact is only a few people have explored that land, or even come back from that land alive. I would certainly not want to visit such a place, but Tamiku always is ready for some kind of adventure." Kurapika put two and two together realizing that child who had the same drive for excitement as Gon was named Tamiku. More names he would need to remember or forget considering the state of his mind these days...

"Don't you have an event, tournament, occasion, and or anything happens in this town besides old folk tales?" Feitan wondered if there was truly anything special about this place beside the sea-related
items hanging around the place. To his disappointment, Anomi didn't give him anything information that peaked his or the other spider's interest. That said the amount of food they were being given for helping out with the townspeople certainly was nice to hear.

"Why are you so trusting with us? It does not seem right..." Shizuku quickly broke the mood by stating an obvious fact none of the others wanted to bring up that bluntly. Kurapika was also curious about this kindness even if the Phantom Troupe did get themselves involved for good reasons instead of killing and looting the town. Suddenly the girl's expression changed to a more concerned look mixed with fear.

"W-What are you talking about we usually give visitors such friendly things like this..." Their stares managed to get through her defenses as she began to leak out tears of sadness.

"We need help! Those monsters have been stalking us, looking for fresh meat to eat, and we all know they will be coming here sooner or later!" She explained how they encountered a huge nest filled with what they assumed were simply bees. Then we got a good look at those creatures, the bees had the faces of piranha yet they could fly around to eat up her husband, and nearly devoured her as well. The other children almost tried to kill some of these beasts with their slingshots, but the other parents managed to keep them safe.

"We don't know where else to turn, and you all looked so strong with those abilities you used to help out with the trees and supplies. You've expressed your wish to leave soon, but we all thought by treating you nicely would convince you to stick around longer..." She tried to plead with them to help out in keeping their town safe from the monsters lurking in the woods. Nobunaga drew out his weapon, pointing the sharp blade at Anomi's face while giving out a bored look.

"We're not official hunters or "heroes" like you think we are, the truth is we don't care about happens to any of you...well most of us anyway." The samurai gave a brief glance at the hateful look in Kurapika's eyes.

"Oh please, you must reconsider what is at stake here! The future of these children will likely be dead if these hybrids continue to plague our town, and we simply can't run away on a ferry to another home...there is too much investment here to just leave everything behind." It would mean they needed to make their stand here, and yet they had no one who could use Nen-abilities like the Phantom Troupe. Not even their leader of the town could do much in his old age leaving their only chance to fight in the hands of the spiders.

"That...does not really mean a lot to us." Feitan was used to children being killed and he even remembered murdering one who was in a mafia family, so her words didn't bother his conscious.

"That can't be possible! Don't you care about innocent people dying at the hands of such monsters?!
Are you all just inhuman beasts underneath that human skin you're wearing?!"

"More like spiders...that doesn't mean they're all unwilling to help out your cause, Anomi." Kurapika stepped away from his group deciding to go against the unspoken decision made by the others. He slid up the sleeves on his clothing, tightened the buttons on his shirt, and mentally prepared himself to protect the people living here despite knowing how dangerous it would be for the young Kurtz.

"Oh thank you so much! I know the children will be happy to hear that you will help keep them safe, Tamiku especially wants to see you again!"

"Hold on just a minute lady! We need to discuss things with our kiddo here, so can you leave us alone for a minute?" The other members felt like strangling Kurapika if Anomi were not present in the room. The debate shouldn't be made public since it would explore who they really are to
everyone living in the town. Agreeing to their terms Anomi walked away for a moment letting the others vent their venom toward the unwilling man of their team.

"You're going to risk delaying our arrival in Meteor City just for these people? Don't you care about getting closer to completing your personal goals?" Phinks hissed out trying to understand Kurapika's reason for agreeing to Anomi's request and was prepared to hit him on the head if the answer involved doing the "right thing" for her.

"What good will it do we if just run or kill these hybrids without learning more about them? They are continuing to increase in both number and strength if those bee/piranha beasts are any indications..."

"Bah! Like a bunch of nasty-ass bugs are gonna take us down!"

"Are you an idiot, Nobu?" The group nearly gasped by Kurapika's remark while the samurai's temper got the better of him, of all the troupe members willing or not Kurapika, was the only one who Nobunaga would not feel sorry for killing with his own hands.

"This idiot is ready to cut you down in a second, chain bastard."

"Look I still despise each one of you and be assured that all of you will get your paid dues for your crimes eventually. That being said something much bigger than what happened to my clan and your group is happening now. Whatever the Chimera Ants want in the future we have to learn more about this possible new enemy." While he was still full of rage over how uncaring the other spiders were such angry could be rather self-destructive. Like before in the forest, Kurapika was thinking much differently than the rest of this small set of thieves.

"Whatever just don't cry when your friends hear about your suicidal wish."

"Nobu, perhaps Pika might be onto something." Shalnark didn't agree with Kurapika's suggestion about sticking around, he wanted to get back home like everyone else however they were coming across or hearing more about the hybrids each day.

"It's only for one more day, right? Boss did say a delay of one day or two wouldn't hurt his plans." Shalnark hoped anyone would back him up with that remark and Shizuku and Kalluto answered the call for support.

"They did give us food and shelter." Shizuku knew that kind of help even if it was meant as a way to convince them to stay was different compared to how they were treated elsewhere...or maybe they were beginning to slowly change their methods and ideas like Kurapika.

"We could easily have taken all of that shit!"

"Don't you think one more day of work is not that much of a sacrifice to gain more respect and appreciation for the people living here?" The paper assassin knew it was not his place to critique the elder members in this group, the youthful killer understands there was a rite of passage he needed to go through much like the recent addition into the spider. Reluctantly all of the members were swayed into sticking around a while longer even with the ferry arriving tonight, with resentment obvious on the faces of Nobunaga, Phinks, and Feitan.

Little did they know their help would come much too late to save anyone...

While the others enjoyed more of the food provided as nice thank you for "helping" Kurapika was finishing up the book on King Arthur getting to the climax of the story after reading the past month whenever he felt bored. At the very least Chrollo would be looking forward to Kurapika's overall thoughts on the book. Looking at the sun beginning to set in the small window he wondered about
what that man was doing with his other subordinates.

'It's only a matter of time before I lose it and kill them...otherwise, I will become like them.'

Kurapika's mind spoke to his conscious.

A sudden shriek broke the silence of his private room, the following sound was a series of loud buzzing filled his ears. He wondered for a moment what was happening until he saw a man screaming for help only to get swarmed by several huge black dots being covered by the flying creatures.

"Oh god please save us!" Kurapika knew those bees that were mentioned by Anomi had come much earlier than expected - at least, not later on when he had time to worry about them. Now he was antsy to deal with them in order to soothe his mortality that wishes to help people. Opening the door he was greeted by the sight of watching a pack of bees devouring the flesh of the elder of this town.

"Humans...don't have a chance against evolution...why didn't I see this sooner?" Shaking his head at the dying admission he knew the priority was to save as many people that he could see or find a way to kill the swarms plaguing the town. Looking over at the panic-filled crowd he saw Anomi trying to get a bunch of the kids to safety inside a building.

"Everyone please get inside and don't go near the windows," She yelled trying to count each child running inside. "Don't open this door no matter what happens!" She knew the safety of the children was more important than her own life, but she suddenly gasped in horror when she didn't see Tamiku in the room with the other kids.

"You there! Can you please look for Tamiku for me? I need to protect this place, and I'm sure your friends are in danger as well..."

'They're not my friends.'

He wanted to say however that was not important so he simply nodded agreeing to her request. Running around the place he encountered more corpses being devoured by the horrifying combination of bee insects and piranha fish. Despite how quickly they moved the steel chains that weren't limited by his chains provided a good source of protection against the swarms.

"Oi kid! You see this crap it's like we're in the middle of the eighth plague of Egypt: The Plague of Locusts my least favorite one..."

"You mean you actually enjoy the other plagues that caused those Egyptians misery, Phinks?"

"Duh, it's not like that really happened it's just a good story of fiction, Nobu." The duo noted with a bunch of dead hybrids bugs lying on the ground next to them. The most surprising detail in Phinks mind was the fact Nobunaga actually remembered what the plagues actually were in that story.

"Where are the others?"

Kurapika knew while they could take care of themselves none of them expected these creatures to show up at the beginning of the night, so they would need to gather together in order to plan a way of drawing out the remaining segments of this swarm. Kurapika had another priority to worry about, the sight of a boy trying to fling a few rocks at the bugs revealing the defiant Tamiku.

"Get out of my town you disgusting freaks!" The boy yelled out despite having a few bites and cuts on his limbs from the invading insects, kneeling down on his legs he was still trying to fight off this force trying to devour everyone he cared about in the town.
"Tamiku! You have to stop there is no way you can defeat all of these things by yourself!" Kurapika yelled out trying to protect the child from getting any more wounds to his body. The Kurta was impressed by the willpower being displaced even in the face of such a threat like this, the young boy refused to give into fear and despair reminding the surviving member of his clan about Gon, and even in threats or dangers like this, he didn't give up either...

"I don't care there is no way I'm gonna let stupid bugs take me down!"

Tamiku hissed out even with the toxic poison entering his body, feeling the effects of the bee stings beginning to render him immobile making him easy prey for the swarm. Kurapika took hold of the boy's arm trying to get him up on his feet, but his limbs were becoming heavier with each second.

"D-Don't worry about me...you have to help out the others."

Tamiku gave a fist pump to Kurapika before he passed out as the blonde performed his missing, dragging the kid onto his back in order to get him to safety. Unfortunately, this meant having weight added to him, the boy not only slowed him down it meant he couldn't afford to fight any insects he comes across. Hearing the buzzing Kurapika ran hoping they wouldn't catch up to him.

"Playing the hero again, "Pika"?"

The Kurta saw the guts and remains of the insects that were sliced apart the paper fans of Kalluto. At the very least Kurapika knew the other spiders now would be fighting if only to save their own skins and flesh. With a nod of acceptance Kurapika made it over to where Anomi was only to find her body slumped over in the doorway, her chest slowly moving with several scars covering her face and body; unlike with Tamiku she looked to be on the verge of death while the other children were yelling out for her to answer them.

"Oh, g-good you managed to keep him safe..."

"Anomi! Come on you need to get inside before they come back here." She shook her head using her strength to keep herself conscious in order to keep the kids tucked away in the shelter. 

"My life is of little consequence...the future lies in those children. You must keep them safe...that is all I ask of you and your friends..." He began to shake her violently keeping her alive out of guilt of letting a person die while he could still try saving them. Hearing the screams, watching the dying victims of these bugs, and watching the swarm assault people without mercy was bringing up bad memories of the moment his life was changed forever. Not again if he could help it...

"Sorry Anomi, but you're not dead just yet." With a growl, he took her arm to help her back up while trying to pry the door open unaware of the swarm heading near him. Yelling at the kids to get them both inside he closed the door behind them just before the first sting pricked his arm, which would render it useless in a few moments.

"No, let me out he's going to get himself...killed." Despite her own injuries Anomi refused to lay down while Kurapika was trying to keep them all safe. The other children knew he didn't stand much of a chance, but then one of the girls remembered something about bees from school lessons.

"We need to start a big fire!" Anomi blinked for a moment to register what the young girl was suggesting, the idea of using smoke to deter the bugs suddenly made a lot of sense even if they were hybrids of piranha and insects. Meanwhile, Kurapika was struggling to use his good arm to swing around his only other weapon to keep the bees at bay, a wooden stick he picked up off the ground. The usage of his abilities in this state could end up making things worse for himself, later on, so he hoped that he could stall long enough for someone to assist him.
Voices belonging to many different people he's met over the years of his life began to ring in his mind. Faces and places he's been, things and thoughts he had about the world in general, and a sudden feeling of a resolution was filling his mind. He felt the rapid stings and bites from the creatures, though he couldn't feel any pain in his body from what he thought was the toxins entering his system. As his eyes were closing up a bright light shined down on him as he saw someone holding out his hand for the Kurta to grasp.

"...Pario?" The image of his childhood friend was suddenly in front of him, and for a moment he believed this was another warped dream of his subconscious. Only when he felt the warm, stinging feeling in his hand did he notice there was a spark of electricity running through Shalnark-not Pario.

"There you are Pika! Man, I knew you were reckless lately, but what did you really think you would accomplish by trying to fight off those pests with a pathetic fly-swatter!" Grinning at the tired expression given by the now red-eyed Kurta Shalnark's body finished the order of "protect Kurapika" via the antenna on his neck, his body removing itself from autopilot mode.

"How did you do that?"

"Do what?"

"That state of electric charge. I've never seen anything like it before..."

"What are you talking about exactly?"

"..." Kurapika thought the tech expert was joking until he noticed the empty look in his eyes, so he wondered if Shalnark had somehow lost his memory about what he's just done. Looking at the now burnt insects on the ground he knew whatever technique was used proved to be very effective. If these monsters could be reduced to this state then he realized there was a way to stop them and that would be...

"Fire! Open the door and we'll roast those bugs!" The children grabbed an oil lamp that was lit up to begin a fire to help stop the insects, and or create a smoke cloud to send them away. Kurapika had to stop the girl with his good arm before she tripped and set ablaze the very area they were standing in. Shalnark knew what she had in mind, swiping the lamp away to set off a nice fire in the middle of town where the swarm was circling around them most. In the meantime, Kurapika's body slumped down nearly falling on the ground.

"Are you, okay mister? Those eyes of yours don't look good."

"Trust me these eyes are the least of my worries." Kurapika knew even with his healing the venom running through his veins would need to run its course. Before he went into slumber he asked how Tamiku and Anomi were doing and he only here one word enter his ears.

"Dead."

- October 5th -

The sounds of an ocean awoke Kurapika out of his sleep which was rather peaceful compared to what happened to him last night. His limbs were getting used to moving around slowly as he opened
his red eyes out of fear he was still in the forest dealing with the chimera-ant hybrids. He was completely unaware of his surroundings as he looked at the white cabin he had been sleeping in for the past few hours. He'd gotten used to having this happen to him over the past month as he groaned while rising up off the bed.

One thing was on his mind as he began to understand the change in his current setting.

"Where am...what happened?!"

Panic was written on his face as he tried to rush out of his room only to fall to the ground, his mind remembering the word he heard before he went to sleep. Trying to reach up to the handle keeping his door closed Kurapika tried pushing his body into opening the door, having tried banging it for someone to come to his aid a few moments ago. He knew his arms couldn't last much longer before falling on the floor in defeat and then he heard footsteps getting louder by each second.

"It's you..." Looking up at the now opened door he saw the gentle voice and concerned expression on Anomi's face, the girl was wrapped up in several band-aids along with using crutches to walk around the ferry. While she had been on death's door earlier now she looked to be in much better shape after being rescued with most of the surviving villagers. In a strange way, Kurapika's decision to help protect the village convinced the other spiders to lend their support, but the ending was bittersweet for the remaining survivors.

"Where're the others? I know the children needed to survive...so um..." Anomi slowly nodded her head to confirm what the blonde wanted to know.

"Yes those friends of yours helped get as many people onto the ferry when it arrived, and yet the cost of our lives would be the loss of our home. It...was burned down when the first fire was set ablaze." Everything they had built was lost to the raging fire that kept them from being slaughtered by the swarm of chimera ants that nearly claimed their lives. Anomi knew material items should not matter much, however, she had so many items that held value in terms of memories in her home.

"There is no way I can get back what I've lost there, but at the very least most of the children lived through that nightmare."

"Most?" Kurapika suddenly heard a cry come from Anomi's lips as her eyes began to leak with tears unaware of the sacrifice that had been made with one of the kids.

"That brave boy Tamiku," Anomi was barely able to maintain her composure as she continued to explain what happened after Kurapika was rendered unconscious. "When the ferry came to pick up your friends we managed to gather the children onto the boat. The swarm tried to kill us on the way, but then Tamiku...he saved us by giving up his life. He said that he wanted to have one big adventure to become a hunter like the ones who passed the latest exams...he even wanted to meet that one called Gon."

Kurapika felt himself swallowing a lot of air knowing that he knew who Gon was and realizing Tamiku likely was inspired by his friend only to end up dying before he could even attempt to enter the Hunter Exams. All because of the beasts that have recently become a public menace throughout the world.

"Do you who I really am?"

"Yes...when that girl mentioned those red eyes I finally realized what clan you are from, Kurapika Kurta." If she knew that much then Kurapika feared she would quickly realize the identities of his "friends" who helped save the children of her town. Instead of a nasty glare or angry yelling, she
gave him a more calm look of sadness.

"Why didn't you tell me you've been a prisoner of the Phantom Troupe?"

"How many others know?!"

"What does that have to-"

"How many people know who they are on this ship?!!" He had to know how many people were in
danger with that knowledge in their heads. She gasped when he explained what would happen if she
told anyone about the consequences before explaining only herself and some of the children knew
not any of the other passengers.

"They still want to be considered dead by the rest of the world; they clearly are not. While I'm not
exactly a free man my relationship with them is not being their prisoner."

"Why? Don't you want to get revenge for what they di-"

"We can't continue this discussion like this, but things have changed with new realizations I've come
to understand about them. Long story short I need time to answer some questions I have about the
world, who I am, and why did things happen the way they did for my clan. I know that I'm asking
quite a lot, but can you please not speak to anyone else about this...for everyone's sake." He pleaded
with her trying to avoid blood getting shed onboard this ship. After a while, she agreed to his terms
knowing that he did help save the youngest from her hometown.

"I still don't get why a bunch of killers helped save lives..."

"That's the kind of world I'm living in now, Anomi." She couldn't understand why he would stick
with a bunch of people who refused to follow society's rules, but then again she felt like her concerns
should be about the children she would need to protect when they found a place where they could
depart off the ship.

The rest of the day was rather calm for Kurapika who was still trying to fight the toxins affecting his
body because of the stings covering his body. Instead of reading Kurapika thought more about
Tamiku, and when he explained to Anomi about his relationship with Gon he imagined them getting
along well with each other. Such a young life that was filled with potential, it was now gone along
with his hopes and dreams that would never be fulfilled. Such a shame that is what he's come to
accept from this world.

- October 9th -

Anomi got off on a small island close to where Meteor City was located taking the other children
with her, and true to her word she didn't tell a soul about the real identity of the murderous
passengers on the ferry ride. While her conscious was screaming to admit the truth she was aware of
how deadly the spiders could be when cornered, and considering how lucky she had been to avoid
death Anomi didn't wish to risk her chances again. Phinks explained they would need to go through
a few customs before they could enter the city, which meant getting searched by the mafia.

"Boss says it will be a grand reopening show when we arrive there." Meaning that the world would
finally realize the Phantom Troupe was very much alive when their business there was complete.
Kurapika was still unsure about what the hell their reason for even coming there was until Phinks
explained the mission given to them by the leaders of Meteor City.

"Apparently there's been something going on causing everyone to run amok. If the rumors are true
according to our boss someone might have taken over the city.
"Bah, it's just another situation to deal with. Plus once our job is done I can finally show off my new game for the Joystation 4, and play with Pika!"

"You have a Joystation?" Shalnark nodded before explaining how his underworld contacts managed to get him the best kind of hardware to play other games on when they were on the road, but it was not easy having to carry it along with the more necessary items.

"Yup, but I'm not sure you'll want to play the kind of games I've gotten they might be...a little hard for new gamers."

"...Are you saying I'm not good enough to beat them?" Shalnark swung his arms around teasing the Kurta about his experience with the art of video games.

"Well, let's just say I don't want you to rage quit when you lose to the first boss."

"...
"...
"...
"...I'm gonna break your phone if you don't let me play that stupid system of yours..."

With that challenge made Feitan lead the other spiders into the desert knowing they needed to get to their destination very quickly since the sun was now beginning to rise up. Travel in the heat, dealing with the winds, and having a limited amount of water could spell disaster for anyone. Thankfully they made up for any lost time by not taking a break at any point simply deciding to suck up the pain, sweat, and soreness in their limbs. Kurapika was needing to rely on Shalnark and Kalluto a few times, the limbs in his body were still getting used to being free of the toxins.

"This is it - my moment and chance to prove my role as the de facto leader of this group." Feitan knew he couldn't fail this mission when he was entrusted with keeping this pack of the troupe safe. Turning around he looked at his "subordinates" for this assignment, studying their reactions and thoughts about their upcoming assignment.

"After that ugly-ass spider along with the annoying pest swarm clearly you think that you'll be able to handle this mess, "Boss" or leader whatever makes you feel better about yourself!" Nobunaga said nearly rolling on the ground in laughter. Phinks was also snickering with the samurai at the idea of Feitan being a competent leader of a team. Kurapika actually wondered why a bunch of people who know each other like to undervalue their skills like this.

'They might not be friends but they shouldn't be trying to pick on each other most of the time like this.'

Shalnark gritted his teeth, "Enough damn it!" He threw around a bag full of items to hit both of the oldest members in the heads trying to calm them down. Seeing the usually relaxed computer genius act like this was rather out of character for Shalnark, the other spiders waited to see what he would do when the both of them would try "coming for his head" after doing that.

"This is the first time we've come back to Meteor City in a long time. Kurapika has never even heard of this place or the legend behind its current state. As representatives of the Phantom Troupe, we have to act our very best for this job, and I won't let you two behave like dumbasses when the reputation of our boss is at stake!"

"I thought we are meant to remove whatever is subjugating the citizens living here?" Kalluto spoke amused by Shalnark's mood-swing when he was finished with his rather inspiring speech.
"Yeah that too I was going to add that at the end, Kalluto!"

"What exactly is the backstory about this place? I only know that it is considered the "junkyard" of the world, and the stomping grounds where all of this started for us." Kurapika expected the answer from who he considered the smarter thief in Shalnark, but Shizuku decided to explain the past of Meteor City in her own kind of way.

"It was said the city is around 500 years old, some guy might have built it to separate humanity. 10 years ago a trial took place involving a guy who was accused of not having a tramp when he was innocent of a murder, and he was found guilty when the real murderer was still free. Then after the trial, 31 people involved in the incident were all killed at the same time, the assassin managed to attach bombs on each victim along with a message written on a corpse's foot, saying: We reject nothing. So take nothing from us."

Kurapika's eyes widen as she spoke that last line about that motto...the very same words left after the massacre of the Kurta clan. Suddenly he was beginning to understand the bigger picture that had taken place, but he still only knew so little about such events like this.

"So what happened to the man who was wrongfully accused, Shizuku?" Kalluto wanted to understand more about that story being fascinated by such a tale.

"No idea." Her mind quickly returned to being a vast space much like her vacuum. Turning over to Shalnark he expected that his mind would have a better explanation of what happened to that wrongfully accused man.

"Don't know either..."

Kalluto almost choked in surprise by that omission realizing it was still a mystery even to this very day. With the chat over the limbs of the spider made their way into the heart of territory now under the occupation of the chimera ant menace, the goal is to overthrow the current ruler of Meteor City unaware of the dangers they would soon face.

- October 10th - Meteor City

A land that harbored many secrets, criminals, and people looking for a place to call home was now being turned into a breeding ground for the chimera ant race. While the news about them had only gained traction recently the race that had somehow made it from the Dark Continent had gained major public attention, the focus now centered around the most advanced creations of the now deceased queen.

Of her numerous progeny, one of her former Squadron Leaders now made herself the "Queen" of Meteor City, Zazan. Thanks to being gifted with her Queen's Shot Hatsu she quickly made her a sizable force of submissive chimera ant soldiers, the majority of which had been former citizens of this very city she now made her nest in.

Laying down on her made-up throne after another long day of building and creating new subjects the self-proclaimed queen was feeling rather tired. Summoning one of her obedient servants she demanded the creature that was previously a man into brushing her hair, the female hybrid did not want a single strand to be out of her skull.

"The life of a queen must be as long her reign so that she continues to reign as the definitive ruler of all things in her kingdom."

The purple-haired female ant sighed in disappointment when she felt one of her hair strands remain
untamed by the brush used to comb it, her reaction was to slap the subject behind her with the scorpion-like tail which she used to transform the man into her peasant in the first place. Yelling at the poor being to start all over again she began to think about expanding her reach beyond this place, the king of her kind might try to do that as well yet she felt like only a queen such as herself could truly make a powerful kingdom.

"I must have more soldiers, more space to build another nest, and most of all I might need a "King" of my very own..." If her mother could give birth to a mighty ruler than she wanted to outdo that as well. Zazan didn't need to rely on eggs to give birth to soldiers certainly, but in order to create a mighty king chimera ant, she would need to consider that option in the future. Feeling a hair fall out of her scalp she grabbed the subject back his neck, her tail whipping him across the room in disgust.

"Get out of my sight you worthless swine!" Calling for another helper she was consumed with the duty of being a queen along with the responsibilities that would entail for someone with such a high opinion of herself. It was then she realized what she would need to do for her goals to be achieved.

"I suppose in order to create a proper heir I will need a human donor...one who is very strong and full of wonderful potential."

- October 11th - Meteor City

To the relief of the pack of spiders traveling in the harsh environment that was the desert land was now in their sight. To say their journey was grueling would be underestimating how little the level of tolerance was in people like Phinks and Nobunaga. Between nearly running of water not to mention being annoyed with the younger members it was a true test of getting here without starting a brawl with their traveling party.

They managed to restrain themselves long enough so they could make it near Meteor City today. The commentary during the trip was mainly about how crappy life could be in the "junkyard" of the world, and yet...each one of the spiders was nostalgic about returning to this city.

"Alright let Operation: Kick-Ass begin!" Facepalms were quickly made after Shalnark's attempt to sound brave didn't work like last time leaving the second blonde in their group feeling dejected, but he managed to get over later when Nobunaga managed to slip over a rock causing him to slide down a hill resulting in laughing, crying, and sword flinging by the pissed-off samurai towards his fellow traveling partners.

'I can't even feel bothered with their antics these days...have I become so numb that I don't mind hanging around them like this?' Kurapika should be screaming at his kidnappers to let him get away to find his friends. Instead, to his horror, the left hand was covering his mouth to hold back his laughter. It was like he never left Gon, Killua, and Leorio back in Yorknew.

"So, when my current experience with you all I've come to the conclusion that I'm beginning to go insane." Kalluto mused to himself knowing his remark got a glare from the older members who found him annoying sometimes; unlike with Kurapika who they refused to accept into their group no matter what Chrollo said about the Kurta. The younger ones had grown to appreciate him being around, so they no longer felt like him being considered part of the spider to be a betrayal of everything they had become over the years.

"Don't say anything, don't look at anybody, and most of all don't tell anyone your last name hell, not even your first name." The order was given by Feitan to Kurapika in order to ensure no one realized got any wrong ideas about what was going on when they arrived in Meteor City. Of course, it wouldn't be easy to get into that city without making such a buzz considering who they were in the eyes of the public.
"Can I at least breathe in the city, Feitan?" Kurapika quipped simply rolling his eyes at the man trying to order him around like he was a soldier or rather a small child.

"You will die if you waltz into our home acting that way boy. Yorknew is nothing compared to what you're about to step into, and without us, death will be certain for you." Feitan was trying to be more understanding of his lack of experience in dealing with a major underworld spot like Meteor City

"You think I can't handle such an environment?"

"I know so, and considering Boss wants you alive that means I have to babysit your ass until we reunite with him along with the rest of this crew."

"Actually I can handle being on my own, Feitan. Nobunaga, on the other hand, needs to be watched."

"Don't make me snap all of those fancy gizmos of yours computer geek!"

Truthfully, most of the spiders could survive on the road by themselves usually enjoying the solitude of being alone. It was the interactions they had when they were all together during a mission or heist that everyone enjoyed on some level. One big dysfunctional family that stuck together...

The group finally made their way to the entrance of the city, rummaging through the sandstorm that was breezing through the place. Shizuku was having trouble with her glasses needing to rub them on her shirt only to get more sand in them along with her eyes. Phinks actually enjoyed breathing in this kind of air, his obsession with Egyptian culture made him feel right at home in more ways than one. In fact, if there weren't people living in these parts he wouldn't mind starting a project to build a small pyramid here.

The guards waiting at the entrance for new arrival certainly didn't expect the supposedly dead Phantom Troupe to walk up in front of them today. Their lips were gaping wide open when they saw Feitan walk in front of the group to explain that none of them were ghosts coming back from the grave, the group was alive and ready to return to the business of killing. As he talked with the guards it became clear he needed to explain what Kurapika was doing with them since unlike with Kalluto he couldn't be honest about what was happening with him.

"Kalluto is a newbie being tested on this mission. As for the other blonde standing next to Shalnark, he is."

"I'm Shalnark's brother!"

Suddenly grabbing hold of Shalnark, the grumpy blonde suddenly did a 180 in his personality. He even began to rub his hair in a friendly way putting on a facade like with Pakunoda if it meant saving his life. The two men wrapped in white outfits turned to look at each other, and they also had black gas masks covering their faces. While the air certainly wasn't poisonous enough to hurt the spiders or anyone else the guards knew it was meant to keep them from being attacked by any chimera ant lurking nearby.

"Well, I wished you guys had decided to resurface earlier before all of this insanity. Those God-less monsters have all but taken control of this city, the bitch they refer to as their "Queen" usually sends out soldiers to capture more food or potential troops for her army." The situation was certainly not good, and like many other parts of the world they were quickly realizing the danger these beasts pose to everyone. To say the arrival of the "deceased" Phantom Troupe would certainly raise the moral of the citizens living here would be an understatement.
"Where is this castle of hers then?"

"It is more like a nest actually, but it got built around the outer sector of our city. None of our more experienced guys could even get near the damn place before getting attacked, so chances are even with back-up from the mafia we can't handle this kind of threat." Hence why they were happy to hear from Chrollo Lucilfer about his men showing up for this pest extermination even if some really doubted they were actually alive.

"The rumors of our demise...have been greatly exaggerated."

"Oh, you were just waiting to say that line didn't you, Feitan?" Shizuku said not caring that she might have embarrassed him during a moment where he tried acting like a "badass" in front of the city guards.

"Watch out for the bitch in charge, she has this strange way of turning humans into her obedient slaves and that is why her soldiers have been snatching up everyone living here."

"Can't be any weirder than the crap we've had to deal with just to get here in one piece." Phinks knew their lives had gotten bizarre ever since Kurapika was inducted into their ranks, so having to kill some kind of female chimera ant claiming to be royalty was nothing new to them at this point. Nobunaga, however, wanted to claim the life of the queen, the current goal on his to kill one of the Divine Blades meant he needed to improve his craft by fighting tougher opponents like a chimera ant.

"Nobunaga, your items are still where you left them since last time. I figured you might want to get them back before heading out, and I'm sure all of you could use a bit of rest before killing those bastard creatures."

"Ahh yeah, that is where I left that item thanks, I guess..."

Nobunaga was not a grateful man a lot of the time he dealt with people outside of the shadow brigade making any kind remarks he gives a rarity to hear. As they headed further into the city Kurapika took note of all the different trash piles around them, so many items lay in the piles of cars, broken toys, worn-down furniture, and many pieces of plastic or paper. It certainly gave off the impression of being a giant junkyard buried in the middle of a desert. The Kurta wondered if he was stepping through a graveyard of lost dreams and forgotten pasts. There were also people wearing white sheets of clothing making it difficult to see their faces or eyes.

'How many people have come here over the years, lost things that belonged to them, and just tried to survive in this city.' Judging by the appearances of the guards Kurapika wondered how many times this place has gone through incidents that were certainly not on this level but had created issues for everyone living here. Walking into a tall building that was considered the city's hotel most of the spiders had split up to find their old lockers and rooms. Since Kurapika was fairly new to the group, however, the other members left him with Kalluto to make their own room to keep anything they needed safe and secure.

"Don't worry I'm sure we will be pretty good roomies, Pika," Kalluto said trying to avoid saying Kurapika's full name if anyone might know about him. The Zoldyck never got a hotel room in his life, so he was looking for to the limited experience he was about to get here. Coming to their room number they were presented with a room with flies running around the roof, several garbage bags hanging out of the can, and what looked to be dark spots covering the dark green wallpaper. All of that paled in comparison to the smell of the room.

"Ugh don't tell me they let animals into this place!"
Kalluto knew he wasn't expecting a great room, but he almost thought there was dead cat held up in
this room just by the horrible odor. Kurapika took advantage of the toilet tissues to clog up his nose
while trying to pry open a window to get fresh air, the stench of the sand felt easier to accept
compared to whatever foul smell was polluting the room. The source ended up being a backed up
toilet filled with unclogged bowel movement that seemed to have been there for a few days. It
certainly made sense then why this room didn't get many visitors for long periods of time.

"Let's get the hell out of here!" They both agreed in unison leaving all of the unneeded items for their
upcoming mission while hoping no one stole anything out of the room. As they locked the door
Kurapika noticed a couple making out in the middle of the hallway, their interaction was clearly
uncaring about who spotted them.

"To think I won't even be in the position until much later in my life, and unlike you Pika I'm not sure
I can even handle that."

"What in the hell do you mean by that?!"

"You know that I'm talking about with-"

"Shut up! I'm never done anything like that you perverted child!" Kurapika was silently cursing his
puberty along with those moments where his innocent mind was led astray into a forbidden, sinful,
and sexual territory. Leaving the couple that was locking lips and removing clothing, the duo
wondered around the inn for a while to find out where the rest of their group had gone. Nobunaga
was the easiest to find, the samurai was actually in a private area using a real-looking training doll as
practice for himself.

"Stupid brats! Why did I have to come here with them...I can't focus on killing those god-damn
swordsmen when I have to deal with pest problems including those little children who don't deserve
to be in our group. Boss, I wonder if you know what you're doing with those two kids who could die
on this mission. Perhaps if they make it out of this...I might understand what you see in them."

Kurapika wasn't expecting the samurai to speak out about his feelings, but he usually didn't pay
much attention to what the man had to say about him. The sounds of plastic being sliced up followed
that remark as Kalluto observed Phinks placing the headdress that he valued more than any other
item in his possession over his head. Strange words that the Zoldyck couldn't understand began to
come out of the man's lips - and he began to speak in the fictional language of the Egyptians while
chanting a prayer of good luck for today.

'Bizarre...'

Kalluto was unsure what to think about Phinks' obsession with that culture, but he figured it was not
any more strange than the rest of the Phantom Troupe, as he walked into the open space where the
pool was for lounging out...at least where the pool should be until Shizuku came along with Blinky.
The youngest female of the gang was in a blue bikini set and dressed like girls usually would relax in
the water, but she was actually sitting in the middle of a pool with no water around her. She tried
getting in, but quickly found the water much too cold for her liking hence it was now sucked up into
her vacuum.

"Oh, there you are, Kalluto. Do you want to come in with me?" Kalluto moves his head around from
the pool, the feet of many angry pool attendants came into his field of vision.

"Umm, I think your swim time is over Shizuku..."

With nearly an hour gone since they got to this hotel, Kurapika found the "head" of their group
sitting in the lounge with a strange bag in his small hands. The Kurta began to ponder all the different possible answers about what lies within it. The scary part was he actually cared enough to become curious about it when he should be focused on getting out of this arrangement or finding his comrades.

"Don't try and run or get away from here, Kurapika! I know your Nen from anywhere so come here and look at me like a man." Even if Kurapika deployed Zetsu to mask himself Feitan wouldn't have much trouble in finding him.

"I thought you shared Nobu's opinion about me." That thought was why did Chrollo allow someone like him into their small organization of crime.

"More like what exactly makes you worth not being killed here and now..." Feitan could not believe what luck he's been having to even make to Meteor City with his life. Much like how the early days of his life even after joining the Phantom Troupe.

/7 Years Ago/

Feitan was still inexperienced when it came to killing for the sake of this new organization, the first couple of missions in Meteor City were simply to gather enough finances to gain more power and support in the future. Chrollo knew in order to make a name for themselves they would need to plan ahead for biggest heists to get higher rewards. They also were dealing with a couple of rival gangs trying to follow in their footsteps, and take everything back they’ve stolen so far in their short careers as criminals. Those first couple of months were the hardest for Feitan who felt so incompetent compared to Uvogin and even Nobunaga.

"Hahaha! Another successful raid on those piss-ant dweebs trying to steal shit our turf! Damn, we make a good team, Nobu." The silver-haired man who looked more like a beast considering his body seemed chiseled out of stone began pouring down enough beer to make him piss drunk for the night.

"More like you're the good teammate, Uvo. I only cut limbs off when you can literally crack a bitch's skull open with little force!" His best friend laughed in his chair while enjoying a decent meal with the amount of jenny they had when today's assignment was finished. Their pay was the most considering the body count left behind was easily over 20 while Feitan only managed to kill one person, and that man was already on death's door after being beaten down by Phinks. To add insult to injury Chrollo tipped in the money for the younger member to get a small drink while the best killers in the brigade had several cans of beer already empty.

"What's the matter kiddo? Needing to kill something or rather someone..."

"Shut up Phinks."

"On second thought maybe you need to focus on losing a few pounds. Those sweets you love will end up making you a little piggie and-"

"Shut your damn mouth before I cut out that mouthy tongue of yours!"

His comment only got the others to begin snickering at him, the younger torture specialist felt like crawling into a ditch just to wait for death to come for him. While he wasn't completely out of shape it had become clear he needed to trim down some of his fat to perform better on the upcoming heists. This lifestyle was all he wanted, and either he could become a professional thief or remain in this junkyard as a helpless nobody shifting through ravaged scrap just to earn enough money to eat.

"Don't feel so disappointed in yourself Feitan," Chrollo offered the man a piece of seaweed that he
didn't feel like finishing up knowing the younger man might enjoy a healthier snack than usual. "Despite not being as involved in the heist as Nobu and Uvo you still contributed in your own way to the cause."

The head spider gave an encouraging look at the smaller young adult who felt mesmerized by his words. Despite not being as classy as Chrollo Feitan felt like he was "being given the red carpet" - which usually happened to those in the upper-class of society. It was that kind of hope that gave the future expert of inflicting pain hope to continue down this path, and eventually, he would become a "celebrity" of sorts to the rest of the world. Now whenever they would travel here like today everyone would roll out the welcome wagon for him and the other spiders.

/ 7 Years Later /

"There has to be something that makes you stand out." Feitan remained unsure what made Kurapika the lucky one of the Kurta clan, and why he felt reminded of his past when he watched him interact with the others.

"Well, I won't bother you if you don't want to tell me what's in the bag of yours..."

"It's...the stuff I first stole when I joined the Phantom Troupe." Kurapika realized the strange gold coins tied together with a string were the items filling up the personal bag. The sentimental value to Feitan was very obvious to the blonde, so he wondered what they also meant to him. Feitan explained they were said to be considered good luck charms meant to inspire confidence in situations when it would be tested. Naturally, he felt like he didn't need luck, but he wanted Kurapika to understand what was at stake here.

"You will have to look out for Kalluto, the kid is still new to what we do each day. Like Shalnark your "bro" showed you with that experience you've gotten over the past month will determine if your life or die during this mission."

"...I'm not one of you...this is just me dealing with a greater threat..." There had to be a way of rationalizing his involvement with the brigade to control his conscious while Feitan just snickered at the response, his body relaxing further into his lounging chair in the middle of the room.

"Sure tell yourself this is nothing too bad, as much as you don't want to accept it you've lost your purity a long time ago. Like with that Zolydck the both of you have been inducted into a whole different world and perspective. You can help us remove the chimera ants for the "greater good" if you believe in that, but don't lie and say you won't enjoy it on some level like that assassin child." Kurapika slouched down in his chair as he was about to fight back against that claim, the memories of what happened last month suddenly haunted him again making him realize those words might not be a complete lie.

He was losing the battle with his own mortality...

With their rest over with the pack of hired exterminators made their way into the heart of the nest filled with chimera ants, the only hope Meteor City had left in dealing with this menace plaguing their home. Feitan didn't know much about the leader of their army who was called Zazan and that tail she uses to make more soldiers. This meant they couldn't just rush her and her forces like most raids, the name of the game won't be planning. Unlike Chrollo Lucilfer Feitan was not the best at this field and so he went for a more direct approach.

"The council left us with only a single objective."

"That was after their pointless bitching about politics like usual!" Phinks huffed as he was forced to
stick around during that conference with the council members, his memories of how long their arguments could go nearly drove him into punch a few in the face just to speed things along.

"Yes that is true Phinks, but remember the main reason we are out here today. We will slaughter the "Queen" bitch of this army before this day is done!"

"What happens after we kill her?"

"Shizuku, you know we usually party like hell when the job gets done...well most of us anyway! I don't think half-pints like Killuto and Kurapika can handle too much beer!" Phinks said with a teasing grin knowing they would get rattled by that remark, the both of them would be treated like children in their eyes until at the least a year passes. It was no different than how members like Feitan, Shalnark, and Shizuku were treated at the beginning of the spider's equivalent of hazing.

"Whatever happens I certainly don't want to end up like that poor bastard who looked like he some kind of fetus monster..." Shalnark was used to disgusting sights, but even he felt unnerved when he and Phinks looked at that freakish corpse that was a human before until the ants came along to change his body, distorting him until he was a shell of his former self.

"...They can't just treat humans like that, and it would be the duty of a hunter to eliminate the threat such beasts pose to the rest of the world." Kurapika hoped that would make what he was about to do a little more tolerable. With nothing else needing to be said the group finally arrived at the entrance of the "royal palace" belonging to the self-proclaimed queen of Meteor City, Zazan. The string webs covering the place gave it a creepy feeling, and for a group who called themselves the spider, they certainly felt like they were stepping into a web. The smell was like that of a molded piece of bread when they caught a whiff of the stretch in the air.

"So all we have to do is break through the front?"

"That shouldn't be that difficult for us, Shalnark," Nobunaga said hoping one of the chimera ants would make for a worthy challenge. The others felt like this was too easy, the palace's main entrance had no kind of guard or set of troops to defend the place from outsiders.

"So, they're just letting us enter as we please?"

"Then I will go this way."

"Fine, I'll just head this way."

"...Everyone's splitting up?"

Kurapika was dumb-founded by this plan of attack, the chances are they had just walked into a trap, and yet the group was about to split up its forces increasing the chances of getting attacked.

"Of course! It's a race to see who can kill the queen first. You likely have abilities that you don't want us to know that you didn't use on Kurapika, right?"

"Other abilities?" The other blonde's eyes looked over at the Zoldyck wondering what Phinks meant by that comment.

"Eliminate anyone who stands in your way. If you defeat the queen, you can serve as the Interim-Boss until Chrollo gets here."

"...Understood."
"Wait just a minute!" Kurapika couldn't let any of them move a single step further before expressing his opinion on this "plan" of attack.

"Instead of working together to eliminate these beasts each one of you will split up for the sake of being in charge? Don't any of you realize this is likely what they want us to do in the first place!"

"...You're right Kurapika. In terms of scheming, this is a rather flimsy plan, and it could result in all of us being killed or suffering a fate worse than death." His eyes widen as Feitan of all people agreed with his thoughts. Then his hands came down to remove his skull mask covering his mouth revealing a small grin.

"The fact is even if you could kill the queen chances are you wouldn't make a good leader anyway. You seem more like a subordinate and nothing more..."

"What makes you think-"

"Feitan's right! Even if you killed my friend you don't have what it takes to have any respect or being in the position that demands respect." Nobunaga knew what Feitan was doing by dangling a carrot above his head, the word bragging rights are all but written on it for Kurapika to grasp in his hands.

"The same goes for you, rookie. You're not going to let the last remaining Kurta show up your family will you?" Kurapika was ready to argue more, but Kalluto's eyes shimmered with newly found determination, and he knew it was useless to defy them when their minds were made up like this.

"Start!"

Meanwhile, Pike could feel the spiders begin their way into the queen's lair unaware they had been expecting someone to show up for a while. From then on, Zazan waited to hear more about the intruders wondering if they could provide valuable strength for her army.

"Are these intruders strong?" She asked the spider ant soldier who confirmed her thoughts about the men who in his words "were used to living in the wild" loving the fact she would get a challenge today.

"One of them, in particular, seems rather strange compared to the others, and it would seem like he is more hesitant in coming further into your castle, your highness."

"Then I myself will greet this guest."

"Are you sure you will be safe on your own dear queen?"

"If you feel that concerned, then go capture the enemy quickly so that you can come back to my side."

"It would be such an honor! I, Pike swear to you Queen Zazan to perform to the best of my ability!" The spider beast quickly made his way out to confront the enemy while his queen got herself ready for battle. She wondered if the enemy she would confront could possibly deliver her desire in finding a worthy mate...only through a male could she have the precious child that could become another worthy king of the Chimera Ant race.

"Fufufu, your reign might be challenged dear spawn of our mother."

Quickly each of the members found opponents as Nobunaga faced the spiky ant, Shizuku faced Pike, Phinks battle Gorilla, Shalnark dealt with Pell and Boki, Kalluto met the Stag Beetle, and
Feitan located...a winged female moth recently made out of one of the capture girls from Meteor City.

As the human spiders confronted their foes Kurapika was silently hoping that none of them would get killed but wondered if that was due to genuine worry or he wanted to slaughter them only by his hands. Unknowingly he was being lured right into the arms of the ruler of this "kingdom" meaning he was about to discover the target each of the spiders wanted to kill themselves.

"Ohh, so you're the one who doesn't want to be here." A soothing voice cooed out from the darkness making Kurapika put up his guard. He could hear footsteps get louder as he tried using Gyo to find the target only to see a tall female walk out with a small skirt hiding the scorpion-like tail from Kurapika's sight. Even if Kurapika could not spot her tail, he still knew she was very dangerous judging by her aura; besides - just hearing the sound of authority from her tone let him knew she likely was the one in charge here.

"You wouldn't happen to know about the queen of this place...or am I actually speaking with her right now?"

"Fufufu, what a handsome boy you are indeed. The hair, face, and figure certainly match up to being mistaken for a girl. The voice and aura you have could only belong to a young man." Shivers went up to his spine at that comment, his mind was becoming concerned about facing this woman in battle.

"You are looking at Zazan, and I'm the queen of this nest you and those other intruders have stumbled into today."

"I see...then can you be convinced to leave this city in peace?" He wanted to be a little diplomatic considering unlike most of the chimera ants he's met this one has enough intelligence for speech and communication. Instead, she moved her head back in rich laughter at the offer Kurapika gave to her. "Ohh that is simply precious, the idea of leaving such a wonderful source for new soldiers for the sake of "peace" is rather adorable. I'm going to have a lot of fun with you, child..." She quickly charged at him deciding to see how strong he could be or if he would end up being another pawn in her army, the reaction she got was Kurapika's chains being drawn out to block the stinger of her tail as he ripped apart the skirt concealing it from his sight.

"Even with enough intelligence to understand things like emotion, feelings, and the difference between right and wrong you wish to submit people for your amusement...that can't go unpunished!"

His steel moved around to capture her tail in an attempt to remove it from her body, so Zazan quickly moved back out of his range observing his nen-ability for a moment. As she was skilled in Manipulation she had never seen a Conjurer like this before, the cold-looking steel that he was using his hands impressed her greatly. Sending out another strike with her tail she grasped his shoulders, feeling the arm underneath his black and red clothing.

"Mmmm! What a fine specimen you are dear human."

"I'm Kurapika Kurta and I'm not your plaything!"

"Indeed you are much more valuable than that..." Hearing those words come from her reminded him of Chrollo Lucilfer, the man who got him involved with this kind of lifestyle in the first place. Sending out a punch she quickly blocked it with her tail, and while she had enough space to stab him she was becoming more curious about his potential not wanting to end the battle this soon.
"Tell me there is more to you than just these boring chains of your-" She noticed his hand reached in the back, the sharp edge of a knife was now trying to ram itself into her tail making her move back only to have the blonde reach up to grasp on her stinger to steer it right into her back.

"Ahhh! Oh, that is what I was hoping to see..." Zazan was fortunate that she could not be affected by the toxins running through her own tail, but that meant she would need to pry it out of her back to use it again. Kurapika hoped his knives would pierce her body since his only offensive chain could do so little against a non-troupe member. Before he could slice up her body Zazan grasp his hands and using her true strength to make him drop his knives on the ground.

"Yes, this is exactly what I've been looking for in a mate!"

"Mate? Do you really think that...fuck no! Just fuck the hell NO!"

"Oh yes yes yes! That look in your eyes is filled with such a wonderful expression, the desire to kill without any mercy." Growling in anger Kurapika moved up his knee to get out of her grasp as he tried formulating another attack plan. As he observed a spider dangling above them his eyes changed color as Zazan looked at the Scarlet Eyes of the Kurta.

"Oh, my those eyes of yours are rather special. From what we've learned out of those humans we captured there was only one clan of humans who possessed such a unique set of eyes."

"The Kurta clan...I'm the lone survivor of my family...my clan."

"I know you were a special boy! To think I was considering making you another worthless slave, leaving all of that potential would be such a waste. No, I think you are perfect to become my equal, the king to my queen!"

"...You can't be serious?" Was she serious about asking him to become her wife or king? The idea of a human being the trophy of some female abomination who treated other humans like slaves was sicken to hear, and Kurapika certainly would not agree to her demand.

"Deadly seriously about this. Hmm perhaps I need to study you more, the outfit certainly looks like good eye candy but I want to see what's underneath it..." She moved her tail around to knock him off his guard while Kurapika used his knife to deflect the stinger unaware of how fast she could be in combat until she ripped off his outfit revealing his chest.

"Yummy that is a perfect figure you must train a lot..." She replied moving a finger down his body in enjoyment while giving one of his nipples a tight squeeze.

"Leave me alone, you crazy-ass bug!" His chains whipped at her hands giving him enough space to run away from her while he was feeling rather unsafe around this female ant - her attempts to swoon over him just made things worse. He didn't even notice the others entering the room as his attention was focused on dodging this "Queen" and her hands that were trying to squeeze more of his body parts.

"Unbelievable! You of all people are fighting her?!!" Feitan was beyond furious that none of the others could locate the queen, and yet the Kurta who likely didn't even want to be here was now battling her. Part of himself just felt like socking him in the face for taking away his one chance to prove himself...his only moment that he would be considered a true leader.

"So, if the chain-bastard kills her...that would make him our Boss?!" Nobunaga thought he was in some kind of horrible nightmare.

"The irony...the mother-fucking irony of all this!" Phinks couldn't believe what he was looking at
while they got themselves a seat to watch the battle, the lone except was Kalluto who was simply observing the amount of speed being used by both Zazan and Kurapika. He was also unaware of the others making it before he did as he was feeling like a fish out of the water.

'Kurapika...he's like on a completely different level.'

"Woah, everyone's here already?" Shizuku just got done with her opponent and she could only arrive in the damaged clothing from her battle with Pike. As she was upset about the looks she was getting from the others they all watched Kurapika "fight" or rather try and run away from the woman trying to claim him as his new soulmate.

Zazan noticed the others simply watching her fight while she began to get concerned about the well-being of her subordinates. As she whipped her tail around Kurapika he leaped through the opening to cut off some of her hair, the notion only pissed her off more.

"Damn those fools! How can mere humans do this to me, the great Queen Zazan!"

"I don't even know why you care about this human in the first place! You could have just stabbed me by now, and I thought you assholes would've jumped in to help me out!"

"Sorry Pika! This game has the rules of fighting your opponent by yourself, and only by killing her with your hands can make you the winner and...err our Interim-Boss."

"I don't even want to be your leader, Shalnark! Why the hell do you think I would want that kind of role in the first place?!"

"You can't break the rules of the spider...too bad Kurapika looks like you'll need to handle her on your own," Feitan smirked as he pondering that fact of the man who stole his kill needing to fight like this with no support to get him out of this.

"Oh, do you mean to explain to Chrollo you're disobeying his wishes?"

"Oh you son of a bitc-"

"That's enough! You will not keep your future queen waiting, so your pals will have to become my lowly subjects if you don't stand down at once!"

Kurapika knew she was likely bluffing with his time with the spiders letting him understand how merciless they could be to their enemies. What he didn't expect was a bunch of black creatures to suddenly fly into the room. From then on, all of the black moths began to cover the room making it difficult to see as when they all stopped moving Kurapika was suddenly unable to produce any kind of Nen out of his body.

"Kuroi-Ga, you've certainly kept me waiting..."

"Forgive me, your highness. My main body was killed by one of the intruders, but my children were finally ready to hatch." The small voices of each female moth spoke as one, the several babies of their mother latched onto Kurapika putting him into a Zetsu-like state.

"That thing had babies?!" Feitan was certainly he put his sword right through her skull when he finished her off earlier. He realized Kurapika was defenseless against Zazan, the rules of a fair fight had been broken not by him rather it was Zazan.

"Hmm I get it now you tried having a little royal rumble to impress your pals, and you tried to kill me in order to earn their approval such a twisted ambition. Perfect for a future king."
"You're still going on about that crap. I just want to keep your monsters from making humans your slaves nothing more."

"Silence!" She slapped him in the face while he was stuck in the insect swarm leaving him in this helpless state.

"This is getting bad maybe we should help him?" Kalluto knew he couldn't possibly handle this on his own. Instead, the others were more concerned about getting to go if Kurapika was defeated in battle, and Nobunaga along with Phinks argued their case of being next in line.

'Something...is wrong with these guys. I was...such a fool to think I'd figured becoming the number two would be a piece of cake.'

As for the Kurta, he couldn't do much to shake off the creatures while his body suddenly felt much heavier than before as Zazan walked over with an aura of confidence.

"Fufufu, it's useless to resist Kuroi-Ga's ability. Not only can her children reduce your Nen-levels to nothing each of her babies also sucks up the energy in your body making your very tired in a matter of seconds. Before long you will be rendered unconscious, so why don't I give you something to make you have a good dream...my precious king." His red eyes widened in fear as Zazan, the woman responsible for the subjugation of Meteor City actually kissed him on the lips. Everyone's faces grew red like a pack of tomatoes.

"That is something you don't see every day..." Phinks was unsure how else he could respond to this scene.

'This is insanity, the touch of a female's lips, their breasts being smothered on their chest, and oh god is she trying to put my hands on her ass?!' His screams were being quieted by her tongue enjoying his mouth. Before Zazan could play with him further she felt a sudden went surge come into the room. As time went by, all of the moths covering Kurapika had been sucked right into Shizuku's vacuum leaving Zazan on her own against him.

"Shizuku?"

"You slutty bitch...you're trying to violate him when he can't do anything to stop you. You didn't even consider asking him out on a date FIRST!" All of the spiders blinked in surprise, the outburst was something they never expected her to say considering her usual attitude was that of an "air-head" and nothing like this angry glare filled with hatred.

"Begone you, worthless human, the fact is you're only good enough to become a grotesque pet underneath my heel." Shizuku didn't move as Zazan moved in with her Queen Shot to "taint" her beauty making her another subject to please her vanity. That was until she felt a tight pulling sensation on her tail, her eyes moved back to see her current love interest-holding back her stinger with his chains.

"Hold a second...I thought you were fighting me or rather trying to rape me...who said we were finished just yet!"

Kurapika's tone felt much more primal than usual, and Kalluto knew that could only mean he was on the verge of madness once again. Zazan took a look at the now blood-lusting expression on Kurapika before he used all of his strength to pull her back sending her flying into a pillar in the room. Shizuku couldn't help the small blush on her cheeks as she realized what the Kurta did for her at that moment.
"Hey, Shizuku. If you've got something to say, you might as well say it." Phinks figured she was enthralled by their recent "comrade" judging by their interactions, but she didn't reply to him directly. She thought about her conversation with Pike before she had sucked him dry of all his blood.

"Do you think...the Kurta boy likes me or Boss weird-looking spider?"

Screams of pain came out of the queen as she was thrown around like a pinball as Kurapika's chains slung her around merely toying with her in his more unhinged state of mind. As she was trying to get back up Kurapika moved around her to tie up her tail in his chains, his intention was clear to all of the onlooking spiders.

"How are you able to do this to me, the queen of chimera ants?!

"Simple it's because I'm a human...and a human can be just as vicious as beasts..." With a laugh, Kurapika began to pull at her tail with force not even caring if he succeeding in removing the tail from her back. His enjoyment was in listening to her screams of agony which was delightful to his ears.

"Unbelievable even with her size and power he can still manhandle her like this."

"Don't be an idiot Phinks. The boy is running on fumes and only pure instinct is keeping him from passing out..." Nobunaga was attempting to downplay it, but he would be lying to himself to not admit this was rather good of him to do this while he was in a weakened state from the moth babies zapping his strength.

"Stop it damn you...I just wanted to have a child..."

"Ohh how sweet I bet you wanted him or her to look like me, and maybe even have the Scarlet Eyes. They belong to the Kurta clan and no one else!" He reeled her back in just to give her a punch to the cheek unaware of the pain being sent down his arm. The fractured bones didn't phase him as he suddenly began to slash her cheek with the sharp edge of his chain before letting go of her tail. He was enjoying the sight of that crack left on her face with the dark blood pouring down her face.

"How could you do this to me...my beauty...my face...you heartless son of a bitch!"

"Now, we do have something in common!"

He couldn't stop laughing as she broke out a rageful scream, the breakdown suddenly made her pull off her own tail to transform into her more powerful state fueled by anger. Uncontrollable rage, hateful strength, and wrathful power now removed any traces of humanity in her body replaced by a monster.

"So, that is what you look like without any make-up...no wonder you needed a pretty face."

"I WILL ERODE YOUR FLESH LEAVING MEATY AND BLOODY PIECES, BASTARD!" Kurapika slumped over as he could not stand up anymore, but his red eyes were still taunting Zazan along with his demented giggles of delight. She moved in to stomp on his head only to find a sharp point that poked her face revealing Feitan standing in front of Kurapika.

"It's obvious you've been defeated Kurapika. I know this is going against the rules of a coin toss, but since the queen broke the rules first I figure we make an exception for myself. That is unless any of you guys wanna fight this fuck-ugly bug instead?"

"Go right ahead!"
Shalanark ran over to Kurapika to remove him from the fight knowing he was unable to do much in his tired state, and the other spiders let Feitan get his turn against Zazan knowing he likely would succeed in killing her. Finally, he would prove to everyone why he should be considered the second-in-command and not Pakunoda. After today Feitan knew the others would consider him a real man once he killed Zazan...he was taking one step closer to maturity along with completing his metamorphosis.
Act 10: Memento X Mori

Chapter Summary

After overthrowing Queen Zazan, the spiders relax for a while before continuing to fulfill their word to Kurapika in reclaiming the remaining scarlet eyes. This time, however, will Kurapika end up as a sacrifice to a "god" in the eyes of a disturbing new religion?

Act 10: Memento X Mori

- October 11th - Meteor City

Fighting sometimes might be considered as performing a dance. With usually two partners being involved in the violence dance each one moving to each other. With each blow, punch, and attack the waltz becomes more emotionally charged for each of the partners involved. Death or defeat would usually be the result of the kinds of fights that happened in the world Kurapika resides in. Mortal combat was the norm for hunters and especially a black-list one like himself. He's been on the verge of death before, and yet he's been able to come back alive and stronger.

The same principle applied to the Phantom Troupe who rarely suffered defeat and or a major loss. Hence when they lost Uvogin and Hisoka it was clear they needed younger operatives in order to keep them around longer. With Kurapika and Kalluto's ages, they would have a longer time of being stuck in the life of crime on the road. That was how most of the troupe grew up, after all, the majority of their young lives were used to the concept of stealing and killing. It didn't matter if the target was a man, woman, or even a child.

"Kill or be killed..."

The words spoke by Kurapika despite still being in a deep sleep while he was trying to awaken with his strength slowly returning to his body, the other spiders no longer were in the room where Feitan was battling Zazan in her more beastly state. While most of the time they knew Feitan could be fine with an audience the ongoing fight with Zazan was not one of those times. If any of them stuck around chances were they would get caught in the crossfire of an uncontrollable Feitan, and Kalluto was feeling disappointed he wouldn't get to watch the special battle armor in action.

"Alright, who wants to take over holding Pika...he's not exactly a light load for me." Shalnark was aware of the old saying love hurts, and while he certainly didn't consider the Kurta a soulmate-god no at the very least he wanted to be considered his friend.

"I thought to be the brat's friend meant watching out for him. Shalnark, don't tell me you can't handle that kind of pressure." Nobunaga couldn't help his snickering at seeing the taller blonde try to keep the other kid on his back. The others remained on watch knowing there were still a few pawns left around there were the mutated citizens of Meteor City. Their relief came soon once Feitan made his way back although his mouth and chest were no longer clad in black. The battle with Zazan had taken its toll on him since he knew there was a broken limb or two in his body.

"Think I look bad you should see the roasted remains of that queen. Shit would make an alien cry from the ugliness..."
Feitan said with the arrogance back in his tone knowing he was the winner of the race. By killing Zazan he's earned himself credibility in the eyes of his allies within the spiders. That said he wouldn't deny he felt impressed by Kurapika's more violent streak that manifested itself in his weakened state, and possibly because of seeing Shizuku in danger of being hurt. One of two thoughts crossed his mind about this: either Kurapika was thinking of himself as a member of their group or he cared about her.

"W-What...where...oh damn it I lost control again didn't I..." Kurapika was beginning to feel like a helpless Doctor Jekyll against the growing chaos of his heart and personal Mr. Hyde. A double-faced person much like the gold coin that symbolizes his involvement with the Phantom Troupe. A red-eyed killer who no longer cared about holding back on anyone, the possible outcome of this relationship with the criminals scared him to death.

"About time you got back up, we almost thought about getting a frog to kiss you." Kurapika frowned at the comment made by Phinks clearly a reference to a few fairy tale stories about princesses being put into slumber. With Shalnark's help, he was able to stand up on his own, but he was still rather weak from being drained by the baby moths.

"Well, what should we do now...Boss!" Nobunaga said with newfound excitement considering Feitan to be a more favorable temporary leader than Kurapika Kurta.

"Let's get the hell out of here for starters." Everyone including Kurapika agreed with that sentiment, and they all began to look for some way out of this nest only to end up in the lion's den with several of the formerly human people now looking at their fellow citizen as chimera ants.

"Just as I thought, even with the death of the queen their bodies can't revert back to normal, at least they're free from the queen's control."

Phinks understand this meant none of these poor souls could return to their old lives. One of the mutated ants crawled over towards the group looking for a way to release himself out of this horrible fate that he suffered. Each of the remaining slaves to Zazan all expressed their desire for death at the hands of the Phantom Troupe. Being an outsider the Kurta couldn't understand why they wanted the spiders to kill them, but as he looked at their warped bodies he figured they couldn't bear the thought of living in those forms. He would have to truly lack a conscious to deny such an offer even if he disagreed with the notion of their lives now being worthless.

"Please...kill us..." The thin-looking ant spoke out a mere shadow of his former selves thanks to Zazan's Queen Shot. The entirety of the court of the former queen sang out this same wish for death. Phinks had no intention of honoring their request...that wasn't how things were done in Meteor City and when he winded up his right arm he felt like they with some of their old integrity.

"Nope! I hate killing for charity, so how about you sons of bitches come out me first. Even underneath those sacks of rotten flesh, aren't you guys still residents of this place?! Don't you dare surrender until the end!" Until the very end, they would fight on to survive like everyone did when born inside of a junkyard. The ants gathered themselves along with the spiders the short stand-off was filled with tension until a voice broke up everything.

"Wait a damn minute..."

"Kurapika, you can't be serious about this-"

"Shut up Shalnark! There is something I need to ask these people..." Kurapika was slowly making his way over to the first ant who approached the criminals. The weakened Kurta made up his mind looking down at the slimmer-looking ant noticing how he seemed like he hadn't eaten much since the
transformation. Moving into a kneeling position he looked into the ant's eyes.

"You don't believe that you can live on like this? With a brain that allows you to speak, think, and act like a human won't convince you to keep on breathing. These bodies you now inhabit make you all believe that you shouldn't even exist. Is that what you all honestly think?" The former citizen nodded his head feeling so hopeless without any shred of his humanity left in this kind of form. None of them could agree with Kurapika's idea of living on even as chimera ants...the following action was a knife being sent into the leader ant's head.

The brain was shut down instantly as the body slammed on the floor, leaving fresh blood on Kurapika's chest and his eyes were glazed over not glowing red. He honored the request given without any kind of hesitation, so he looked at the others who certainly weren't expecting this action.

"Kill or be killed...Memento Mori." The old saying you must remember that you have to die.

"Remember death?" Shalnark spoke without getting much of a reply from the Kurta.

He repeats the words he spoke in his momentary sleep as the other spiders followed suit in exterminating all of the remaining chimera ants. Before long the only things that left the former palace of ants were a group of spiders...Kurapika included. The job had been done like Feitan vowed to leave the group with nothing else to do besides keeping the place safe or that is what Phinks thought was the plan. Feitan was more concerned about what Chrollo was up to with the rest of their gang.

"Thank you for the clothing Phinks. I really don't know why my outfit had to get ruined like that." Shizuku said hoping the revealing bra and panties didn't make the boys feel awkward. Really they had forgotten Shizuku was crushing the skulls of chimera ants with only white underwear to wear including Kurapika.

"Perhaps we can buy you some new clothing in town..."

"Yeah I mean we're cool with you buying it, Pika!" Shalnark loved the flabbergasted look on his eyes at the reply to his comment.

"What makes you think I'll just buy stuff with all the jenny in my possession." That being only around 100 in total since the funds usually went to food, clothing, and other needed resources for living on the road.

"Do you think I can borrow some of your clothing again, Pika?"

"...Where is the nearest shop and does it have women's clothing?"

- October 12th-

Shizuku, Kalluto, and Shalnark quickly took advantage of the Kurta's lack of clothing in order to go on a mini-shopping spree. Things like what lingerie was, the many colors that could go with a bra, and how long stockings could stretch out. Despite being mature enough to kill people the smaller blonde was not exactly mentally ready for the world of female outfits or even dealing with the nature of the opposite gender besides speaking with them. Then again he wasn't sure how to feel about this matter when it comes to people of his own gender.

"Shalnark, are you sure he won't pass out in a few moments?" Kalluto was still young when he walked into this small department store as the four of them browsed for Shizuku's certain taste in clothing. That was the idea until Feitan, Nobunaga, and Phinks wanted new outfits as well suddenly ordering the younger members with getting the other stuff as well. Kurapika was about to get into a
shouting match when Shalnark told him it was the perfect time for him to get time away from them, so he decided to go with them in order to get another outfit for himself.

"Wow, I'd forgotten how expensive these kinds of items could be on the market." Shizuku was looking at a sparkly bra that was around 1000 Jenny. Considering the older thieves only sparred the rookies a few bits of cash with the suggestion of stealing whatever is too expensive Kurapika was not a happy man at the moment. The group just took care of the chimera ant problem, and now they were just supposed to steal from the people they helped like nothing's happened?

"I won't have much trouble in getting a nice furisode here," Kalluto said usually getting a nice kimono to wear ignoring the remarks by Phinks and Nobunaga about looking more like a girly brat than Kurapika. The chimera ant he needed to kill in the nest had mistaken him for a girl at first, the upbringing he had with a woman like Kikyo might contribute to his more feminine appearance.

"Can't you try on something easier to put on like a regular t-shirt?" The technical expert couldn't understand the Zoldyck's reasoning behind such a notion.

"No...I must wear this kimono and nothing more." Besides having different colors for his sandals and kimono he couldn't wear anything else. Time passed by as the four criminals managed to find enough clothing to call it a day despite knowing Feitan along with Nobunaga would not be happy about how tacky their clothing might look. Kurapika suddenly noticed a small child wrapped in clothing poking at his leg repeatedly in an attempt to get him to notice her.

"Mister can you give me some jenny please!"

The Kurta felt like he was back in that small town near the sea with those other kids who were looking to get something from him. Unlike last time, however, she was providing a distraction for the fellow kid to swipe the jenny out of his and Shizuku's pockets allowing them to make off with their payment for the items. Kalluto caught onto this and to provide a counter move he set up two small pieces of paper on their clothing, the small paper stars would allow him to use his Surveillance Paper Dolls skill to hear them.

"Uhh, Kurapika how come there is no jenny in your hand?" Shalnark was also obvious about the robbery since he was playing a mobile game on his cellphone. Kalluto created two paper dolls in order to listen in on the siblings speaking to one another.

"That was so easy brother! Father was right about life when you take you can make things happen!"

"Well, I for one can't wait to get a nice meal thanks to those poor saps in that clothing store!"

Kurapika couldn't believe that he was just hoodwinked that easily, the fact a fugitive like himself was being taught by the world's most infamous thieves lost jenny that easily was simply unacceptable. If Feitan and Nobunaga caught wind of this it would be a field day for the rest of the Phantom Troupe. Shizuku was more upset with herself as Shalnark remained unaware of the robbery, focusing his attention on beating his mobile game on the cellphone he used for calls.

"Whatever! At the very least Kalluto you really pulled through for us, so let's get that jenny back before the day is finished." Kurapika said with an authoritative tone causing the others to blink in confusion.

"I thought you didn't want to have the role of a leader, Pika."

"That hasn't changed, but there is no way I'm gonna let those assholes laugh at us for losing jenny to kids."
The others agreed with that idea meaning they would track down the younger crooks and get back what was theirs on their own. While Kurapika didn't know the pathways around Meteor City Shalnark and Shizuku knew their way around the place. Being their old stomping grounds they knew where a bunch of children might hang out during the day. Unlike most places, there was no kind of educational building where kids can learn safely, so most had to gain experience in this kind of environment.

"Most of the kids living here are orphans, the parents are either dead or not around to raise them. There are exceptions of course, but chances are if you were born in this city you needed to grow up on your own. In a way, that's why many citizens here treat each other like family more often than not..." Shalnark was not from this city, however, he did hear a lot from the founders like Pakunoda and Chrollo about living here. Also because he was actually a hunter he learned about the kind of society and reputation this city has gained from the Hunter Association.

"I got my first pair of glasses when my eyes couldn't read things when I was little..." Shizuku was also feeling nostalgic about her life before the Phantom Troupe came along to add her to their ranks. As they were moving to find the kids she remembered her first act of crime, the need to take a replacement pair of glasses from an elderly woman who carried many kinds of glasses and yet she refused to give one away.

"Don't tell me this is what Chrollo and Pakunoda had to deal with when they were children..." Kurapika certainly wasn't expecting their early years to be filled with kind of hardship. Not that he was feeling sympathy rather he figured they had normal upbringings that made their decision to become criminals all the more difficult to accept, so this revelation made him question a few things.

"Not just him Nobunaga and Phinks also have ties here, the official records state that many people who live here are social outcasts, and the existence of this city is only known to a few people." Shalnark knew his knowledge of Meteor City would impress both Kurapika and Kalluto. Moving near an abandoned building the four fugitives noticed several kids huddled together in a small dining area. They also took notice of the huge white bag on a broken table filled with many different items stolen from around the city.

Kalluto moved away from his allies trying to hear what the now "wired" kids had been saying as they confirmed they were indeed stuck in that building they found as thanks for helping some of the citizens around the city. The old hideout was originally a mansion for a mafia family that operated here. Of course, they were not the only group with ties in this city with Kikyo Zoldyck once being an inhabitant as well. While it had still been a place mostly controlled by the mafia some people rebelled against their rule.

"What's the gameplan "leader" that is if you haven't already thought of one." Shalnark knew he would get a glare of irritation, but he was beginning to suspect Kurapika had what it took to become a decent pack head with more time and experience in the phantom brigade. Before the Yorknew incident, the electronic support of the gang couldn't find anyone else who could possibly take charge when Chrollo was gone besides Pakunoda and maybe Feitan. The issue with Feitan was he could be a little hot-blooded in his actions with everyone saying the same thing.

"You really need to relax sometimes! Shit!" They all said whenever he would become more thirsty for blood, which seemed rather similar to Kurapika's case although his issues were more troubling than simply liking the thrill of killing people. Pakunoda, while more gentle lacked the ruthless, confident, and self-assured egotism that made Chrollo Lucifer an enigmatic figure to follow. He felt inspired by any moment when he would break out a speech or piece of wisdom he's learned over the years, and Shalnark felt like Kurapika was learning from him as well.
"We should attack at once ensuring they can't get away, so in case any of them have Nen-abilities none of the kids will be ready to use them against us." All three of his "subordinates" agreed with that line of thinking, but Kalluto also had a suggestion of his own about this small operation.

"Perhaps we should attempt to startle them, the fear might ensure they will not try stealing from us again."

"Clever, and if they get spooked good enough chances are those kids might be more willing to give up the money without a fight." Shalnark wondered if the Zoldyck was trying to earn approval with this idea of his own. The catch was figuring out how to combine both of their plans into one successful idea that would earn back their jenny, and then Shizuku offered up her own thought about how they can accomplish their personal mission.

"We could just ask them to give back the jenny."

"..." Silence quickly followed as the males wondered if she was actually serious about that idea. Considering how she acted they assumed the latter and not the former.

A mere couple of yards away the children were thinking about how they should split up their goods in order to get the most out of what had been stolen from not just the spiders, but also many other travelers who came here for refuge mostly from any authoritative figures. Meteor City served as a haven for wanted fugitives, and yet for children growing up here, it was anything but easy.

"Hey, how many times do I have to tell you, you big, annoying prick! Stop hoarding the food all to yourself!" The young girl who helped pickpocket Kurapika hissed at the biggest child sitting at the table. Kyodai, the kid also known as "tubby" was on the verge of tears along with feeling rather hungry at the moment. Being picked on for his usual habit of devouring most of the food they took away he felt like he deserved some more respect than he got from his fellow crooks.

The group had gathered to eat in celebration, each of the young members wonder how long they would need to live like this in order to eat and live for another day.

"Do you think we should consider finding a better way to eat, sister?" Todoh asked his sibling Tanda who almost fell back from her chair in surprise.

"You can't be serious about that?! When did you grow a conscious all of a sudden my dear dim-witted brother of mine."

"It's just when I saw what those people were buying I felt like was it right for us to rob them of that, and that blonde guy, in particular, looked like he could use some new clothing."

"Pfft, like they would even donate some of their funds just to give us something to fill our bellies. Needless to say, the only ones who can help us are ourselves."

Kalluto figured they were going by the standard of survival of the fittest, so the idea they would leave them with no jenny left bothered him on somewhat. Kurapika, however, decided to make the first move here with Kalluto and the others on standby in case the kids decided to run away.

"Ahh, its that guy we ripped off!"

"Hold a minute...I only came here to talk." Kurapika said with a smile knowing they wouldn't buy that, so why not stall until the others were more than ready to strike. Having no white flag on hand the Kurta held up his hands showing the kids there was nothing up his sleeves - although Hisoka didn't need a suit to hide any of his tricks.
"You must be pretty stupid mister! Now we can use you to get even more jenny." Tanda grinned as she ordered the other children to tie up Kurapika in rope, the unseen spiders wondered what Kurapika could do now in these binds.

"Alright you've proven that you will do anything to get something to eat, but if you don't mind me saying there is an alternative to all of this."

"Keep flapping your gums, I'll get my brother to stuff something in that big mouth of yours!" Kurapika didn't speak only accepting her demands in only to lure her and the others into his trap. As he "surrendered" Kurapika noticed all of the different goods that were stashed on the table along with the stolen jenny that "rightfully" belonged to the Phantom Troupe.

"I think he might bring his friends here to catch us all, Todoh." The co-leader spoke to her brother as she began to suspect this was indeed going according to plan. Breaking out a friendly grin Kurapika broke their attention by making small talk - his mind knew children could easily be distracted.

"First-time visitor here, so do any of you know local attractions or maybe a nice place to stay? Let me tell you no one have to smell whatever was dealt in there!" The kids began to giggle at Kurapika's way of saying such a line.

"There you go, Pika! You got that line from me!" Shalnark cheered on as he nearly blew the cover of himself, Shizuku, and Kalluto. His mouth was quickly covered by a paper doll as they other kids were caught up in Kurapika making light of his situation like he intended.

"Who cares about what you want mister. You're just a dumb moron we jacked for some of your cash nothing more." They felt like all of them had made it to the top of their small world and nothing could stop their streak of crime.

"You know this kind of reminds me of a group of guys and gals who also like to steal things: The Phantom Troupe."

"Who cares about those losers! Sure they might have killed those weird-ass things, but in a couple of years, we will be the most wanted thieves in the world! Right, brother?"

"Of course sister!" The siblings knew about them, however, Tanda felt like she and her brother could easily become more of an infamous group with enough years and experience under their belts.

"Interesting, and tell me how many people will you kill before any of you can even be considered to be on their level?" The mood in the place took on a more somber feeling, the smiles on the children's faces quickly disappeared.

"K-Kill? We just want to steal things to eat and live..." Todoh knew people might get killed around this city, but until the chimera ant incident, he's never experienced the feeling of death besides when his mother passed away, which forced his father to seek out a haven to raise his children in hence their move to Meteor City.

"Do you really think someone won't try and come back to get what was stolen from them, try and get you arrested, and then send you away to prison. That is unless they try and defend what belongs to them with force..."

"We...ugh..."

"Don't tell me you never heard about how the Phantom Troupe conducts their raids. Between the mass-murders, violent attacks, and lack of humanity toward their victims they clearly are in a league above whatever this group thinks it should be..." Kurapika suddenly had tape cover his mouth as
they were all getting pissed off with how little respect he was giving them.

"Perhaps we can start with you...I'm sure your friends won't miss you when you're gone." Tanda's arm was grabbed by her brother who didn't like where this conversation was heading along with the other children. Sure, their antics would cause some trouble which they didn't mind yet actually killing someone didn't sit right with them.

"Sister...this doesn't seem like something we should really think about doing. Look at him he's trying to scare us certainly, but it does not mean we should actually kill him for it." Kurapika only watched with eyes that judged their souls and minds, his thoughts pondered if these kids would turn into future serial killers like the phantom brigade...and himself.

"Shut up! This is the only way any of us are gonna survive in this world. We either fight or die...this is the future for all of us." Kurapika broke up the conversation with a muffled-up noise coming out of his taped mouth. Sighing Todoh removed the tape in quick fashion in order to understand what he wanted to say. That's when he began to laugh...and laugh...and laugh some more.

"You all really do sound like me...that's just funny."

"What is that supposed to mean exactly?" Tanda was ready to shut him up again if he didn't give an answer she did not want to hear.

"I used to have the life of a simple hunter, having the benefit of friends who keep my life from spiraling down into depression, and over the course of the last two months, losing everything that kept my mind in check. I suppose that my mind was lost a long time ago, but I am starting to understand what I'm becoming now. My arrival here in Meteor City; the group I've been working with over the past couple of weeks...they just happen to be the Phantom Troupe."

"Liar!" Two smacks to his cheeks followed his truthful comment about why he was here in this place. Tanda's brother was not so dismissive of Kurapika's suggestion considering the fact they were in town to help out with the pest problem.

"You likely were just in there with that girl with the dumb glasses, and that brat who looks like a lady. You and those friends of yours couldn't possibly be-"

"The Phantom Troupe? Well, you don't have to take my word for it just ask my "friends" about that."

Suddenly the place was filled with small sheets of paper meant to intimidate the children. Shalnark and Shizuku made their way in through the back while Kalluto marched in via the front door with all the paper moving around his body.

"That's the boy who looks like a drag-queen!? Why is he holding a paper fan?" Kyodai said while hiding behind Todoh.

"Whatever that's only paper nothing to worry about!" Tanda's confidence was broken as she saw him begin to move around with his paper confetti sending it near the kids with the intention of scaring them. Shalnark and Shizuku moved in to help cut the rope binding Kurapika and to make the final threat against them.

"Please don't hurt us we just wanted something to eat!" Todoh knew things had gone far enough.

"Y-Yeah we only have so much to dine on these days, and we all saw how much jenny you were carrying in your pockets..."
"That's the reason you stole from us? That's pretty ironic for thieves who stole from other thieves..."

As the kids saw Blinky hover about their goods ready to suck up everything they've gotten Shalnark quickly pulled out his Black Voice phone also playing along in the act of being a ruthless killer, which wasn't that difficult for someone like him.

"It has to be them...we just ripped-off the Phantom Troupe, sister."

"Oh, we are so fucke-"

"Don't move a muscle unless you want to end up without a single piece of food on this table."

Having the kids under their thumbs Kurapika and the others quickly learned about their situation of being on the verge of starvation, and it turned out Todoh and Tanda's father explained that they would need to get food on their own every once in a while. Shalnark knew Feitan and Nobunaga would understand what that felt like considering their backgrounds.

"Haven't you considering doing something legal to get food? I'm sure there are ways you can work to earn some food..." Kalluto knew they looked old enough to do a few small jobs around Meteor City. Granted, the chances of actually getting a job here that would provide enough food to eat was slim, but it wouldn't hurt to try.

"Fat chance that will happen! Kyodai will lose some pounds before the adults decide to let us live like normal kids."

"...I guess you want all of the stuff we took back..." Todoh sighed in defeat knowing they would be forced to return everything leaving them nothing in return.

"Tell me where did you get all that food?" Kurapika was curious about how they could have smuggled out this much meat for a dinner like this without being caught. Tanda explained they easily took advantage of the city while their attention was focused on dealing with the chimera ant problem making the stealing of these meals rather easy for them.

"Hmm you know there is another way you can get food to eat besides taking it from others. Barter with people, so you can exchange something for the food while they get something as well." The Kurta knew there were some items that could be valuable to the people living here, and if the children could get something to eat in return then that might be a better option for everyone. The other idea he suggested was they could start catching their food if they headed out to a forest area or near a lake.

"You mean like catching fish or small animals? That's so boring, though, and we want to become cool enough to steal everything just like you guys!"

"Hold on you're telling us you actually look up to us?" Shalnark certainly never came across many people who supported the Phantom Troupe or their actions besides either accomplices or allies like the Zoldyck family.

"We've heard so much about you guys in the news, and the fact you're all still alive is awesome. Including you umm weird guy who looks like a girl."

"I'm Kalluto Zoldyck, the person you are speaking to is really a boy..." Giving Todoh a sharp glare he introduced Kurapika as "Shalnark's brother" in the criminal organization. They believed that story but wondered why Kurapika felt different to them compared to the other spiders unaware of how unique his morality was compared to the rest of the group. With the misunderstanding cleared up, the kids let Kurapika and his allies get their jenny back and even offered to help them out if they needed...
anything else.

"I'm telling you this place really is treating us like celebrities, Pika!"

"You mean a bunch of children letting us eat with them is "celebrity" treatment?" The Kurta was at the very least grateful they were trying to mug them for everything they had now, and they managed to get the clothing from the small shop in peace. The only problem for Kurapika was maintaining the facade of being a sibling to Shalnark, which proved to be difficult when two real siblings started asking questions about him.

"So, when did you join your brother in becoming a hunter!?"

"It happened a few years ago...when I wanted to get revenge against someone..." The other blonde's eyes moved around having to mix together lies and truth in order to maintain his cover, wondering how long he would need to keep up the fake smile on his face when he spoke about Shalnark in a positive light. Meanwhile, Shizuku was eating up her plate without out trouble - a sign that using a vacuum was rather symbolic for her stomach Kyodai thought to himself when his hands were moving down to eat up more food to the protest of everyone else.

"Come on at least give us a chance before you finish off the rest of it!"

"Rather strange meat we're having tonight, and there seems to be a bone still left inside of this food." Kalluto never experienced eating meals like this, having gotten used to dining on prepared dishes instead. With a heavy heart, Kurapika continued eating with his most despised people in the entire world...or what he used to consider before his shift in attitude and reasoning.

- October 13th -

Looking up at the dirty-looking roof covering his and Kalluto's room the lone remaining Kurta in the world pondered what would happen next in this strange journey of his, and who he will run into today considering the many people, places, and locations he has visited so far. He also was happy to get brighter clothing since it was rather hot here compared to everywhere else he's been on this trip. Going into his bag he put on his new outfit, a white shirt with black squares on the middle and sides, gray pants covering the bottom, and finally black shoes to wear instead of his usual flats.

'Why am I still wearing these earrings...' The red jewelry never left his ears no matter the wardrobe he put onto himself. In a twisted way, he felt more like Chrollo Lucifer by keeping this look on himself, and he began to change his hairstyle making it less tamed than usual with his brush. Kalluto also became aware of Kurapika's increasing desire to have different kinds of outfits instead of the clothing he wore to honor his fallen clan.

"Is he becoming influenced by Chrollo into becoming like him?"

It wasn't just his style of outfits either, encouraging Kurapika further in his changing personality and ethics was how the head spider dealt with business. Kurapika learned things from him considering how the deal with the children was handled yesterday, the kids had no way of outwitting that strategy formed by the Kurta, and from what Shalnark told him Chrollo would have praised Kurapika's way of solving that little problem. More and more Kurapika was transforming into the kind of person he despised.

"Apparently Chrollo will be contacting us later in order to provide an update on his progress, even though he won't be arriving anytime soon he felt like speaking to you personally or that's what Shalnark said when he called earlier." Kalluto thought Kurapika was going to fall out of his small bed when he told him about that information since he wasn't up in the morning, unlike the Zoldyck.
"Here I thought he would just be a few days behind us, not this long of a waiting period is what I expected to hear...will the others be arriving at least?"

"Yes, and it seems like everyone else will be here in a matter of a week or two except for our leader."

The both of them were curious as to what Chrollo was up to while they were apart from him. Kalluto also didn't hear an outburst from his roommate when he said: "our leader" in his news to him, which made Kalluto wonder how much Kurapika has changed.

"Do you think there is a place in this city where we can train in secret, Kalluto?"

"Interesting...we both have the same idea in mind." The two heirs of famous bloodlines decided to head off to train by themselves since it had been a while since they could let loose without the others knowing about it since one of the unsaid rules was to keep your abilities a secret unless it was part of a mission or heist. Also by training, they could feel more free of the influence the spiders have on them when they usually spent a lot of time in recent days. That's when Tanda and Todoh stepped up to help them out with their private exercises.

"At the very least we have people rooting for us now..." Kalluto certainly was not expecting children to be cheering them on as they walked into the hideout to where the young thieves called their home. But for now, Kurapika and Kalluto would need to consider it a home as well until Chrollo arrives in the city. While they split up to work out in different rooms Tanda sneaked off to spy on Kurapika while he was working out.

'H's really Shalnark's brother?' She knew they had a similar look, but it seemed like judging from the abs on his chest he might have more of a build than his "brother" in her eyes. As he looked at a spider to activate his special eyes Tanda wondered what he was planning to do with the broken modeling statues he brought into the room, so when she watched the blonde man wrap silver chains around the neck of one doll with the chains being connected to his hands shocked her.

'That's so bizarre, had they been real then this boy would be choking this doll's throat...' She hadn't realized she was observing the last remaining Kurta in action. Kurapika now eager-to-vent himself let out his anger and rage into this helpless punching bag that resembled a man...in fact, it looked similar to Chrollo with his black hair and facial features hence the following reaction from Kurapika.

"My god is he trying to kill someone!!"

She noticed the many scars he was giving to the figure, the slashes mainly to the face despite it not bleeding made Tanda shiver up in fear. It was almost like watching some butcher up a dead animal into pieces, and she was trying to figure out what grudge he might have with someone unaware the person was the very man she idolized among the other troupe members. Then she noticed he was swinging the other doll around with his chains like he did to Zazan, the same kind of actions before his mind spiraled into temporary madness.

Instead of lashing out more Kurapika simply slumped down on the floor with the doll he used for his anger next to him; imagine what his fellow criminals would think if they saw the proud Kurapika in this state-on the verge of tears and sadness. Tanda felt like going out to support him, but remember she didn't know what was going on in his head thus her running in right now could be a bad idea. Her concerns were quickly put to an end when he got back up to continue striking the doll with his hands continuing on with his training. She quickly became impressed by the newer "spider" of the Phantom Troupe.

Meanwhile, in the other room Todoh observing Kalluto dancing around with his own "sparring
partner” in the form of another doll figurine, if only he could get closer without getting cut up by the flying pieces of paper floating around the Zoldyck. His training mirrored Kurapika's approach to combat as he also sliced apart the helpless figure in a slow, purposeful, and painful way. Now he was glad the others didn't risk getting this kind of treatment for not returning the stolen jenny.

'He really is dancing with paper...' Despite never hearing about this new recruit before he was quickly impressed by his level of skill being used in his attacks, the determination in his eyes showed how much effort he put into the strikes with his paper fans. Before long Kalluto had reduced the training dummy into a mere torso without any limbs attached to its body.

Time passed on leaving Kurapika and Kalluto with nothing else to do besides speaking with the children, teaching them other survival skills, and learning more about their different pasts. They had gotten so invested in the conversation with the siblings they were unaware of Shalnark running over with his phone being waved around in the air.

"Come on guys! The Boss is on the line, and he really needs to talk with you two!" Shizuku also joined him if only to get away from Phinks and Nobunaga who got into a fight with each other at the hotel. Kalluto decided to answer first while moving away from the kids for some privacy while Shizuku decided to explain what exactly was going on with their organization.

"Boss can't come here for a while, but Paku and her team will come in his place. Apparently, he needs to be on his own for a while..."

Kurapika wasn't sure why that had to happen considering he usually didn't operate without his subordinates, so he was very interested in learning what Chrollo was scheming. Shalnark also didn't have much information besides the reason involving his status as an official hunter, which made Kurapika remember something the leader of the spiders told him earlier.

"Does that mean he's trying to become..." Kurapika couldn't see how that could happen with the background Chrollo Lucifer has, the crimes he's committed alone should not allow him to enter the exams. The answers quickly came to him when Kalluto came back to hand the phone over to the Kurta, and he placed the phone next to his ear.

"I suppose you should hear the bad news first. The next pair of scarlet eyes is in the hands of a religious cult, the leader of which needs the eyes for some kind of ritual meaning they might get ruined if you don't take them back in time. Don't worry you will learn about where they are shortly thanks to the Zoldyck family's resources. Now, the good news is you won't have to worry about me being there for a while since the operation will be run by my second-in-command. As for what I will be doing...you will see me again when I become an official hunter."

Kurapika thought he was joking about this...

Was it a lie?

Just a trick of words...

Chrollo wasn't telling him the truth...

Before he could say more a single picture stood out on the touchscreen. Shalnark was more concerned about his smartphone getting damaged instead of Kurapika's reaction to seeing Chrollo Lucifer, the leader of the Phantom Troupe standing next to Menchi the Gourmet Hunter of the association.

- October 15th - The Usual Spot
In the following days, Kurapika had come to understand Chrollo's plan to infiltrate the Hunter's Association and fulfill the arrangement made with Hisoka in order to ensure the safety of the Phantom Troupe. Despite their concerns about his own safety, the leader of the spider assured his allies that he would be fine on his own, his usual nature of not caring about what happens to him didn't lessen their concerns about this scheme. In the meantime he wanted the group to hunt down the last remaining eyes left in the world, and thankfully quite a few had been gathered into one location for their convenience.

"This is it! My chance for redemption against the Divine Blades..." With one of the last two serving as a guard for the group trying to capture the Scarlet Eyes: The Omekata Cult. Nobunaga saw the opportunity to fight and kill one of them successful, and prove himself in the eyes of his friends and comrades. Kurapika just wanted to finally complete his collection of the pupils of his deceased clan members.

The cult was planning on meeting in a private location to get the next pair of eyes from an underworld contact, so the leader of the cult decided to conduct the meeting in Meteor City. Chrollo explained that he wished for someone to infiltrate this cult in order to find where the rest of the eyes were located, and then remove any trace of this group since they were still operating under the radar. The plan couldn't be formed until Pakunoda and her team arrived in the city giving Kurapika and the others more time to relax and prepare for the upcoming heist.

'How many more people will I need to kill this time?'

Kurapika's hands had become stained with fresh blood, so it would make sense that he would need to slaughter again during this upcoming operation...only now he was becoming numb to this sensation-the notion of murdering someone no longer was torturing him. In a strange way, Chrollo had given him an order despite not requesting for Kurapika to kill everyone himself rather his other subordinates. Even so, the Kurta knew if this cult held many of the eyes of his clansmen then he might not have a choice besides obeying.

'Why? After everything that I've been through...why can't I just kill them? Goddamn it!'

Even with the rules of his Judgement Chains binding him he should have let control of that mental restraint by this point. Worse than simply tolerating the other spiders he was beginning to actually like being around them, the dreams that made it difficult to sleep no longer affected him, and he was working beside them more often than before this arrangement was created.

'Gon...please watch out for the others...and be careful...'

He knew Chrollo wasn't able to harm his friends, but the same can't be said about his friends. Chances are they would punch him in the face when they see him, but they might have other problems to worry about than him. As the chimera ant race became the major focus of the media, the Hunter Association got wind about a possible new threat born from the queen ant that was rising in power.

"Don't think Boss is gonna get himself killed brat. If he could manage to remain alive this long the exams are not gonna kill him." Nobunaga spoke out when he spotted Kurapika sulking in his small corner where he was reading away from the children who rented out their small base to their idols. The samurai was more than willing to use the kids for supplying him with wax to shine his choice of weapon in battle. Despite not liking children thanks to being around Kurapika at the very least Nobunaga could tolerate brats who "obeyed" his orders.

"At the very least the old geezers aren't gonna send people off on a suicide mission. If the Hunter Association really is prepared to take matters into their own hands why not let them deal with this
mess?" Phinks said while telling Kyodai about one memory he had with Uvogin back when they still lived in this place, his eyes lit up when he explained the part where they need to escape from the officers chasing after them both.

"That is when Boss orchestrated a riot in order to help us get away with several cans of beer for the night. When it was bedtime Uvogin was so pissed drunk he fell over right on Nobu's body, and used his outfit as sheets to sleep in!" Despite his audience being around the age of 12, the child was cheering by the end of his short tale about how himself, Nobu, and Phinks ended up butt-naked in the morning with Chrollo Lucifer simply chuckling at the sight of his indecent looking followers. Those days seemed easy and more innocent compared to the current world he's living in.

"I'm guessing you've never considered letting go of that habit, Phinks. You know such a beverage will degrade your body and senses over time."

"Coming from the virgin who's never even taken a sip of the good booze right, Pika!"

His hands shook around the cold steel can in his hands, clutching the chilly beer tightly Phinks poured another sip into his mouth slowly as he watched the Kurta give him a defiant stare having been mocked for not accepting Phinks' offer to get drunk. Placing the book in front of his face, which had been about two people who had become attached to each other, but one of them was a vampire while the other had been a werewolf. Despite coming from different worlds and backgrounds two people came together in genuine love.

"Two unique worlds...and yet they came together for a common cause..."

Placing himself back into his current book Kurapika wondered how this kind of tale would end for the bizarre couple, and wondering there was parallel to his own situation with the spiders. Ignoring the laughter of the children Kurapika felt like contacting his friends again to ask if they might know about Chrollo being involved with the Hunter's Association. He was thinking that maybe he could warn them about this plan as well, but that could also make his own situation worse.

"Hey, bro! How do you feel about helping me out with Tanda?" Shalnark yelled out to his "sibling" as the young girl was anxious to get their help with a small request she needs help with today. It was actually a personal "mission" she had to do, and she couldn't involve the others because of the nature of this operation.

"Do you two know what you can put on a person's grave?"

Her intention was to pay tribute to her mother who was buried in this city when she got sick, which explained to Kurapika and Shalnark why father left shortly after she was put into her grave. It was the second year to the day when she passed on, so this year she would provide something to add to the grave since last year her brother gave a few flowers. Deciding to rely on these two for assistance, for this reason, Tanda revealed the jenny she earned by helping out an elderly woman with her pets, the advice Kurapika gave to her paid off.

"I thought you wanted to steal whatever you wanted to give to your deceased parent."

"That wouldn't honor the kind of woman she was, Kurapika. This is the proper way to cherish her..." Seeing how she was on the verge of tears Shalnark broke up the mood by asking if she wouldn't mind getting him some new tech for mobile devices. Either he was trying to piss her off purposefully or he was trying to make her calm down Kurapika could not be sure.

"Do you think might appreciate a flag or some color that was her favorite?"
"Well, mamma did enjoy the color yellow, since it was what she wanted to wear during her wedding with daddy." She remembered her mother speaking about that day is the happiest moment in not just her life but in fact her whole family's lives. That was before everything snowballed into hell for all of them, but she realized getting a nice yellow flag with flowers might do the trick. As she went into a small shop where Tanda wanted to get the items Shalnark asked Kurapika if he was beginning to feel homesick.

"Gon and the others can handle themselves, but you should be worried about Chrollo. Those exams are nothing to take lightly..."

"Oh yeah, and when he gets back that will make all three of us hunters!" The Kurta's eyes couldn't roll back in his skull any harder at the moment.

"Ohhh! We can also take official assignments, and even hang out in Heavens Arena legally!"

"Oh sure, and hey maybe we should become combatants while we're at it!"

"Not a bad idea, Pika!"

"...I despise you Shalnark."

"I love you too bro!" Their short conversation was interrupted when Tanda wanted to know their opinion on the flag and flowers she bought with her money, which they approved of despite not knowing how to appeal to the tastes of women.

"You know if you want four-eyes to like you more then you should consider learning how to earn a girl's appeal." Kurapika thought she was joking about that, but Tanda knew how they looked at each other when they were in the same room. She didn't know if their future would end up with similar results as her parents, but she knew there was a connection building with Shizuku and Kurapika. She hoped the relationship would bloom with enough time and effort, and despite being too young to really understand the concept of love she knew they would make a fine couple.

"Well, the goal was pretty easy, but then again I haven't visited the grave in quite some time." What she didn't expect was a bunch of litter, trash, and other things covering up the grave where several people had been burned including her mother. They had to process this for a moment as not one of them thought any of this could really be what they were looking at, something like this could only be a horrible nightmare or imagination, but here they all were looking at a ruined graveyard.

"Who the hell did this?! Why are there holes in this place? What's with all this trash?" As she moved over to her mother's grave she noticed there were a few dead bugs moving around it, but there was no kind of body in the hole instead a series of violent quakes began to tremble the very ground they were standing on. As the surface gave way to reveal a giant worm coming out of the ground. While there were a few small shifts in the ground earlier no one in Meteor City expected these bugs were lying underground until now. Tanda was about to throw a rock at the beast until Kurapika dragged her back with his steel chains for her own safety.

"Chimera ant-styled earthworms? They are just making monsters out of any kind of animal these days, but that would explain the strange nen I felt earlier today..." Shalnark sighed knowing that these creatures would be a pain to deal with in combat. That was before they noticed the end of their tails looked to be dripping with a yellow-looking substance.

"Bet that is some kind of poison, Pika?"

"That would make sense or it could be acid."
"I don't give a goddamn what these bastards are...they ruined her resting place so kill them all!" Her yelling inspired the crowd marching at the site of the earthquake. No one was prepared for the ants to show up like this, but they all felt like getting revenge after seeing what the ants did to their make-shift graveyard.

"It is the time we kill these sons of bitches! First their bitch queen breeds these monsters, next her offspring mutates are people, and finally, these inhuman parasites want to feed off our dead! Are we gonna let them get away with all of this?!"

"No!"

"Not a chance in hell!"

"Game over, man. Game over!"

"Who the hell said that?!"

The crowd only needing pitchforks and torches to match the stereotypical angry mob out to hunt a monster, but this "Frankenstein won't be killed with small knives or pipes being held by the city's civilians. That is where the Phantom Troupe came in...

"Well, it looks like we've gotten extra work to do today, Nobu."

"I suppose this will make a nice warm-up for the upcoming assignment. Shizuku, you and the other brats can handle the clean-up when we're done here."

Shizuku frowned at the suggestion of not getting involved in the battle feeling like she could do more than suck up corpses into her bottomless vacuum. Kurapika and Shalnark felt the same way, so he pulled out a bat-shaped antenna to stick into one of the few civilians brandishing a gun with them to control his body via Black Voice. As for the Kurta, he learned something from Zazan, and as he watched the worms try to sling around the yellow goo onto people he knew what he needed to remove from their bodies.

"Does anyone have something that is sharp enough to cut through steel?" He said while trying to keep his eyes from turning red in anger, the citizens all shook their heads while the child thieves knew exactly what Kurapika could use in combat. Kyodai ran off to get the machete while the others kids would help keep the monsters busy with their own kind of tricks.

"Hah, these bastards are nothing like those ants serving that queen." Phinks was easily holding the beasts back with a few punches, winding up his arm to increase the power of their impact.

"You saying these guys are much tougher, Phinks?"

"I know what you're thinking...not a chance in hell these asshole bugs will beat us, Nobu!"

The worms were moving underground to snatch up some of the people watching, and Tanda suddenly being sucked into the ground nearly being eaten alive by the worm.

"Sister!"

Todoh ran back over to Tanda while trying to avoid the sinkholes being formed in the sandy ground. Tanda was struggling to draw herself out of the pit before the teeth latched onto her short legs, but the sand was making it difficult to climb out for her sake.

"Brother...please be safe..."
"No! Don't you dare give up!"

"He's right!" Kurapika ran over to the girl and threw out his chains for her to grab onto helping her out once again. Using all of his strength he managed to keep her out of the jaws of death literally for a second time. Growling out Kurapika was getting tired of dealing with these ants and yelled out for someone to give him an explosive of any kind.

"Brother..."

"Sister!" They embraced each other while they left the extermination of these monsters to the professionals. Instead of grenades or items that would cause explosions all they could provide was fire made with matches and sticks.

"...Screw it give me the stuff!" As Shalnark was providing cover with the civilian toting his gun around to draw the attention of the worms Kurapika took the fire in order to harm the ants. Despite the scolding singe of the make-shift matches the worms began to grab hold of the civilians, their bodies were slowly being devoured by the monsters.

"Son of a bitch...alright that's it!" Nobunaga decided to end this before things got messier, but his En radius slice couldn't hurt these monsters.

"Their skin...it must have become hardened somehow...no kind of sword will cut through that." Kurapika realized that removing their limbs would be impossible of Nobunaga couldn't cut into the worms.

"Then we have to hurt them on the inside! Kurapika, hand me one of those torches!" Phinks knew they could likely feel the burn on their tongues, so he launched one right into the mouth of a worm when it came down to eat him whole. Nobunaga took advantage of the heat, his mind getting inspiration about how to use a more effective method of using his weapon. As he placed some paper on his blade the swordsmen put the match under it creating a flaming sword to battle the chimera ants. The challenge was difficult for Nobunaga, and yet he was thrilling these beasts were providing worthy training for him.

"Amazing the Phantom Troupe truly are some of the world's deadliest men alive..."

"They took down that false queen, this group has proven they are indeed what the best Meteor City can offer. Chimera Ants! Your days of pushing us humans down are coming to an end!"

"Yeah yeah, big fancy rousing speech! Now, get your asses out of the way and let the pros handle this!" Phinks knew the citizens were prideful, which meant they could easily die because of their newfound bravery. The children and adults knew they couldn't ever reach the amount of carnage and destruction members of the spider could achieve in a single assault. The sight of watching such powerful beasts getting burned alive, stabbing from the inside out, and having their limbs removed thanks to the efforts by the thieves/killers was almost breathtaking for them.

'So much death...always around me...' Kurapika could not escape it, the specter would never leave his shadow no matter where he was in this world. A hooded figure with a skull for a face came into his mind only instead of killing him it took away others around him, except for the people who've only made his mental state deteriorate further by the day.

'No, no, no! I can't let it go on anymore, that by sticking with these guys will ensure everything will just work out fine.' Kurapika's mind suddenly stopped while he was in the middle of burning one of the worms, face slack and his body was swaying around despite the situation he was in. The border of insanity and his moral conscious was being tested once again, but he would not let the pressure
buckle and shatter his mind. He needed to save lives even if they were on good terms with his arch-

nemesis and his group.

By the end of this day lives had been lost, and yet Meteor City was no longer plagued by the chimera ants rather a group of murderers calling themselves the spider. It wasn’t a surprise that even in the middle of the rising threat of the chimera ants, the rest of the world still feared the seemingly invincible Phantom Troupe...along with their youngest recruits.

- October 18th -

Another day under the sun in a sandy desert city meant Kurapika was still alive. He'd no longer get angry at seeing the members of the troupe walking around this place or talking with him except for when they got on his nerves, the ones mainly still being Feitan and Nobunaga. That's why Kurapika was looking at a spider crawling around near the "baseball field" with made up bases from old boxes, the ball was made out of several rolls of toilet paper and a small ball on the inside, and for the bats, Kyodai was holding a small pipe.

"Alright let's make this quick I know the world's most wanted criminals don't want to spend all days with us brats!"

"Relax sister I think we will have a fine game that won't take that long." Kurapika certainly hoped that was the case before his eyes could turn red by observing the many spiders crawling around the outside portion of the kid's "secret" hideout. Shizuku certainly was happy that teams went by gender since many of the boys thought the girls didn't have a chance of winning, the exceptions being Tanda's brother, Kalluto, Shalnark, and Kurapika who knew better than to underestimate the girls. It turned out both sides were good with Todoh and Kalluto getting a few points in the game, but Shizuku and Tanda easily tied things back up.

"Alright, bro! Just take me home and we'll be in the lead!" Shalnark cheered on for his "sibling" as Tanda was up to the mound for pitching while Shizuku was behind Kurapika to watch with the kitchen oven mitts to hold the ball if Kurapika got a strike. While the Kurta didn't feel like playing this game at the very least he figured this would calm him down not to mention help out the children by having a somewhat normal experience for once.

"They should be acting like children instead of future murderers and criminals. Certainly, they shouldn't be looking up to them...or me.' His thoughts allowed the pitcher to give him a strike while he was distracted by himself.

"Come on blonde get in the game!"

"You need to win this one for the boys!"

Hearing the jeers of his teammates Kurapika had to gather himself in order to not let down the boys who were actually invested in doing a non-violent activity for once. Watching the home-made ball move in slow motion Kurapika timed his swing. The ball just managed to get past him earning him another strike meaning he was down by two in the count.

"Blondy can't hit the side of a barn!"

"Shalnark's brother is gonna blow it for us!"

The jeers only got louder as the pressure was slowly building in Kurapika's mind. Despite this game being the most unimportant thing he needed to do, the tension was drawing the Kurta into proving his critics wrong. Watching the spider moving down his focus was drawn back into the game, but his
eyes had turned red when he swung at the ball this time, the sound of a ball making contact with steel followed by the round sphere moving up into the air heading into the outfield. None of the kids noticed since they were concerned about the fair ball moving through the sky.

"Run you, brilliant blonde bro of Shalnark, run, run, run!" He quickly made it to second base, the chance to go to third was clear however the girls managed to find the ball that was still in play. Taking a daring move he ran towards third even when Tanda called over to get Kurapika tagged out before he could make it to the base. He jumped toward the base, reaching out his hand to grab it just in case he couldn't make it in time knowing that is what more famous players would do in this game. Looking up he saw the girl on the plate out as everyone saw that he managed to get to third safely.

"It seems you're not that much of a geek like you bro, Pika." Tanda had to admit Kurapika was impressing here more and more even if she never heard about him. The fact she still remained unsure about that momentary glare of red meant she would be invested in learning about him. Shizuku was also pleased to see Kurapika behaving so well, and wondering if a "date" might not seem that hard to ask for in the future with the extra time they had in this city.

Finally, the game was over, the fact each score was the same meant it was a draw, however, the baseball game had to end considering the sun was close to setting in the sky. It was also important the spiders got back together since more of their comrades would be arriving at the earliest possible time of tomorrow morning. That meant they would need to travel for a couple of days via another ferry. That also meant time spent with the citizens here would be more valuable to Kurapika and the spiders.

"That was pretty fun, and you weren't half bad Kurapika. Still, I think me and the other girls could have won if the game continued." Tanda gave the blonde a smirk once she saw how dirty he looked from playing around with the others, and yet she also looked rather unclean herself with smears covering her face.

"Yeah, sister I'm sure we would have lost to your team already whatever makes you feel better." Todoh quickly moved out of the way as his sister aimed the baseball right at him while Kyodai was nursing a cold soda as he felt exhausted from today's game. He was grateful that he got to play since it meant he could shed off a few pounds while not being picked on for his weight since he did play as the catcher for the boy's team.

"Do you mind if I can have a can of soda," Kalluto never had gotten to drink something like this before in his life. Being near someone who didn't live in a prosperous home, a wealthy family to watch over his actions, but most of all someone who was not acting like an elite person compared to everyone he knew who lived in a luxurious existence seemed refreshing to him. Even better was the fact he didn't seem to pick on his feminine look, but Kalluto figured he didn't want to be considered overweight again.

"You sure you want this stuff? Once you get hooked it will be easy to put on a couple of pounds from this drink alone." He didn't want the professional assassin to end up like him.

"Not really all one needs to maintain themselves in moderation. I'm guessing you haven't been able to control yourself, Kyodai?"

"Do the kids treat me with respect to my size?" Indeed they wouldn't give him much of that until he lost several pounds, his body looking less like a round sphere. The children once more were left with a strong feeling of respect toward the wanted fugitives as the night finally came down over the sandy place Kurapika had considered "home" for a few weeks. After taking a long cold shower Kurapika was sitting on a bed pouring his imagination into a brand new book to read.
"Faust? I've never heard of a title like that, Pika." Kalluto knew his blonde roommate enjoyed reading long-spanning tales like this, but he figured that he might be willing to read something about a culture he was familiar with instead of this. Turning a page Kurapika tried to describe what made him invested in learning more about this certain book.

"The main character is a scholar, Faust. He feels dissatisfied with his life, which results in him forming a contract with the devil himself." While he was only a few pages in Shalnark felt like spoiling a few details about the book.

"That's how he wants to deal with his boredom?!"

"Not just that, but apparently his soul being given to Mephistopheles for new desires and knowledge. Thinking about what a deal with a devil implies I can't help but wonder how my deal with my own personal demon will end..." The arrangement that changed his and Chrollo's lives for either the better or worse, the jury is still out on that outcome.

"I guess time will tell you how this ends, but we certainly can't turn back the clock on our decisions..." Nodding Kurapika brought up a passage from the book, to sum up, his thoughts on the matter along with the possible future ahead.

"Age is no second childhood—age makes plain, Children we were, true children we remain."

- October 19th -

A new day had brought the regathered strength of the spider and now were almost complete in number except for the most important part of all: Chrollo Lucifer. That didn't mean they would be hurting without his presence; the spider was, in fact, stronger than ever. It was natural they would seek out more dangerous prey in order to help to be one of their own become part into their fold, which would also benefit themselves considering what other things the cult has been scheming lately. Naturally, the world had slowly realized the Phantom Troupe was still around, so they figured why not come out of the shadows in a big way.

"You up for this trip, brat? I know how you think that you're above murdering people with that "conscious" of yours." As usual, the samurai was sneering at the blonde with all of his venom filling his lungs, but he was in a better mood now that the rest of the group had arrived in Meteor City in one piece. Dealing with Kurapika and the other younger member felt like being a babysitter, and Nobunaga certainly was glad to get back to doing what he loved the most...killing humans, not bugs.

"At least I've been able to disguise my hated for each of your monsters, but there is one thing I can say about you, Nobunaga. You don't beat around the bush..." Indeed the samurai never did lie or hide his true feelings often, the trait was something Kurapika almost found redeemable about the older man.

"The gift of a silver tongue...I guess that's why you're in Zetsu. Can't let that cover of being someone other than "Shalnark's brother" get blown ahh, kid?"

"That certainly is not in the laws of my Judgement Chain, but then again I certainly can't refrain from calling you an unevolved ape."

"Why you little..." Kurapika certainly was glad the others were here now, the words he's been feeling like saying could finally be let free. In a way just having this small chance to express himself felt like he was no longer confined to the imaginary box that was created under Chrollo's reconditioning for Kurapika's mind. He certainly hadn't earned his "freedom" more like he was given a moment of belief that he was not bound by the commandments on his heart.
"I might not be able to hurt you physically, but it can't mean I won't imagine watching your body get ripped apart by those people you've been wanting to hurt all this time."

"You think this sword won't stab one of those swordsmen in the heart. How dare you underestimate me and my skills!"

"You mean the skills that nearly resulted in your death? Face it, Nobu! Everyone will think you're a butt-monkey until you prove them wrong..." Kurapika knew the others wouldn't give him any respect until he proved that he deserved any in return whether or not he kills one of the Divine Blades, but even then the last remaining Kurta won't give him that kind of satisfaction. In his eyes, he was just another person who should have died by his hands, the beholder of the eyes that witnessed the kind of slaughter the spiders were capable of doing...

"Everyone will see why you're just an arrogant punk, which will prove me right when you turn on us just to save those precious friends of yours."

"What about your friends...oh that's right Uvo."

"Don't call him that you little bastard!" He couldn't believe how brave he was acting considering the short-temper Nobunaga had on the subject of his fallen comrade, his friend who had been killed by the very person who was simply reading a book in the same room, and with an uncaring look on his face.

"Like I honestly care about how you feel...none of you shed a tear when you killed my own clan, so why the hell should I treat that man with any respect."

"You're still on about that crap! Look, if you still feel salty then fight me here and now!"

"Trying to get me killed again? Either you really are that damn stupid or you want to piss me off out of boredom."

Hiding his scarlet glare behind the book Kurapika knew better than to give into such simple emotions, the benefit of being around a pack of criminals was learning to control himself along with how to manipulate people to his advantage. In his mind, Nobunaga was harmless to him despite the man reaching down to draw out his weapon for sheer intimidation. To his surprise Pakunoda stepped into the room with a lit cigarette in hand, she glared at the sword getting drawn from the hilt and interrupted whatever might be happening.

"Saved by the bell, because let me tell you if the chance comes up we fight one-on-one you will be chopped into pieces like the rest of your worthless clan. Heh even now I could hear the screaming of those weak girls, so easy to cut, and I enjoyed watching them bleed out..." The air grew thick as Pakunoda knew Nobunaga was a brave fool to dare Kurapika like that, but he didn't buy into the samurai's game simply turning another page in the book he was reading.

"Bastard..." Feeling ballsy he tried stabbing the page to hurt Kurapika on "accident" instead of that however he was quickly smacked in the head by the book with a red-eye Kurta ready to reap the rewards of fighting in "self-defense" meaning it was now open season on Nobunaga.

"Enough! Both of you need to stop acting like children...look both of you hate each other, and that likely won't change. Still, if you both want to get what matters to you right now. Nobu, you want to kill a Divine Blade? Kurapika, you want to retrieve the rest of your clan's items and eyes?" Both of them knew she was trying to calm down the situation is that she was the second-in-command of the spider's operations.
"Grow up and handle things like men! Chrollo is not here right now, and I know he wouldn't want things to operate differently in his absence, Nobu." She placed her hands on her hips while she was in the middle of scolding these two once again.

"As for you Kurapika you surely have learned to tolerate this man's actions over the past few weeks. Now, while his comments just a moment ago were uncalled for," She ignored the hateful glare provided to her by Nobunaga while continuing with her lecture.

"It does not excuse this clear violation of our rules-"

"I'm not a real member. Nobunaga, Feitan, and hell even your leader is aware of the fact that I'm not a true spider."

"And yet, the coin in your possession suggests otherwise." She knew that was more than merely a simple token of kindness by Chrollo, the fact he was all but accepted into their ranks albeit it on a "trial" period was significant. The next few missions would be crucial in determining if Kurapika was worthy of the black ink most of the members had on themselves. He didn't think he would ever consider the idea of getting a tattoo, but both herself and the spider head wondered if that mindset would change soon.

"Our next mission will be to retrieve more of the scarlet eyes, but there will be opposition there waiting for us. The world knows we are still alive, so they will try now more than ever to eliminate us. That means we need to depend on each other more than ever before in order to survive for the sake of our survival..." She sighed knowing that seemed impossible with two personalities in the room always clashing with each other. Both Nobunaga and Kurapika couldn't deny the fact they wanted their goals completed despite knowing it would involve working together now more than ever.

"I know you want to kill us more than anything, Kurapika. The only thing I can ask would be to hold onto your hate for a while longer until we reclaim the remaining eyes."

"You can't be serious about this! He will just cut and run the second he gets those stupid eyeballs back! Hell, the boy might even try killing Boss and running back to his bratty friends!"

"Do you want to die in shame or in the heat of battle? Chances are even if you fought this boy right now he would have the upper hand even with the restrictions on his chains..." She knew that underestimating the Kurta would prove fatal as the most of the other spiders who've gotten to know more about his violent streak.

"You're lucky Paku is gifted with diplomacy, kid." Nobunaga left the admitting defeat while the older woman sighed out in relief. Looking at the unwilling accomplice she was surprised at how he went back to reading his book like he wasn't about to fight the heated samurai.

"Here to provide another "therapy" session?" His tone felt rather casual, even slightly mocking to Pakunoda who took a puff of her cigarette with smoke coming from her mouth.

"Actually I'm going to provide you with the information about our next target. Do you want me to shoot you with a Memory Bomb?"

"Sure just blow my brains out while you're at it like the rest of my clan..."

"Hate me if you wish, but I simply follow my orders provided by our Boss. Unlike Nobu's suggestion not all of us took pleasure in murdering the helpless...we are not without a conscious."

"Funny you say that when your group is known to the rest of the world as a pack of cold-blooded
monsters in human skin." Huffing out his feelings Kurapika tried to ignore her by diving back into his chosen literature to read before getting in breakfast. Sitting down next to him Pakunoda looked at the place she had left a long time ago, the memories of a younger version of herself being enthralled by the words of a younger Chrollo Lucifer about the world they would take for themselves over the course of several years.

"This cult wants to use the Scarlet Eyes to read some kind of tablets uncovered recently. If the rumors are indeed true about them, the knowledge might detail certain artifacts located on the Dark Continent. Or in all likelihood, it could be the ramblings of false prophets justifying their choice in religion." Chrollo shrugged knowing at least another pair of eyes would be returned to the rightful owner after this job.

"Dark Continent!" He couldn't believe that place might be connected with his deceased clan like the Clan believed, but he knew better than to trust word of mouth from two very unreliable sources. Already he wanted to reclaim the eyes, but should there really be a connection to that unknown world then he needed to learn more about this cult.

"We've discussed what could be the best method of breaking into their society, and in a way that would not raise too much suspicion about us. Naturally, we felt like you should understand the plan we've come up with..." Before the day was over with Kurapika would wish he had gotten shot in the skull. It would also be the last time he would be around the crusaders of Meteor City for a while since before he met Chrollo Lucifer. Their next destination would be into the hornet's nest of a society of sinners claiming to be pure of nature.

- October 24th - Omekata Cult Temple

"The promised day has arrived, and with this moment has come to a fortune from the heavens above!" A bald-headed man shouted out to his brethren in this society of "religious" followers in the ways of the sacred eye. Ever since the fall of the Kurta Clan, their voices, activity, and overall attention had died down. That changed with their "shipment" given by the Phantom Troupe in a surprising turn of events. Pakunoda sent up the drop-off, a single box crate, but the item contained within was more valuable than any kind of artifact that could be sold on the black market.

"Hurry up and open it you fools! Despite the holes in the package, I doubt it can breathe all that well." One of the head zealots of this cult observed the lower-ranking member pry open the tall box while a girl remained in her position watching from behind a see-through curtain. Out of her one good eye, she wondered if this was indeed the genuine article or some trick by the spiders to fool them, but indeed the naked truth was revealed to them all. A naked Kurapika was slumped in the cargo crate with cuts, bruises, and gashes over his body.

"I can't believe they were hiding this all along, the last remaining Kurta is still alive!"

"No wonder they faked their own deaths if it meant getting a payoff for this kind of treasure."

"Finally our dreams will come true!" All of the cultists looked like sharks who smelled fresh prey swimming in the sea, and the figurehead of the group was hoping that she could find "salvation" in this child. Before anyone could make a move a tall younger gentleman walked in front of the boy drawing out his weapon that was sparking with electricity: The Divine Blade member Jikoku Jin.

"This is the prick who killed Tamon and drove Zojo crazy? Ahahahahaha! You've got to be shitting me!" The blonde man knew this "item" had been damaged to make it easier to put into this box however he was more than happy to see the defeated Kurapika remaining still. Jabbing his weapon into his arm he felt like playing with this boy, the idea of giving him a few rounds of shock treatment seemed exciting.
"Enough! You were brought here as protection in case the Phantom Troupe decided to break their agreement, so leave our guest alone." The calm and authoritative voice belonged to a girl named Toshi "The All Seeing" Teki. She was the High Priestess of the cult at only the age of 14, but that was because she had been physically and mentally raped into believing this role by the other cult members. In truth she was just as much of a puppet at the entire cult was to their own self-delusions about finding salvation through the sacred sight of the eye.

"Heh you mean you could see that I was going to hurt this boy with that fancy "sight-seeing" oracle chick? You might be happy to get this boy for your fucked-up cult, but I'm not gonna be happy until I make him suffer." Despite her sight not being in good shape, the tone Jikoku spoke in to let her know that he could be troublesome for her group.

"We will get what the boy possesses soon enough, and only then will you get to have him!" Ordering the swordsmen out of the room she wanted to get a better look at their prized Kurta. Looking at the unconscious blonde with her eye which wasn't covered by her long hair she was impressed by his beauty and body.

'He certainly has built himself up to survive for this long. He looks rather handsome even in my blurry sight.' The other cultists simply wanted him to read the ancient scrolls so they could remove his eyes from his skull, but Toshi wanted to study him more beforehand.

"Take him into my chambers," She ordered knowing that he would need some care until he was ready to comply with their wishes since his eyes were now more valuable than her own as the cult's oracle. Watching her followers drag the young man away she wondered if there might be another reason she wanted to observe him in a more private setting...
Kurapika's descent into madness continues while he gets closer to completing one of his goals in life, but will a possible reunion with old faces hinder that progress?

"W-Why did you stab me like that?"

Were the first words spoken by a very injured Kurta who was resting in the head priestess' room in this temple after being removed from the box he came here in. His last memories had someone from the spiders giving him a nice slice across his chest adding to the many wounds covering his body. His eyes quickly darted around trying to understand how he ended up a different location than on the ferry boat he was traveling on a few days ago. His mind knew why he needed to come here, but his body was still unsure how the previous events led him into this place in a helpless state.

"W-Where the hell I am?"

His first minutes of waking up were trying to figure out why he was laying on a well-prepared futon. The scent of fresh mint entered his nose as he began to adjust to the brightness of this room. The candles were freshly lit up for Toshi's guest, the water next to him was meant to revive him, and the covers around his body managed to keep his body warm in the cold air surrounding the temple. The months in fall usually brought about a colder atmosphere in the environment, which also resulted in a change in the rest of the year as everyone focused on the upcoming holidays.

Kurapika tried getting up, the limbs in his body had other ideas leaving him stuck in his current position until he could rest longer. He knew that whoever was here likely had a sinister purpose for keeping the last Kurta here, but he couldn't complain about the room service they provided for him.

He figured the layout of the wallpaper and different candles might suggest this place belonging to a female then again he wasn't sure who else in this place including himself at the moment. He also noticed there were several different kinds of balls that were scattered across the room, which matched the color scheme of this place of mainly orange with hints of blue and yellow.

"He must awaken sometime soon...do you think we should bind him down?"

"Nonsense, the task we had been given was to stand by until Lady Toshi Teki arrives. We shouldn't need to keep him tied up since he won't be able to leave on his own from here."

Turns out he should be trying to get the hell out of here after all, not stick around to find out the kind of person his host, Toshi is when she arrives to meet him. He tried remaining as quiet as possible, his arms tried climbing out of his bedding so that he could sneak out when the guards were not focused on him. Inching closer to the paper thin doorway he heard the guards outside move away, which gave him the opportunity to escape as slowly as he could in his current state.

"I'm going for a piss you coming already?"

"Wait up we have to be quick in case Lady Toshi Teki gets here before we come back!"
'Perfect timing for a duo of guards who deserve a low payment.' Smirking at his own humor, Kurapika pulled back the door to find no one around, so he began to inch along the wooden floor hoping to not make a lot of sound—he couldn't get caught in an unknown area with no way of defending himself from his kidnappers. All he knew was the Phantom Troupe was going to suffer even more the minute he comes across them again. The catch was he needed to find a way out of this temple, and he didn't know how he would even get away from here besides some kind of vehicle.

'I can't stop...do not get caught goddamn it Kurapika.'

He didn't want to have to kill anyone here, but if they began to attack him then he would have no other choice if it meant surviving past tonight. Using all of the strength he could muster he noticed the different torches burning that make light around the hallway he was inching through with his hands. His head was dripping with sweat, his sheer will allowed him to get this far away, the legs were struggling to keep moving, and he knew it was only a matter of time before someone figured out he left the room.

'Okay so far so good now where should I go next?' He came to a fork in the path he was going down, the split of two different ways meant he would need to pick a way to continue through. Choosing the left path he was able to see the outside portion of the temple, and luck smiled down on him again since the guards were off patrolling another portion of the temple at the moment. Holding onto the wall he was able to slowly regain his footing allowing him to rise back onto his feet, but they felt rather heavy and he could barely put pressure on them before he nearly collapsed in pain.

"Hmmm, where are those two idiots guarding that new little piggy? Don't tell me they abandoned their post again?" Darting his eyes back from where he came from he knew that he needed to get out of this place, the limbs on his body slowly limped along as he figured the best way out was simply going over the wall surrounding the temple. It certainly was a dangerous idea, but he couldn't think of a better option in his crisis that was only getting worse by the second.

"What in the hell happened to that boy!?" His senses kicked into high gear as he heard loud footsteps ring through the cult's temple. He tried getting to the wall, but a girl suddenly called out to him. "You there! Stop!" He saw the pink haired priestess call out to him, so he ignored her reply and tried climbing up the huge wall in front of him. His hands couldn't latch onto the wall as he was scratching the bricks in order to find his footing, and hoping the girl behind him didn't try grabbing onto his leg. Sure enough, the young priestess was holding his leg attempting to stop his escape.

"You mustn't strain your body, Kurta. Lady Toshi Teki has put much care into helping you recover!" He wondered then why were they trying to keep him here, and how they knew about him being a Kurta. No, he refused to stick around and find out while he struggled to shake off the grip the female priestess had on him. Unfortunately, his body was unable to climb onto another brick making him fall down on top of Izumi. He didn't realize how far he climbed until he saw the pink-haired girl behind him remained motionless, which let him get away from her as he was now desperate to get out of this place.

"There he is after him!" His eyes grew red in color, his hands projected out his chains, and he was prepared to fight them all until his last breath. Suddenly the crowd standing in front of Kurapika dispersed revealing the head of their cult. Despite her blurred vision, she could see the shimmer of the scarlet eyes on Kurapika's face, a glare of crimson that made her blush with joy. Finally, her cult's work shall pay off with Kurapika now being in their clutches.

"Izumi, take the boy back into my chambers. Everyone else spread out and find those two fools, and make sure to cut off their fingers. I refuse to allow more disobedience for my orders." She spoke with a sigh watching the other cultists give Kurapika several different punches to keep him down while
her assistant moved back to her room with the special guest of Omekata. Although he was a bloody, broken, and beaten young man she was looking forward to learning more about him.

"Poor thing at the very least I get to make you feel better."

Kurapika once more had been put int Toshi Teki's only, the difference was he couldn't get out of the cuffs keeping his arms stuck to the futon he was laying on once again. This time he awoke to find Toshi Teki waiting for him, reading something from a scroll as she was sitting on a small chair. It was the tale of a legendary treasure of value beyond the scope of man, hidden away in a land undiscovered by mankind, and only those gifted with the special light could find it. Kurapika was considered their special gift from "god" leaving them with the key to unlocking their own salvation.

"Forgive me for not explaining things to you properly earlier. Those fools are being punished as I speak for their ignorance." Her calm tone started Kurapika who remained unaware of the two cultists being punished by having their limbs removed while they were awake. Smiling at his reaction she gave a small bow to introduce herself properly.

"Greetings, I am Toshi Teki. Welcome dear Kurta into the holy temple of the Omekata Society."

"Society?" He wasn't sure if she was being honest considering how happy she seemed about kidnapping him, so he decided to remain calm and be nice in return.

"I'm Kurapika Kurta..." Now tell me what possessed you to just abduct me all of a sudden is what he wanted to say instead of that.

"Hmm, such a nice name that makes you have the same letter initials for your first and last name. Do you mind if I call you K.K? Oh, I shouldn't be rude after all you're my guest here a very special one at that!" He knew that he would have to sweet talk her in order to get out of this place since he realized charging head-on past security would be impossible at this point.

"That being said I find it strange you were considered dead months ago, but only thanks to the Phantom Troupe you were brought here as a peace offering for us."

"Peace offering?"

"Indeed, the spiders have been a problem since they refused to sell the Scarlet Eyes that belonged to your fallen clansmen to us. We've been considering stealing them ourselves, and yet they inexplicably brought you here in a nice wooden box...seems rather sudden and strange." She told him while approaching his bedside to continue the negotiation process.

"They kept me as their hostage by threatening the lives of my comrades...I wouldn't stay with them if I had any choice in the matter." It was the truth, but he couldn't be sure if he remained with them during the last few weeks because of the commandments on himself or by his own will.

"I'm sure you glad to be away from such a band of murderous crooks...don't worry I will not harm you, Kurapika." She got closer to him to whisper that near his ear. He tried back away, the time he spent with Zazan of the chimera ants made him feel uneasy around females who did this kind of stuff. She gasped at his concerned expression, and yet part of herself wanting to go further despite his fearful eyes.

"Don't worry the others will not bother you until the ritual is ready, a lucky break for us since we can talk with each other like this." She was glad he couldn't escape from his binding on the futon, Toshi wondered if she needed to light a few more candles in the room- a simple gesture, to make Kurapika feel more relaxed to make things easier for her plans.
"Do you mind if I ask you something more personal? Have you ever...consider exploring the full scope of a woman." He tried his best to push her away while growling in angry, his eyes began to shimmer as they were in sync with his emotions. Sighing she gave a playful slap on his cheek trying to calm him down with a friendly giggle. The blonde remained hostile towards his host frowning at her high-pitched laughter. She curled some of her hair around while she tried to find the best way of making him easier to communicate with she missed having such a companion.

"Forgive me I guess after what I've been through you must still be pure when it comes to such matters. That makes curious however to know what sins you've committed in your short life, Kurapika." Or rather what sins haven't you committed she wanted to say, but she merely brought a small bowl of water to Kurapika while she waited for his answer. He wasn't sure if he should drink whatever she was offering, so he decided to keep talking to keep that liquid out of his mouth.

"I have claimed a few lives, committed crimes, and lied to people just to save my own skin. Honestly, I'm not sure how this foolish boy got this far without being killed, the only reason I can assume that of the promises I've made to those who matter to me that are both my friends and enemies." His vow to reunite with Gon, Leorio, and Killua along with killing the Phantom Troupe kept him from taking his own life during the first days in this deal he made with that devil in black leather.

"Why did you bring me here exactly? Revenge against the spiders or do you want to take my eyes like others in the black market?" He asked her while staring at her face, he wondered if she would break and admit the truth or hide behind a lie. She gave a little bit of both in order to keep the surviving Kurta reeled in.

"We do require your help, so that we may finally uncover the fabled key of salvation hidden away on that dark continent that is mostly unexplored by mankind."

"You're completely batshit insane. What makes you think eyes can do that!?!" He was certain now that if this legend was spread across this world then it might actually be a real thing. Nodding she brought up the bowl to his lips, but he slowly shook his head wanting to get some more answers not drink that stuff she was offering.

"We can't be sure if it really does exist, but all of the scrolls we've uncovered about that place suggest that is the case. It also seems rather convenient the key to uncovering the truth lies in those special eyes like you possess in your beautiful skull, my dear Kurta." He must have figured the cult either was full of shit or they really uncover something of value that was interpreted as using the eyes of his fallen clan. Either way, there was no one in hell that he would die here a blind, helpless captive to these people over the Phantom Troupe.

"...Then you really do want to rip out my eyes, bitch." He could feel the strings in his head beginning to untangle as he was no longer in the mood to play nice with his kidnappers. His comment got a hiss out of Toshi along with a harsher slap on his cheek leaving it slightly red and bruised.

"You're like everyone else in the end just harvesting us for these damn eyeballs!"

"I can't even see you that well with this light, but rest assured that is not going to happen if you behave." She hoped they wouldn't be too rough with him during the ceremony, the sake of their cult's years of work depended on Kurapika's cooperation. With a tap, she brought over one of her many small balls in the room, but this one had a red eye design on the top, which resembled the eyes of the Kurta clan. Playing with it a little she had a gentle smile while continue to warm up Kurapika to the idea of helping her cult.

"There are many secrets in that dark land, and I'm sure you want to uncover them just as badly as we
"I will admit that those secrets have gotten me interested in visited that land, so why don't you just let me go and I'll go there on my own terms." He wouldn't be swayed by her charm, the following response was her grabbing his nose and holding it long enough for him to breathe through his mouth. He would soon be rendered unable to stop the sleeping medicine from entering his body without losing his ability to breathe.

"This is how it started for me, you know?" She placed herself on Kurapika's chest, feeling him to express the last moments before she lost her purity to the very cult she now obeys without question. "I begged, pleaded, and demanded mercy however they continued to defile both my mind and body until I gave into their sinful desires." The cuts that scarred her young, pale skin would never leave along with the memories of those first nights. She had a better vision of the men driving themselves into her, her mind could remember their faces, tongues, and groans of pleasure come at her expense.

"You're lucky these eyes of yours have some use, left, unlike mine..." With that Kurapika struggled in vain to remain conscious leaving him at the mercy of Toshi. She was considering doing something she was used to while he couldn't say or do anything, but a voice in her head told her that it might be too much so she simply removed his clothing to prepare him for the holy cleansing.

Everyone gathered in the main room with several lit candles in their hands, chanting the same thing in a loud chorus while Kurapika is led into the room on a white bed being held on several wooden poles. Toshi lied in the center in a white outfit to keep herself as the "pure" oracle; Kurapika was now in a black Haori outfit in contrast to Toshi's clothing. Being put in the circle that was filled with candles burning each of the cultists sat down in a formal position ready to begin things.

"Gentlemen, it has been such a long time since we've all been together in this place having the greatest dream within our grasp. Long have we worked to reach this point, but finally our moment has come! With the aid of our precious sacrifice, we shall be blessed with the passage to a wonderful new kingdom!" Pointing at the unconscious blonde each of the men began to drop red ink marks onto his body. The liquid came down onto his arms, legs, feet, chest, and finally onto his forehead leaving the finishing touches in the hands of Toshi.

"To receive the treasure of old one must possess the sight of the scarlet eyes. Now, I shall claim this pair as my own along with the others in our possession. They shall grant us the gift hidden in that unexplored world, and then we shall create our new paradise!" Grinning in triumph she awoke the boy with a bottle of special perfume that she sprayed over herself. The other cultists were ready to remove their eyes to inherit the other scarlet eyes while Toshi was desiring her own way to recreate the Kurta clan.

"Wake up my precious Kurapika the time has finally come for you to be enlightened!" His first moment of being awakened out of his slumber was the head priestess laying a kiss down on his cheeks. Instinct took over as he struggling with Toshi to break free of her grip, which resulted in him punching her in the face. Once he realized what was going on to the shock of everyone chanting the same thing in the room Kurapika didn't hold back anything.

"Get the hell away from me, you perverted fucking bitch!" Toshi retaliated by scratching him on the cheek, hissing out her disgust for how he was not cooperating with the sacred ritual. He was considering jumping down off this bed, the cultists glaring at him with a few sharp objects in their hands gave him hesitation. Turning around he saw the oracle began to remove her kimono revealing a lacy bra and silky panties, but he took notice of the scars on her body along with bite marks on her legs.

"Don't ruin this for me! I've become adjusted to this for years, but you need to accept me by the end
of tonight or your eyes will come right out of your skull!" The realization sunk into Kurapika about what might have occurred with Toshi and her cult, which made him feel slightly guilty about hurting her a moment ago until he remembered her trying to feel him up when he woke up.

"You're crazy if you think I'm going to have sex with you, and why the here are all these people here!"

"You're in the center of the Omekata Society's temple, the reason my followers are here is to serve as witnesses to this sacred ritual. Either you comply with our wish to help us reach the divine realm or we shall take both your precious seed and eyes for ourselves. The choice is yours, Kurapika." They are all insane, a bunch of screwed-up cultists who were trying to abuse him for his genes and eyes. Suddenly he began to see there was evil in this world that didn't involve the Phantom Troupe between the chimera ants and people like this.

'I might have lost the right to be morally correct, but I refuse to let these bastards get away with abusing the legacy of the Kurta!' That said he needed to get out of the cuffs locking him into this futon while dealing with the angry mob of cultists ready to cut and slice him open like a pig. Toshi was grabbing hold of a sharp needle in preparation for this rebellious attitude, sending a few stabs into the back of the Kurta.

"We'll need to do this the hard way then, Izumi!" She hissed while licking the blood dripping from the backside of Kurapika enjoying the taste of his crimson liquid. Her handmaiden brought a towel for her to clean up the mess which she accepted. While this was going on she was completely oblivious to the unseen threat approaching her and her cult that already infiltrated their temple, the very threat that sent Kurapika into their clutches in the first place.

"Operation: Trojan Horse is proving to be quite successful." Shalnark got a bump in his head from Feitan while the first team made their way inside of the temple since mostly everyone was stuck in the same room. Led by Nobunaga they would remove the rest of the hostiles, but the samurai, in particular, wanted the head of the Divine Blade on a silver platter not caring about what might happen to Kurapika. Pakunoda sighed as she knew how thick-headed Nobunaga could be around the Kurta, the fact was it was Kurapika who agreed to infiltrate this cult by having his memories erased.

"He must feel so afraid being used as a spy without even being able to remember his role here despite agreeing to it. I think we should make it up to him, Paku." Shalnark wondered how he must be doing in the heart of this cult, and the fact they could possibly pluck out his eyes if he didn't cooperate with their insane demands. They certainly knew the boy had killed one their own, but they couldn't let him die in this kind of place.

"The first team already is on the move, so we should gather the scarlet eyes and everything else of value in this temple before all hell breaks loose as usual. Machi, Shizuku, Shalnark and Kalluto you're all with me."

Their mission objective was clear as the spiders dispersed throughout the temple's hallways. Meanwhile in the area where the scrolls containing information on the dark continent was Jikoku who was killing some of the cultists out of sheer boredom, his decision to help out this group during their "ritual" was turning out to be a bad one in his mind. He just wanted to get his hands on that boy in order to get a small amount of retribution for his fallen comrades; blood vengeance would do even if the circumstances didn't much up for it.

"I have to maintain the reputation of our group since the leader is now working with that Hunter Association. At the very least we're gonna be the survivor of this ordeal with those freaky ants." His thoughts were broken up when he heard a loud scream next to the room he was sitting in, which he
wasn't the cause of from his sword and he couldn't have anyone else steal his fun. Walking out he saw much more carnage than he expected, the hallways were littered with dead bodies belonging to the cultists who stayed behind on watching duty. Nothing but streaks of red entered his vision as Jikoku drew out his weapon in preparation for this intruder to show him/herself.

"Who the hell could have done this?" Even for a well-known murderer like himself he never encountered such a sight like this often in his line of work. Then he began to remember there was a group who usually had this trail of bodies left behind in their wake, the group he thought would show up tonight to create some mayhem while likely coming for the scarlet eyes. He grinned in satisfaction knowing they would at least relieve his boredom completely unaware of the figure walking closer to him from the shadows.

"You must be one of the Divine Blades, and I doubt any of these cultists possesses any kind of nen-ability involving lightning."

Nobunaga with a smug look on his face while looking at his opponent.

"Nobunaga, the wanna-be samurai of a group of thugs. You couldn't even beat the old ass man or the newbie in the Divine Blades. So, what do you think you can accomplish besides getting turned into a crispy corpse that is..." Instead of getting a response Nobunaga simply drew out his weapon despite Franklin warning him to just leave him alone for now.

"Piss off, Franky! This is my fight and if you want to go join the others be my guest. If I don't come back then I shouldn't even be considered a spider to the Boss anymore..." His pride was fueling himself into taking on this challenge on his own, and Franklin knew he couldn't get through to the samurai when he was like this.

"Nobu, don't die you crazy son of a bitch!"

"Tch, are you mocking me, Franky?!" He drew out his sword feeling like proving his critics wrong by delivering the head of a Divine Blade to his fellow criminals. Jikoku simply laughed not feeling threatened by this man's words. He thought this samurai was nothing than a fool who deluded himself into believing he could be a true warrior of the sword. In other words, he was another person who looked down on Nobunaga, which didn't surprise the spider at this point being used to such ridicule over the years.

"Tell you to want I will make things interesting for you by not using my Nen-Ability. At least you can feel some amount of confidence in facing a normal man in battle and not a superior samurai of the Divine Blades!"

"Are you done with your shit diarrhea of the mouth? I'm not bragging about being a Phantom Troupe member or someone who's killed many people over the years...right at this moment you're looking at someone who will become something greater than he was before today." Metal clashed with metal as both combatants started off with each other to continue a long tradition of man that's been passed down for years, the art of killing.

The other team of spiders began to rob the place for everything with value since their deal with the cult has been broken, which had been in fact part of the plan. Chrollo knew this cult would either steal Kurapika's eyes or turn him into a victim like they've done with their own priestess. Pakunoda knew the cult would attempt their scheme tonight, so they figured to attack when they least expected this double cross from the spiders. As Shizuku and Shalnark were bagging all of the valuable items Machi was busy torturing a poor man in order to learn where the rest of the cult was in the temple.

"Like I would betray my comrades for my own life!" A loud scream was made with a simple tug on
nen-strings by Machi, her hand quickly adding pressure to his arm wrapped up in her strings. Her methods didn't involve cutting up someone like Feitan, but in the end, they usually would start singing like a bird. The oldest woman in the room wanted to know why she couldn't just read his mind to find the answers, but Machi apparently felt like getting in some work as she felt like she was a bit rusty in this field.

"You can remove my limbs until I'm just a torso there is no way I will betray Lady Toshi Teki! Besides you're too late in trying to stop our sacred ritual! Soon, that boy will deliver us to paradise-" He suddenly felt his throat get squeezed by her strings nearly being choked to death except Machi still needed him to live long enough for Pakunoda to suck out his memories. While he was helpless Shizuku asked about how Kurapika was doing since his capture by the Omekata group, her increasing interest in his well-being didn't go unnoticed by the other members of the brigade.

"You worried about your possible "boyfriend", Shizuku? That is unless Chrollo will call dibs..."

"Shalnark, don't mess with her like that. Matters of a heart in star-struck love are pretty serious considering the kind of people we are to the public. Many things we don't have the heart to really care about anything even ourselves." Hearing Machi verbally stick up for Shizuku like that surprised both Pakunoda and Shalnark never seeing the normally cold girl speak with such passion in her tone. The pink-haired girl merely lets Pakunonda's mind-reading skills get to work as she quickly executed the man once she was finished. They doubted the world would miss a man who lost himself in a group of mindless followers.

"That's the last of the eyes. I can't believe this place doesn't have any kind of real security. No wonder they needed to hire those nen-users as bodyguards." It was a good plan to have extra security besides the Divine Blade, and yet the two men who failed to become hunters only ended up becoming puppets of Machi and Shalnark during their assault on the guards in this room.

"They are in the underground complex. Apparently, there is a secret pathway through the main temple hidden under a statue with a switch on the bottom of a boar." Seeing through his eyes she also recalled Kurapika being unconscious while the other cultists strapped him into the futon. Shizuku knew they were doing something very wrong if what Pakunoda said was currently happening to him.

"They won't rip those eyeballs out just yet, but the fact this group brought so many of the eyes here could mean they intend to insert them in their own skulls Still, if they want to use the eyes to find this treasure on the dark continent then Kurapika has become a lot more valuable to us." Being a hunter himself Shalnark was aware of what it means for them all to reveal themselves like this, the dangers in the future would become far more difficult to face. All the more reason for them to reunite with their leader sooner rather than later.

On the other end of the place, Feitan was making quick work out of some nen-created ninja who was in his way. He was in the middle of a small game with Bonolenov to see who could get the most kills in one night, but also it provided a good way to converse with one another about the current state of the spider. Being a blood knight himself the warrior of the Gyudondond Tribe knew that Kurapika's mental state was slowly corrupting his nature, which could what Chrollo expected to occur when he inducted the boy into their ranks.

"Will he become like us or perhaps Kurapika will hold onto those morals if his? I can't be certain of the outcome, Feitan." The bandaged man spoke while crushing the skull of the clay-like head belonging to a black-clad shinobi. Despite the enemy not being a real person, it's fake teeth flew out of the mouth under the might of Bonolenov's boxing glove as the body collapsed onto the floor.

"Who cares about that emotional dead weight of ours? I'm more concerned about Boss trying to
become an official Hunter. I mean it isn't like Shalnark does anything with that job of his anyway, but the fact Hisoka is manipulating our leader into following his rules is pissing me off. He should know better than to believe in that perverted clownish traitor!" It had to be some kind of trick being pulled by the magician on the head of the spider, the game of chess between them now involved many people in this world in order to create their long-awaited battle. It only made sense the thieves and hunters were simply pieces on this board to be moved around by the main players.

"He will be fine with those hunters even Kurapika's friends can't do much to him. Despite the fact, hunters would love to see us all dead right now they're dealing with a "bigger fish" as the media puts it. It seems like everyone is going about those chimera beasts these days almost as if we've been forgotten by the world." Technically that is the case for a bunch of "dead men" that only now resurfaced with Chrollo beginning to go through the Hunter Exams despite the fact all of the other entrants wanted to kill him for just being there.

"I still don't like it Bonolenov. All of this happened simply because we couldn't kill that one last Kurta child, the fact he bought into Neon's ability to predict possible outcomes in the future, and those stupid eyeballs we sold just for basic supplies along with getting those pricks off our backs." Feitan knew the men who paid for the extermination of the Kurta clan were much higher up on the food chain than other criminal kingpins like the Ten Dons. Their marching order likely meant they were simply being used as pieces in someone else's game but back then the Phantom Troupe were simply small time.

"Hashtag. Eyegate."

"I beg your pardon, Feitan?"

"Eyegate, a news media term or rather what the papers will be calling this incident once it leaks out to the press. In a strange way, I always enjoy reading the headlines whenever we make the front page." That and hearing about the world acknowledging his rise to fame or rather infamy helped boost his ego. That's also why when he managed to kill the man controlling the clay ninja he considered that winning the game since "he killed more people" by which he meant an actual person. Looking at their carnage they knew it would only get worse from here...for this cult.

"You call yourself a warrior of the sword! This farce of a battle is boring me to death, so that means you don't have long to live." Nobunaga was on the receiving end of such taunting for once, his body was already limping from using all strength available to hold himself up with the battle scars already visible on his limbs. Pure adrenaline was keeping him from passing out due to the pressure, nervousness, and anxiety he was feeling. His next attack was quickly blocked by Jikoku who began to zap the man with his Transmutation skill.

"My ability is certainly nothing like that Killua boy though, in the end, I don't really need your body to be in perfect condition."

"You're right about one thing, the electricity here is pretty many fireworks compared to that Zoldyck's work. Nobunaga's mouth got him more zaps of lightning that made his eyes roll back into his skull. The Divine Blade enjoyed toying with his prey much like Nobunaga making him a dangerous opponent for the spider. Looking down at his weakened foe he couldn't help but get pleasure from this experience. His dream of becoming a name known across the world could be a reality once he kills one of the most wanted criminals that everyone thought were impossible to capture let alone murder.

"This. Certainly. Feels. Like. A. Disappointment. To. You. Right?" Each line came with a jab-filled with lightning that seemed like Jikoku's way of zapping Nobunaga. Sighing he simply sliced Nobunaga's chest when he tried slashing back in retaliation. As the blonde considered just ending
this fight Nobunaga knew that his chosen enemy during this raid was making a small mistake. Taking his other hand he put it on his wounded arm to will himself into trying for another attack despite the sparks of electricity running up his spine from hitting Jikoku's weapon.

"This is all you can do, Nobu? I'm aware of your little trick with En, but that won't do much if your body is numbed out by my nen-ability. Your precious Iaidō couldn't even scratch the other blades, so what in the hell were you thinking of taking me on exactly?"

"You're exactly like me...we both don't know when to shut up. I guess that's why you will be the one I get to kill out of the rest of your pals." A frown formed on the hired bodyguard's face as he moved into to chop off his head, but Nobunaga deflected the strike even with his body getting shocked once more. Several more killing blows were blocked getting the blonde swordsmen upset by this defiance. His steel couldn't cut through Nobunaga's sword, and suddenly he felt a slash across his own left arm.

"How dare you fight back, weakling!" His angry resulted in the room being lit up with his charges of lighting-enhanced attacks that burned Nobunaga's body leaving him in a bruised, battered, but still standing body. Now, Jikoku was on the receiving end of attacks that began to damage his left arm while his sword-using arm remained unharmed by this second wind of Nobunaga. Both men knew they didn't have much left in the tank due to the voltages being discharged out of the bodyguard, and Nobunaga's attacks managing to harm his foe.

"You stupid bastard just give up already! You don't have anything to prove to me or everyone else, they won't forget you exist when you do so why struggle at all?!

"No, you don't get do you, samurai? They will forget me even with all the crimes and people I've killed with this sword. The man you're mocking isn't a Chrollo Lucifer, a Hisoka, and for damn sure not a chimera ant! That is why I will kill you tonight because when it comes to being the world's greatest swordsmen...that is a goal that I will achieve with your death!" Suddenly blood began to come out of Jikoku's chest as the defiant criminal's sword finally punctured his chest, as he was left shocked by this sudden turn of events in their life or death battle. How dare this mere thief degrade his image, his status, and pride as one of the world's deadliest swordsmen.

"Now, burn to a crispy-smelling corpse you worthless piece of crap! Die! Die! DIEDIEDIEDIEDIEDIE!" Sending out every burst of Transmutation throughout the now broken beyond repair "healing" shine he began to unleash attack after attack, his movements seemed endless as he wouldn't stop until Nobunaga wasn't breathing anymore. The yellow irises were filled with savage youth that was powerful and yet untrained in controlling such a fury that he was unleashing on the enemy. In the heat of the moment he remained unaware of how much sweat his body was covered in until Nobunaga seized the moment of swiping enough liquid off his body to put onto his blade, which was followed up with a stab right to his leg, but in the process sending all of that spent electricity into Jikoku's body.

"God damn it! You moth-" He could barely speak since his own nen was now harming his body instead of being used to burn more of Nobunaga's body which looked like second-degree burns covering his chest and arms. Weaken, but not dead the more experienced warrior took hold of Jikoku's sword while he was trying to remove Nobunaga's weapon quickly stabbing him right in the middle of his body. Both men were on the verge of collapsing onto the floor, but one of them would only fall when they were truly near death...which was Jikoku, not Nobunaga.

"Right in the middle of my rise to glory...you bastard! This will not be the end of the great Jikoku...not until you're dead alongside me, spider!" Despite his words, the most he could do was send out more lighting since his body was also unable to move becoming numb like his adversary.
His body was closer to the edge of death, and with a gasp he saw every moment in his life pass before his eyes knowing that his sensei and leader of the Divine Blades would be disappointed in his fall, the thought of dishonoring his mentor was worse than dying by the ends of "scum" like Nobunaga.

"You really are like me, but that is your weakness...the only reason you've survived this long is that you value strength and nothing else. There are places, people, and things I want to do even in my old age before this crazy bastard kicks the bucket," He coughed out some blood with his injuries beginning to catch up to him while he continued with his small speech to his nearly dead opponent.

"Being a samurai is a major role in one's life, but there are other things that should matter besides strength. Funny; a killer like me speaking about such humane ideas...guess that brat is starting to get to me after all." He hated the idea of becoming soft like he was, but then again he remembered his first time meeting Uvogin and how he didn't get along with the man he considered his one true friend. Despite Kurapika being the one who took away his comrade...he knew that his life was important to the Phantom Troupe meaning that he couldn't let him get killed here.

"You asshole chain-brat...I can't believe you've gotten me to care about your well being. Oh hell! This isn't much but at least you won't have to worry about this arrogant prick getting your way Boss..." His last moment of sight before darkness covers his vision was the sound of footsteps closing in...

In the underground section of the temple, Kurapika was struggling to keep his virginity from the head priestess of the cult who tried to seize control of everything belonging to the Kurta clan still left in the world. Her nearly clouded eyes saw the object of her obsession with power try to hold her away from him despite being unable to move from the bed.

"Why can't you just do this for me? I'll let you see your friends again, you will be free of the Phantom Troupe's cruelty, and most of all you can have your wonderful clan reborn through me!" She couldn't understand the reason he was struggling...why was he fighting back like she did when they first began to molest her...

"Why are you acting like...me?!!!" Her voice came out with a quiet sob filled with guilt.

"Lady Toshi Teki, we don't have all night to finish this ceremony."

"Izumi, do you really believe this is the only way to reach our salvation?"

"What are you talking about milady? This boy refused to cooperate with us so he must be forced into acceptance!"

'Forced? Is that did was done to her?' Kurapika took notice of the scars covering her body as he began to realize the awful truth about the cult's oracle. His blood was beginning to boil over as his rage was building while looking at the perverted bastards looking at the Kurta.

"If she won't do it then we should like should have with those pretty boys and girls! His eyes would look beautiful to watch while we break him in too!"

"No this is all wrong...he doesn't want this...I don't want this to happen either!" Her mortality managed to come back to Toshi, her hands quickly untied Kurapika from the bed unaware of the bald cultist moving up behind her until she felt a knife enter her back. Izumi suddenly ordered the men to hold him down while she began to undress.

"She has been fooled by that brat! I will complete the ritual in her place instead, so keep him down
on that bed! That boy is dangerous; just be looking at him now I see a serial killer in the form of an
innocent child. We will need to gather his and just kill him since there is no way we can "tame" him
like with Lady Toshi Teki." The assistant decreed to everyone unaware of the blood pouring out of
the man who stabbed Toshi until Kurapika slowly got up off the bed. The crimson liquid clashed
with the white sheets he was standing on while he began to laugh.

"Alright, boys and girls! I think we should begin painting the town red!" The shine of the scarlet
eyes was revealed in the light made off the torches in the underground area, which meant Kurapika
was ready to begin his own attack on the cult who tried to make him their slave...like with Toshi
before him. His morality unlike with her won’t hold him back from killing as many people as he
could with his bare hands.

Bloodshed results in more bloodshed, hatred gives rise to more malice, and through these negative
emotions, the darkness that lurks in the hearts of men is unleashed. Criminals like the Phantom
Troupe were used to being considered insane by the rest of their world, the group didn't care how
many people called the morally incorrect for their many crimes. Their voices seemed like static to
their ears at this point, and each of the spiders really didn’t care what anyone believed they should do
with their lives except for their leader. That could also be said for Kurapika Kurta, and even if he
refused to believe it he was slowly beginning to behave like those spiders he wanted to kill with the
very chains he was now using to choke the life out of people that were attempting to stab him.

His face was distorted with malice just like during the last time Kurapika lost control of his sanity. He
either grew tired of being a prisoner, couldn't accept the betrayal of this girl's own cult and or was
tired of remaining calm in this situation. He felt the pulse of the man slow down, looking at the rest
of the cultists prepare to stab him with their sharp objects until he was ready to become a breeding
tool for their purposes. They hesitated to move closer since their captive was no longer helpless on
that white futon.

"Hold him down you fools," Izumi hissed while she was only in her pink bra and panties, she was
desperate to have the Kurta since her lady seemed hesitant to claim his manhood for herself. "We are
running out of time for this ritual, so we must make haste!" She said while hiding in the back of the
angry crowd not wanting to get involved in the fighting herself. Much like the rest of the cult, she
couldn't bother getting her hands dirty simply relying on others to do the hard work for her sake. Her
cowardly nature made sense however when she saw how easily this one body could fend off the
crowd of knife-wielding zealots. Her eyes almost popped out her head when she saw Kurapika toss
around the older man like ragdolls.

She couldn't believe this "boy" was making a fool out of the Omekata Group like this, his
movements were methodical in their approach, each man who either got sent back or stabbed by his
unbound chain were shocked by how quickly he could move, and he didn't stop laughing or smiling
at the chaos he was making with the cultists. His crimson irises matched the blood now covering his
black outfit as he seemed to behave more like a murderer than a man who tried to achieve peace with
avenging his clan.

"How dare you ruin this wonderful moment with your violence! You must be taught some manners,
boy!"

"So sayeth the pack of elderly, perverted, and downright creepy men who enjoy raping girls for fun!
Sure I love hurting people myself, but it certainly doesn't make me horny like the dick like you old
bastards!" The gathering of the followers in the order of the "sacred eye" rush at the blonde who
smiled and threw around his chain some more, watching a man climb on to stab him in the chest only
to turn that blade against him instead. His screams only caused more giggling from the currently out
of his mind Kurta.
"He can't be a mere boy, the face looks like it belongs to a demon from the depths of the underworld!" Izumi never expected the last survivor of his clan to have such a warped personality inside of himself, the idea of such a beautiful face being covered in blood didn't sit right with her along with the others involved with this cult.

"I knew the boy was obsessed with vengeance, but this doesn't match his Modus Operandi...unless something has changed." Toshi's personal aid began to ponder all of the possible reasons he could be acting this crazed. She then remembered who exactly brought him into their hands in the first place, but she couldn't fathom the idea of the spiders breaking his mind like this unaware of Chrollo's real intentions with Kurapika. If nothing else, she only figured they wanted to get revenge as well for what he must have done to them over the past few months.

"Grab Lady Toshi Teki you fools! There must be conscious still left in that rabid dog, so why don't we take advantage of it?!" She knew the boy must want to protect innocent people, and Izumi figured why not exploit that to keep him in line. Of course, that would be easier said than done considering how easily Kurapika was holding back the crowd trying to get onto the futon.

"Praise The Sacred Eye! Glory be the holy vision! Let it deliver us to a new world free of humanity's sins!" Their chants were motivating them to continue on despite the fact their prophet was standing in their way.

"No! Kurapika doesn't protect me...I deserve this for what I almost tried doing to you..." Apparently, Kurapika was not the only person in the room who retained some amount of their humanity. While it took her a long time to realize how far gone she her blurry eye started into the manic-looking blonde who didn't care about this emotional turmoil she was feeling right now. His only thought was about how many other people he could get to hurt tonight, Kurapika relished in the pain he inflicted on others.

"Why are you trying to interfere with this sacred moment, Lady Toshi Teki?!"

"I finally realize how much of a fool I've been, allowing you all to abuse me and others for the sake of this stupid cult! My body is marked by sin, this heart submitted to such a warped fantasy world, but now I wish to end the twisted fantasy I've wanted to have in this rotten temple." She knew that her life was going to be over regardless if Kurapika decided to spare her from his carnage. At the very least she could do one good deed before her demise, help out this boy from getting the same treatment she's been enduring for years.

"Get away from him, Lady Toshi Teki!"

"Did you really care about me over these past few years?! When I begged and pleaded for help during those first nights...do you ever consider helping me, Izumi?"

She didn't look the now remorseful girl in the face or even give a response to her question made Toshi sigh in defeat. She knew her "subordinate" never cared about her only being concerned about retaining her position in the cult's order. Grabbing hold of one of the knives she began striking at the mob despite not being able to see that well in the near pitch-black chamber they were currently in. Kurapika was torn between feeling sad that he tried attacking her earlier and simply enjoying the fact he wouldn't need to protect her since she had a deathwish.

'What a dumbass! Thinking some kind of worthless self-sacrifice is gonna save her in the end!'

'She's not innocent, but I doubt she was always one of their group's mindless puppets. Is her life really so useless...'
'Like it matters you just want her to die like the rest of these monsters, Kurapika!'

'No! I...why do you sound different than before...conscious?'

'I think you should be asking yourself is who are you now? Are you Kurapika Kurta, Kurapika the Hunter, then maybe you will see yourself as who you really are...Kurapika the Spider!'

'That isn't who I-

'Am? Grow up already! Your soul is not pure or white, the fact you're dressed in black should be a big freaking clue about your mindset these days. I thought you could still retain some piece of yourself, but it seems they've beaten you down...You're on your own in this mess you've gotten yourself in, traitor...'

"Hold on a second, fellas! I think you want to fight someone who actually has a pair to match their bravado!" Kurapika charged in despite the cuts and scars he was getting to slash at the throats of anyone moving near his direction, his animalistic nature once again overrides his human side even if he did it to protect her from harm. He would certainly feel the pain and wounds later, but he pushed back that back into his mind, his sight entering tunnel vision while slaughtering as much of this cult as he could before they could kill him.

"Enough of this I only need him barely awake to make him suffer for this insult!" Izumi yelled at her followers to finish the job of putting the Kurta back in a helpless state by any means while she kicked at the curled up Toshi laying on the floor.

"You stubborn brat! All of this could have been avoided if you let go of that worthless kindness that I hated ever since we first started this group!" Hissing at the fallen oracle Izumi began to remove Kurapika's outfit desiring his body as her skin began to sweat with anticipation. The other cultists were rubbing their wrinkly hands over her body while Toshi weakly tried to make them stop.

Kurapika's chains were unable to do much as he felt several stabs enter his body, and while he tried using Emperor Time he couldn't focus too well since the mob constantly attacked him to make him vulnerable.

"Hah! Even with your impressive skills and nen, in the end, you're only a human boy! You can't overcome these odds all alone, Pika!" Izumi moved to him getting in the first kiss only to get bitten on her face by his teeth, the bite was hard enough to make her bleed almost mirroring what happened during his encounter with the Chimera Ant Queen, Zazan. He smirked as he listened to her loud scream while the other cultists began to pound his face in while he was being restrained. Like before he could only do so much without back-up against these numbers despite killing a few already.

"Let us try that again, so please remember any more defiance will result in your precious eyes being removed while you're awake!" She received a bloody spit from the injured, but still rebellious blonde who only mocking her for thinking he would lie down quietly. The other cultists were stunned by how willing he was to insult their sacred ritual in such vulgar manners.

"I bet your inner cunt has been ruined by all these old, wrinkly pricks already!" He enjoyed the slaps to his cheek that followed as Izumi began to beat the hell out of him while the others continued stabbing eventually hitting a vital organ making him gasp out in pain. With the blood pouring out Izumi stabbed the man who seriously wounded Kurapika in the head royally pissed everything was going wrong with her big plan.

"Clean up him now you worthless morons! We must delay this holy ritual for-" A loud bang could be heard as one of the zealots near her location suddenly fell down with a hole now in his head. Several more bullets were fired off leaving a few holes in the herd of cultists unaware of who
discovered their secret underground area.

"Damn it! It has to be the cops! Someone must have snitched on us!" Izumi didn't see the blonde woman playing target practice with the men, the shorter pink-haired girl wrapping up the dead corpses in her nen-strings to make them into her puppets. Only when Toshi's assistant got a look at the tall man who pointed his hands at the rest of the cultists left did she realize who was standing in their way, and she began to cry in sheer terror with her mind coming to terms with the bringers of death that had come for them all tonight.

"P-Phantom...Phantom...Troupe...here..." Her eyes grew hollow in despair as she took hold of the bloody Kurapika to get out of this room before she would end up dead next. She could only move a few feet before those cold, unfeeling silver chains of Kurapika's nen wrapped around her neck even while he was badly wounded. Her lungs were beginning to lose oxygen as she tried getting the silver chains off her next while Kurapika wheezed out more laughter.

"Don't worry you're not gonna die just yet, but I am going to have to pay you back for all this wonderful treatment you've all been giving me!" Despite knowing it would harm him later on the Kurta enter his Specialist state to heal the gravest injury to his kidney, so he wouldn't lose that organ ensuring he wouldn't need major surgery for that part of his body. He stood with her still wrapped up in his chains.

"I can't use my Chain Jail for this little game of mine," He spoke near her ear with a mocking tone. "It doesn't mean I don't have other ways of making you talk, Izumi!" Picking up a bloody knife in the middle of the ongoing chaos Kurapika dragged Izumi behind a pillar to begin his own "interrogation" by cutting up her face with the sharp tool. She tried to scream despite the chains wrapped around her throat while Kurapika began to ask her a few questions about how events happened tonight starting with how they got the eyes from his clan.

"I don't know...ask Lady Toshi Teki..."

"I would but she's a little busy laying on the floor in a bloody heap, and you're her girlfriend so I'm sure the both of you share naughty secrets while painting each other's nails, right?" He relieved the pressure on her neck for a moment only to increase the tightness of his chains around her throat, she could only look at the manic expression being given by her torturer, interrogator, and possible murderer if she didn't provide the right answers. As the slaughter continued on she knew that there was no way out besides that secret entrance.

"Alright! We got tipped off about the eyes, the amount we needed to pay for them wasn't cheap but it was worth it! He said those eyes would draw out the last Kurta..."

"WHO?! Who the hell is trying to piss me the fuck off, Izumi!" The mention of the man who orchestrated the events between the spiders and this cult suddenly came into focus, his sudden thoughts were on who could be playing with him besides Chrollo and Hisoka. No one else could be aware of the fact he was alive until recently, and the man behind these events had to know where the eyes could be, which considering how many people bought them over the years wasn't easy to actually pull off. Pointing the knife at her eye Kurapika wanted her to give him a name...a name or an eye would be taken in the next few seconds.

"I don't know! Our contact didn't give us a name, the only thing he said was make sure to hire one of the Divine Blades for security! I swear I don't know who he could really be, Kurapika!" That wasn't the whole story, and Toshi knew her assistant was hiding back the last part of the deal made with their mysterious accomplice.

"Gon...he said," Toshi was silenced as Izumi began to scream out to her oracle to shut up before
getting a stab to her hand before being restrained by the furious Kurta. "That man would meet up with Kurapika's comrades when the Chimera Ant threat is over, but he wanted us to keep you and the spiders out of their way until then." She realized in hindsight that everyone seemed too content between the eyes and getting their hands on the last surviving Kurta so easily meant the Omekata Cult was being used for someone else's scheme. Toshi also wondered if their contact expected this massacre to happen once they got started with this ritual of theirs, and through the spiders, he would remove this cult from the picture by the end of the night.

"Damn it Toshi...I should have never let you take charge this is all your damn fault!" Izumi tried to strangle Toshi to death letting her feelings boil over, the next moments would be her last as her neck was twisted by Kurapika's chains leaving her lifeless body on the floor. Indeed, she was nearly naked; but she was also very much dead.

"BORING! This shitty as hell pity party is so damn dull between you two!" His mind fractured with his more rational side wanting to find out who was out to get his friends, but his new sadism just wanted to kill more people here, and even the spiders who "betrayed" him in the first place. That is when he could see Franklin blasting down some of the last knife-wielding followers of the warped minds of this cult with his Emission: Double Machine Gun.

"See this is what I wanted, so here you backstabbing sons of bitches are...Then again I don't remember being pals with you assholes in the first place!" His body tilted back and forth in a twisting motion, his stance was like a hungry wolf ready to strike at a moment's notice. The spiders knew the boy likely doesn't remember the deal he made with the group in order to stage his kidnapping, allowing the group to infiltrate this temple later, and take back the scarlet eyes from the nearly extinct cult.

"Boy, relax we're trying to save you from this gang of mindless dimwits and not hurt you," Machi spoke effortlessly while causing her strung up corpses to slice and cut down the remaining forces standing in their way.

"I know you're not going to trust us, the state of mind you're in especially is not going to make that very possible then perhaps you can believe in this." Pakunoda moved a hand in her dark purple suit to grab a note written for Kurapika to read...that was written by the red-eyed killer himself. He couldn't get a good look at the writing from his spot in the room so he asked Pakunoda to walk over the dead bodies now filling up the floor in the hidden sanctuary underneath this temple. While he remained unsure about this Toshi wanted to see it herself before she likely would be killed by the wound in her stomach or the spiders themselves.

"Listen future me or whatever I consider myself these days, the plan in order to steal back the eyes here involved losing my memories, getting my ass to this temple, and most likely killing most of the zealots before they start poking out my irises." The hunter recognized the handwriting as his own, but he still couldn't be sure they didn't make him write the note. Kurapika tried to reason a way they could make him do this against his will, but as he read the rest of the letter written to his future self it became apparent that this could really be the truth.

"Whatever happens next all the matters is reuniting with Gon and my other friends again, so whatever you decide to do next just remember that your life is not the only thing on the line. I might not ever get over what the Phantom Troupe has done to my life, but if they can help me find my friends again...then perhaps I should be willing to risk myself one more time."

'Is this what I want?' I mean those friends are more important to me than everything, but to continue working for these guys and their leader, Chrollo Lucifer.' Before he could think on it further Toshi gave a friendly smile to the man who in her eyes gave her a new outlook on things even if it might
have come too late to save her.

"Don't worry I know what must be done...a cleaning of this sinful soul. Thank you, Kurapika. I would have met a less dignified death if you hadn't come along. You have people who still care about you, after all. Now, go find them with these odd comrades of yours while I accept my judgment in fire..." None of the spiders were expecting the weakened girl to grab a torch on the wall, and throw it on the ground in her attempt to start a fire in the temple.

"You do know that one torch isn't going to set a room ablaze, right?" Machi almost feels sad about the head priestess' attempt to burn down this place especially when she saw her trip over herself, and nearly started a fire on her orange kimono. Toshi frowned, the attempt to kill herself ended up making her look rather pathetic in the eyes of the world's most wanted fugitives not used to seeing a sight like this.

"Do you think we should kill her too?" The giant criminal pointed his fingers at Toshi's helpless form waiting for the word to fire.

"I don't know Franky, but she did just try to burn down this place...not exactly the action of someone who wants to live." Machi couldn't help but wonder if they should do something out of their character, and let the poor girl off instead of murdering her as well. They did need to regroup with the others meaning not wasting any more time here would be what Chrollo might say if he were in charge; Machi and Franklin just wanted to understand what their next move should be tonight. That decision however resided in Pakunoda being that she is the one who takes charge when their leader isn't with them. In fact, without her making the fateful decision to "abandon" Chrollo back in Yorknew events likely would have resulted in a different outcome, but here she was being looked at for guidance once again on what they should do next.

"We came here for Kurapika and to capture the eyes. If she lives or dies it does not matter in the grand scheme of things."

"That's where...you wrong, Pakunoda." Kurapika could already feel the consequence of his abilities affect his mind, but he could not show weakness in the middle of this situation.

"Toshii knows what really went on here, and while I can see she is rather suicidal...That doesn't mean she can't try screwing with you all later down the road, the last thing we need is someone who could help the authorities can use to trail back to you and by extension myself. I can't be sure we can trust this girl is not coming back for revenge even with her newly-found guilt."

"No! I don't care about you all since we're all in the same boat, killing, murdering, and hurting people simply because we enjoy it. The fact is without this cult my life isn't worth anything no matter what you all could say to convince me otherwise. Please let the fires purify this scarred and sinful body of mine ensuring my soul will know peace even for just a fleeting moment." Kurapika's mind snapped back to normal despite holding onto a man's dead throat while stabbing him in the heart, his eyes looked at her tears pouring down her cheeks as she looked sincere about her statement.

"Leave me alone and get out of here while you can..." Toshi was afraid; terrified would be an understatement about her accepting death. That doesn't mean she would back away with the weight of her actions finally coming down on her conscious. While she was trying to grab another torch to spark a huge fire they did exactly what she told them to go along with finding their allies who were off in separate directions in the temple.

"Good the hard part is over, so we just need to find most of the boys and get the hell out of here before that priestess actually learns how to start a fire."
"We should start with Shalnark's team since they've gotten the scarlet eyes ready for traveling by
now," Kurapika admitted to himself and only himself one thing about the spiders. Efficient, so
efficient, ruthless, intelligent, and successful at what they do for a living. Despite the lack of their
leader each of the members of this brigade could operate like this despite missing the head of their
group. He wanted to say that he still hated the Phantom Troupe for their methods, but then he
collapsed onto the floor having used up so much of his nen that he couldn't remain conscious. That is
when they noticed a few more of the cultists try and kill them only to get their lifeless corpses strung
up in nen-strings while Kurapika's body was being held on Franklin's shoulders under Pakunoda's
order, which came from concern about the fatigue that comes using the scarlet eyes so much.

"We've taken back Kurapika how are things on your end, Shalnark?"

"Besides handling a laser security system and Shizuku stealing a kimono from one of the
handmaidens nothing has been too crazy over here. How is our "trojan horse" doing btw?"

"He seems to have exhausted himself while murdering several of the cultists with his bare hands. We
need to get a move on before their oracle sets this place on fire."

"Hey now I know we have to clean up our tracks Paku, but isn't scorching the earth a bit much for
this operation?"

"I didn't say anything about us burning down this temple," Sighing out she knew it would be a long
story that would need to be explained, and they didn't have a lot of time at the moment. "We just
need to regroup and evacuate the premises before this whole place burns down." That brought up the
question of where Nobunaga could be, which Franklin knew the answer to along with who he could
be fighting that being one of the Divine Blades. Machi facepalmed at the thought of their old samurai
going himself into a fight he would likely lose.

"What possessed you from not telling us about this earlier, Franklin?!" Pakunoda couldn't believe he
would keep that secret, but the giant wanted to honor Nobunaga's request for an uninterrupted fight.

"That old bastard loves to continue fighting even when his opponents have the upper hand, the
stubbornness Nobu has is something that has to be admired..."

"Franklin, go find him now! We'll take Kurapika and find the others. I don't care if you have to drag
his ass back here just make sure he doesn't get himself killed!"

"Right!" Franklin didn't bother making the second-in-command more pissed off, so he ran off while
the girls took hold of Kurapika since he was still out of it. On the other end of the heist, Feitan was
running into some trouble when a few of the temple guards began to literally spit out fireballs to ruin
the goods that were being stolen from the cult. Shalnark was busy downloading all of the files on the
only kind of technological item in the whole temple, and where emails were sent from the mysterious
benefactor who gave the cult most of the remaining eyes left in the world.

"You guys might wanna keep those guys from melting this tech! I'm not exactly that great when
under pressure..."

"Then maybe you should join us on the battlefield, Shalnark." He gazed back - see the carnage
taking place in the room, fire, blood, violence, and murdering intent take place. Shalnark quickly
went back to finishing up with stealing all the files on this CPU that Chrollo would be interested in
hearing about later, which meant he could back to playing more of his ongoing Spider Solitaire
game.

"Do you think you should be playing that right now, Shalnark?"
"Coming from the girl who stole an outfit while hitting one of the handmaidens in the head!" He couldn't believe "four-eyes" of all people was suggesting he put effort into helping out Feitan and Bonolenov with the flame-spitting grunts, unlike Shizuku who sucked up the fire being left around with Blinky. It was rather "unfortunate" that Feitan ran towards the computer monitor to fling it at one of the guards taking him out of the equation.

"Well, it seems like your work is done now get off your ass and stab these idiots with those fancy needles of yours."

"They are not needles they are antenna! Do I call your umbrella that weird red thing that should be held by a girl, Feitan?!"

"No need for petty insults. Compared to the both of you these boxing gloves have to be the second most bizarre tool used in battle with the first being Shizuku's vacuum." She didn't take kindly to Bonolenov simply referring to her item as it, she constantly called it Blinky to make it feel more like a living thing, which it was technically a living item that sucks in anyone and anything while sending them into a black void of nothingness.

"Blinky doesn't like being called it he does have feelings, you know?" Every one of the male spiders deadpanned Shizuku's reply forgetting about the now deceased guards who moments before dying wished they didn't get paid so well to protect this temple, the decision of refusing Toshi's offer would have meant they would not be decapitated from the neck up. Moments later Pakunoda's team had arrived without Franklin, Kalluto, and Nobunaga in tow since they were in another part of the temple.

"Where is that Zoldyck kid, Franky, and Nobu?" Feitan knew that in this huge place sticking together would be next to impossible, but he didn't ask because he was concerned about their safety rather if they were getting into more interesting fights than what he just dealt with moments ago.

"Franklin went after Nobu, but Kalluto simply vanished with his explanation being he needed to "check" something out here." Pakunoda was aware they could be a hidden agenda involved, but it wasn't like the spiders were the type to always stick around one another during operations.

"Sneaky little bastard, the kid needs to learn some manners or rather get beaten into proper shape like our precious damsel in distress!"

"At least he put in work killing quite a few of the moronic zealots, so I don't see why you still have a problem with him Feitan." Machi knew they wouldn't get along every, but she felt like giving him credit for handling the situation pretty good despite being outnumbered. Compared to the first couple of days she had completed warmed up to the idea of him being a part of the Phantom Troupe, and not simply a substitute until they found a better option down the line. That could also be how Pakunoda felt about Kurapika since he's only provided the group with nothing but success ever since his induction, why did their nemesis end up becoming such a valuable piece to their nearly well-oiled machine she couldn't figure out.

'From enemies to...' Part of herself couldn't truly accept the idea yet since he was not branding the tattoo but even then she accepted her leader's trust in him. 'Allies, it would seem.'

"Whatever, the sooner we can get the hell out of here then I won't act like less of a prick...oh wait that is a fantasy for you gals isn't it?" Feitan inquired, only to laugh at their pissed off expressions. Pakunoda turned her attention to the jars containing the eyes they came here to gather, something that became normal to them at this point while everyone else couldn't figure out why they were stealing back what they sold in the first place. What they weren't expecting to find is someone pulling the strings as Toshi theorized before she turned suicidal.
"Paku, I think you're gonna want to call Boss on these files that were on this computer. I would show them to you on the screen, but someone felt like turning a useful tool for research into a weapon for combat..." The hint was already obvious, and yet Shalnark had to give a nasty glare at Feitan who did something worse than killing people...he broke a computer monitor. That was something that Shalnark would fight about more than any verbal insults his fellow criminal usually threw at him on a daily basis.

"Someone wanted this ritual to take place with the cult implanting the scarlet eyes into themselves, but the timing of these events seems rather suspicious. Right after we sent them Kurapika this sacred "moment" would take place in a matter of a few days when in fact this cult has been at this for several years before we even came into the picture." Pakunoda nodded at Shalnark's explanation, took note of this information and wondered where their fellow spider's expertise in technical devices was going with this idea.

"Was all of this staged by someone? To what end do you think we are being manipulated, Shalnark?"

"I wish I knew that answer, but if these files are something to go by then we could have gotten played like the Omekata cult did by this guy. We might need to meet up with Boss sooner than expected..." He wasn't trying to suggest Pakunoda was a bad temporary leader far from that, the problem was whoever was running the show could be out to remove or manipulate the spider into some kind of trap with tonight being the first stage of that kind of plan by removing this cult from the picture.

"Don't tell me you're gonna let this boogeyman scare the piss out of all of you wanted fugitives! This guy wants to hide in the shadows then we'll draw him out, bare ass naked, with no one to help him out, and then we will teach him who the real specters of fear are in this world!" Feitan made it clear he wouldn't let anyone make him show fear, and he felt like his allies should have the same mindset. Shalnark began to get a whiff of wood burning, which made him ask Shizuku if she sucked up all the fire in the room.

"Burning smell..." Machi realized what that meant, her feet already moving back from where they came from discovering the burning blaze taking hold of the underground area. All of the spiders knew it was time to flee the scene, but they were still missing Franklin, Nobunaga, and Kalluto.

"We need to get out of here, so one of you needs to call Kortopi about driving the get-away van already!"

"I still wanna know who's bright idea was it to let that small man take the wheel of a car..."

"Not now, Feitan!" Handing the unconscious to Shalnark who complained about having to carry "dead weight" the group took everything of value while beginning their escape before the fire caught up with them. Kortopi waiting outside was enjoying a nice tune on the radio while interacting with the jockey on air, the questions he was asking about the artists he tried to get right and yet he failed with every answer that was asked.

"Alright folks here is another Brain Thumper, the year is 10 years ago, the place Yorknew City. Now for everyone listening can you tell us what famous music group began here with their first hit song..."

"Oh, I know this one umm...Yellow Car...Bug Boat...Submarine Surprise..."

"Beetles Submarine?"
"Correct! The Yellow Meanies started their rise to the top with a little tune called Beatles Submarine, which you can all listen to now while I take a short break on the Yu-Yu Hakusho Station 657!"

"Damn it!" Kortopi slammed his hands on the wheel, which he was able to sit on thanks to the several books the short man used to be able to see the window and not crash into something. "How could I get that wrong that's one of my favorite tracks..." The man decided to sing along with the track unaware of the door to this van being opened revealing an unconscious Nobunaga laying on the floor with Kalluto glaring at the driver who was ignoring him.

"Full speed ahead Mr. Boatswain, full speed ahead"

"Full speed ahead it is, Sergeant."

"Cut the cable, drop the cable"

"Aye, Sir, aye"

"Captain, captain!"

A paper fan quickly smacked Kortopi in the head showing a frowning Zoldyck who was furious that this man was ignoring him.

"Oh hey there Kalluto, so umm care to explain what happened to our fellow samurai?"

"How about while I was looking around for something that is personal to me I caught up to him dying next to someone who already looked to be a corpse." He knew that dragging this man out of the temple was a pain in his ass, but at the very least he would earn some respect from the others for not leaving him to die back there. Slowly he would be considered a real member just like with Kurapika, and Chrollo might consider giving them a literal stamp of approval with the official tattoo of the group.

"Hmm did you set a fire in the temple by any chance because-" A huge burst of flame began to spark in the area, clouds of black smoke rose up in the air, which left Kortopi and Kalluto concerned about sticking around here much longer since the authorities were bound to show up. Eventually, the rest of the group made their way into the van that while felt cramped with everyone in the van now ensured they would not need two vehicles to drive away in. Even the spiders were stunned by what they heard from Pakunoda and Machi; at the thought of what could have occurred with Toshi Teki and the rest of the cult resulting in her committing suicide via burning alive.

"Rape huh...that certainly explains why she was trying to screw Kurapika. Sometimes I forget we're all a bunch of murderers when we deal with people like this." Franklin knew they were not good people, but none of them took advantage of the men and women they killed in a sexual manner despite the jokes Nobunaga, Feitan, and Uvogin make about the opposite gender. Yes, even the infamous Phantom Troupe had some amount of standards, the bar was low for that but they never crossed those lines of rape or defiling the dead. Each of the spiders watched the haven of the Omekata Cult burn to a cinder with all their hopes and dreams being reduced to ash along with their bodies, the air in the night never smelled so foul to them.

- October 26 - Abandoned Warehouse

The news quickly spread about the inferno that spread through the fallen temple, much of the media was covering this event along with the knowledge of the Phantom Troupe coming back from the dead. It seemed that through "dying" and being reborn has only made the Phantom Troupe all the more famous and feared. The group was called by Chrollo himself early in the morning to turn on the
news, which would have a "special report" from the Republic of Padokia, the continent where Killua originated from in fact. Kurapika, remained in sleep trying to recover his inner wounds while remaining a Zetsu state with barely waking up to get some water and nutrients to get through the day.

"Is our dear princess ready to get out of her bed today?" Feitan gave a nasty glare at Kurapika while he was eating up some easy to make ramen since they didn't want to head out to the public to avoid being caught here.

"Come on Feitan things have could have gone much worse, and he does have company alongside him."

Kalluto knew that Nobunaga would hate being stuck next to the Kurta except for the fact he was the same shape as Kurapika that being they couldn't yell at each other let alone fight. Pakunoda was busy speaking with Shalnark on the files that were being uploaded to his laptop to decipher the stolen data. While that was happening Machi was playing around with her hair deciding to keep it down today instead of in her usual pony-tail. She looked at her two "patients" feeling annoyed that she would need to play nurse once again with their bodies, but she didn't complain about Chrollo personally fitting the bill for Kurapika's health.

"He continues to get hurt, and that body never seems to show any scars when he heals himself..." Shizuku was aware the injuries still affected the young man, the Holy Chain always seemed to keep his body looking like not a scratch was put on his skin. Machi knew the wounds, battle scars, and most extreme of injuries affected not his body rather his mind. Hence why Pakunoda wanted to provide more sessions of "therapy" to help him cope with his issues to some degree; he would hate her and remind Chrollo's number two of this, however, he did trust her with his personal thoughts over many of the other spiders.

"It seems like we are getting a special interview with one of the higher-ups in the Hunter Association. Ladies and gentlemen: Pariston Hill!" Eyes looked at the only functional television in the building as Kurapika was the first to awake from his needed rest, the first image he got was himself wrapped up in bandages with a few nen-stitches in his chest from Machi. The Kurta thought that he having deja vu about these circumstances, but he quickly followed everyone else as he eyes became glued to the glowing tube in the room.

"Now, you've wanted to make a few statements about the on-going Chimera Ant menace that has been plaguing this world for a while at this point." "That is correct, and that issue is something we plan on taking care of shortly. There is, however, another pressing matter that's recently gained our attention, the return of the seemingly undead Phantom Troupe."

"Oh yes the group that many of us have concerned dead have made their return, and if the rumors are true about the burning of the Omekata Group's main headquarters then those people could have been their first victims. To think such murderers could have survived the events in Yorknew is rather frightening, Pariston." To such a comment Pariston smiled and chuckle while sitting down in his chair during his televised interview with this news reporter.

"Indeed, but I've recently come to a realization about these past few weeks. I've come to understand that in order to truly be a hunter than you must understand the hunted. The Phantom Troupe has become the attention of all Black-List hunters who wish to collect on such a bounty they've made of themselves. With new dangers lurking in the world, and the unexplored world that is the dark continent it is only now that I wish to unveil this surprise I've been working on for a while." In the shadows, a very familiar face walked into the camera to shock the crowd watching on their television screens and would create a news story that wouldn't be forgotten.
"It would only make sense to handle the dangers in the world you learn how to deal with monsters from a monster. Don't you agree, Chrollo Lucifer?"

"Spoken like a true politician, Pariston." Kurapika saw Chrollo and Pariston shake hands with each other, and it was then he knew what he needed to do right now. He didn't care if his "caretakers" disagreed with him on his decision.

"I have to go there...Gon and Chrollo will be waiting for me."
Act 12: Rat X Rabbit

Chapter Summary

After coming into the heart of the Hunter's Association, the Zodiac begins to wonder what to do with the seemingly rouge Kurapika while a golden opportunity presents itself to Kalluto and his brother involving Killua.

Act 12: Rat X Rabbit

- November 10th - Hunter Association HQ

The events in East Gorteau took everyone by surprise within the association, the death of the current Chairman of the Hunter Association: Issac Netero. Everyone remained in shock about this, no one expected a man who remained in the position he had for quite a while to end up dying in the fashion he did at the hands of the pinnacle of the Chimera Ant race. With the immediate threat over with all of the world's major hunters came into the town where the upcoming Chairman Election would soon begin with many believing Pariston Hill taking advantage of the previous chairman's demise for his own gain. With an unknown future in sight for everyone involved two blonde individuals make their arrival outside of the giant building where Menchi was relaxing with a treat, she took from a foreign land.

"Ahh that certainly hits the spot, the sweet would put on a pound or two if I wasn't a hunter. Damn, I love my line of work..." Enjoying the chocolate-frosted cake she had in her hand the 21-year old Gourmet Hunter was lost in her own personal world of sweets, and unaware of the two men trying to get her attention. Menchi's attire had quite the aesthetic that many would look at including the last chairman Netero who liked her see-through mesh shirt, short daisy dukes, and black bra. With her legs in a crossed position, she certainly oozed sex appeal.

"That asshole Pariston might attempt to make me wear "proper" hunter attire, but I will be damned before he takes away my food. Give me sugar or give me death, you smirking yellow bastard!" Pointing up in the air she finished her speech to no one in particular when both of the strangers decided to introduce themselves by showing off their Hunter Licenses.

"Hey, there do you mind if I can have a small bite of that cake," The cheerful blonde said while pointing at himself and his partner who stood in a blue and yellow outfit that many had seen before in the news. Menchi couldn't believe those words came out of this fellow hunter's mouth, her hands were ready to stab him with the fork in her left hand. Then, she recognized who exactly was staring at her position on the park bench...the very people she never expected would show up out of the blue like this.

"Who the hell do you think you are showing up like this, and what makes you think I'm going to give you anything besides a stab to the chest...spider!" Menchi thought Shalnark was either stupid, crazy, and or both for confronting her like this. Before she could toss out a fork to the thief's head Kurapika steps in to explain the situation as he was holding up his badge.

"Believe it or not we're here on business to meet up with a few people, the man at the top of our list being Pariston Hill. The Vice-Chairman of the association who likely is here today." Kurapika knew the explanation would not fully explain two people who should hate each other standing together as
hunters in front of an examinator like this after weeks of remaining on the run from the authorities, and with no kind of communication with hunters around the world let alone to his friends in the organization.

"What makes you think I should let you go anywhere besides an interrogation room, Kurta?"

"Well, you can question us but the both of us are official hunters. Ah, rest assured, the pass here is genuine nothing there is nothing fake about this license." Menchi wanted to smack Shalnark, his smile was beginning to piss her off while she looked at the proof in his hand that he was really a hunter. Kurapika knew the girl was rather strange in her choice of outfits, but he would never question her tastes in food considering what she and the other examinators put him and his friends through during the exams.

"Who did you steal this from you bastard! There is no way you could have gotten this through the exams!" Menchi began to shake the computer expert violently while Kurapika tried pulling her off while being called a pervert for even touching her like that.

"Run it through your systems, lady! I'm sure when you put down the food that you will find my name in your database." Shalnark replied while hiding behind his companion in fear of the butter knife wielding Menchi. As their strange argument continued Menchi wondered why Kurapika didn't speak with Leorio, Killua, and Melody about his absence ever since the "death" of the Phantom Troupe, the response given was a basic I couldn't reveal myself to the media answer that she didn't accept for a second. If Kurapika really cared about his friends then she believed he would break away from the spiders to go meet with them again unaware of the stipulations placed on Kurapika's heart.

"Trust me...I had good reason to avoid being seen like this, and even now the world is going to want to come after me with questions like you're doing right now," His eyes darted from her angry expression to Shalnark's nervous look about this revelation he made about what happened to him. "To sum it up I could only reveal myself today after a certain man decided to make himself know to the world." By that he meant Chrollo Lucilfer, and whatever game he was playing with Pariston Hill. At the very least he would feel better that he could see everyone that he cared about here even if one of them wasn't in the best of shape.

"Hmm. I don't trust it you could be a fake Kurapika hiding with Zetsu to make your identity! How about you prove to me you're the real deal?" He knew that she would be suspicious of him even if he was honest about why he didn't come out about being alive at this moment. Looking her in the eye he told her what happened with him and the brigade of criminals, their adventure to hunt down all of the scarlet eyes, and how he turned into the very thing black-list hunters look to capture or kill in the first place.

"The irony certainly isn't lost here, Menchi. To find what I've been looking for I had to embrace the lifestyle of my most hated enemies, the people who ruined my entire life merely five years ago," His eyes darted from her angry expression to Shalnark's nervous look about this revelation he made about what happened to him. "With that said it doesn't mean working with them has been a complete waste of my time." They helped him achieve his goal of reclaiming the eyes slowly over the past few months.

"Damn. I guess you've learned how to use people since becoming a black-list hunter, but why didn't these guys murder you for those eyes in your sockets."

"Aww, the thought of ripping out this guy's eyes just won't do for me or the others well Nobu and Feitan might try doing that but..." Glaring at Shalnark to keep quiet Kurapika knew he needed to say something to ease the tension in the air.
"We kinda need each other right now...symbiosis to say the least on our relationship." He was given that speech during the first days by the head of the spider himself, so Kurapika figured to simply use that to help make her understand this deal. In a funny way, Chrollo has become an unexpected mentor, teaching him things that seemed horrible to learn, but helped him overcome some of the trials he had to go through during his strange journey. He would have likely been dead for real if he hadn't been forced into following the spiders and their leader.

"Bah, the reality is I'm not going to ever figure out what the hell went down between you guys, but honestly, those criminals seem easier to deal with than the chimera ants. I guess if you know that much then you might not be some body-snatcher, fake imposter using Kurapika's image, and or some weird alien changeling after all. If you truly want me to believe you, then how about we start the physical examination then to confirm you're really Kurapika Kurta." Menchi snickered at the flabbergasted expression he used along with Shalnark's angry tantrum about not trusting his genuine words.

Being the spider's first time in the halls of the hunter's building in a long time Shalnark was thrilled to begin remembering his early years when he passed the exams. This time around he was handcuffed to a chair, several guards were watching him play on his cellphone, and he was not allowed to pee without someone standing behind him in the bathroom. Despite promising not to use Black Voice in order to earn Kurapika's acceptance in going along with him to this place no one in the association was buying this, so he was now without his phone leaving him bored with nothing to do while Kurapika met up with the higher-ups here.

"Hello? Anyone want to tell me what's going to happen?"

All of the guards told him to shut up leaving Shalnark with a pout as he felt like anything but a hunter. Watching everyone walk by he noticed most were either frowning or had tears rim from their eyes unaware they were still mourning the loss of the previous chairman. He asked one of his guards to explain what happened, but he just got another fearsome look that said don't talk or you're getting punched in the stomach. He was then approached by a man in a strange costume that stood out compared to the grey-colored men keeping Shalnark from moving from his spot.

"This is him? He's one of the infamous spiders wanted throughout the world?" For a moment he thought this was a simple joke however the tech expert of the spiders wasn't laughing at one of the members of the Zodiac. Mizaistorm expected someone more frightening in appearance, the boy who was playing around with his feet was anything but that.

"What? Expected Franky would be here instead? Then again he would fit the expectation you all seem to believe about the Phantom Troupe." He gave a defiant look not wanting to be looked down by anyone here considering earning the official stamp of a hunter was no easy task for anyone including Shalnark.

"Bold words considering you don't have that silly phone to call for help in this place. I don't know what your deal with Kurapika is, but make no mistake you will die here or later by our hands along with the rest of your pals." The "Ox" wanted this boy to feel all kinds of fear knowing that he likely wouldn't get out of this place alive. Instead, Shalnark couldn't help but giggle at the threat made against his life. How many times people said that he was going to die or get the piss beaten out of him by now Shalnark lost track of the count.

"Are you going to kill me then or will it be these rent-a-cops under the association's payroll?" The Zodiac wasn't the only person in the room capable of snarky comments or the will to fight back with big words. Mizaistorm brought down his fists on the chair which Shalnark was stuck in, and nearly breaking his bound hands in the process of this sign of intimidation. The computer prodigy was
afraid of not being able to use his phone or computer with the bones in his fingers being shattered by this brute.

"How about you start telling me what you plan to accomplish by coming here, spider!?!"

As the criminal genius was being interrogated by the Zodiac's Ox Kurapika was held in a two-way room awaiting other members of the Zodiac to begin questioning what he's been up to since his supposed demise. The Kurta wasn't expecting a warm welcome; no fan-fare or people he knew being happy that he was okay just an empty room with cold handcuffs on his wrists. The questions running through his mind kept him busy while the rest of the Zodiac wondered what to do with the Kurta. Then, he saw him...the face of Kalluto's brother looking at him from the two-way mirror that was not turned on at the moment.

"Kurapika...it really is you isn't it?" Killua knew that tribal outfit could only belong to his friend, but something about him wasn't the same. Leorio also noticed this change while shedding a few tears of joy. Despite the room being locked up from outside, the both of them were considering breaking the window keeping them away from Kurapika.

"Killua...are you there..." His desire to meet him was overriding his other thoughts as he centered his focus on the Zoldyck family member in his sight, the only person he cared about touching now.

'Find him and bring him back to his family. Bring him back to his real home...' The whispers in his ear he couldn't understand or ignore, his hands were trying to break free of the binds, his feet were trying to knock over the chair he was sitting in, and he was trying to crawl over to the window that was keeping him away from his target-friend, Killua.

"Kurapika! Hold on we're coming through to help!" Yes, that is exactly what he wanted or rather the subconscious will being implanted into his mind wondered, the friends of the lone surviving Kurta remained unaware they were walking into a carefully laid trap. Leorio took hold of Killua's arm before he could make the first strike, however, the man began to notice how this behavior seemed out of character even for a "changed" man like Kurapika.

"Kurapika! Why are you sweating like this? Don't you remember us or me?"

"Killua...please help me I can't...break the window. I will be alright when you get me out of these cuffs." While Leorio wasn't the smarter man in the world even he knew something was wrong about this.

"What are you talking about?! He's stuck in there likely freaking out because we're back together, and he doesn't even know about Gon most likely." Leorio wasn't sure that is why their friend was starting to freak out, but Killua wasted no more time in trying to break down the window keeping him from his friend. Cursing a few more times about this situation Leorio knew that Killua wouldn't be swayed by reason at this point, the reunion that Kurapika promised is finally happening, so the former assassin wanted to hug his friend despite the bonds holding them back from each other.

With enough force the plastic window was keeping Leorio and Killua back so they decided to try the door instead of leaving Kurapika to try bringing out his chains to break free of the cuffs on his hands like a spider through the air, he moved.

"There was go at least not everything in this building is up to date with its security." Leorio was grateful no one was watching as they managed to pry open the door handle with a self-made lockpick with a simple paperclip.

"Alright now don't go near him just yet Ki-"
Killua cut him off, "Kurapika!" The Zoldyck heir ran over to Kurapika trying to calm him down as he was thrashing on the ground in desperation to get free. Leorio couldn't help noticing more uncharacteristically Kurapika was acting since he was only asking for Killua to see him, his friend. The fact he didn't even ask about Gon made him very worried, but Killua was begging for Leorio to help release Kurapika from the cuffs binding him. All of this seemed wrong...they had to have locked him in a chair for a reason.

"Are you sure this is the-" His lockpick was removed as Kurapika was no longer held in the cuffs, Killua wrapped his arms around Kurapika while weeping that he could touch his friend again. The spiders, chimera ants and no one else was keeping them apart from each other right now. To Killua everything seemed right in the world, but this was only a short moment of happiness.

"Kurapika...I'm so happy that you're alright..."

"As am I, Killua...brother of the Zoldyck family..." Hands were wrapped around Killua's neck as Kurapika's eyes shimmered in the ominous crimson while his mission was clear, the drifter of his family must return to his blood relatives in one piece no matter who gets in his way. Naturally, the sudden grip on Killua's arm caused everyone in the room to freak out.

"Kurapika! What is going on with yo-"

"Get out of my way!"

Leorio couldn't believe what he was seeing, but Killua was trying to break free of Kurapika's grip on his arm, tightening as the blonde was considering using the handcuffs he had on his friend-turned hostage. Killua knew he might need to use Transmutation to get out of his friend's hold the conscious inside didn't want to harm his comrade like that forcing him to hit Kurapika in his pale cheeks a few times. Looking at Kurapika's face the ex-assassin knew something was wrong with him, the answer to what exactly remained unknown to Killua.

"Stop struggling and just let me take you back to where you belong!"

"Why the hell is so obsessed with dragging me back to...my family?" Kurapika suddenly brought his hands over Killua's mouth to try it harder to breathe despite Leorio pulling at him from behind in an attempt to pry him off. Killua knew he couldn't fall unconscious, the charging bolts in his hands were something he was about to regret doing to his precious friend. Meanwhile, all Kurapika saw in his head were black, swirly eyes looking at him with the same words being whispered in his mind.

"Capture him...bring him back to the Zoldyck family...this is your mission!" No matter how much Kurapika wanted to ignore this order the power of Illumi's golden needle was too much, so he was forced into taking this man back to his brother by any means possible. Killua was rescued when Leorio whacked Kurapika in the back with a chair. The ex-assassin was surprised for a moment by his friend, but he remembered that like the Kurta laying on the floor Lerorio had undergone a change of his own over the last few months.

"That must be some kind of impersonator faking being our friend, the idea of him trying to abduct you like this is just unacceptable." Looking at the unconscious Kurta who was still feeling the effect of Killua's electricity run through his body Leorio wondered what exactly happened just now.

"No, Leorio. Something about him is different from before...and whatever it could be I don't like it." Killua should have trusted his buddy's instinct on this matter, slapping the cuffs back onto Kurapika hoping that someone from the association would explain what's been going on here. Instead, Melody, the close personal aid of his during his hunt for the spiders was shocked to find her confident locked in a chair with some minor scars on his face. Looking at Leorio and Killua for some
kind of answer they also felt unsure about what happened to their ally and friend.

"We tried to set him free of those cuffs...it was a mistake apparently." With that Kurapika was beginning to stir out of sleep; for a moment he thought he was still dreaming when he saw Kalluto and someone standing by him instead of Killua, Leorio, and Melody. The smaller of the two Zoldyck heirs was glaring at him with disapproval.

"No, no, no. This will not do at all. My brother gave you this assignment to complete, so you can't rest until you reunite our family."

"Fulfill your purpose, the ones who stand in your way must be put down..."

The needle began to vibrate, as a headache quickly formed in Kurapika's head making him groan out in pain. The others noticed the blonde try to grab hold of his head to relieve the pain in his skull.

"Kurapika what's wrong with you now?" Each of them saw the blonde rub his head against the top part of his chair desperate the relief the suffering his brain was going through under the hypnotic suggestion being put in his mind.

"Make it STOP! Something please help me..." Being so close to his target, unable to do anything to make the pain stop, and with his limbs restrained he could only thrash around in torment. None of them could figure out what was going on until Kurapika continued to complain about his head killing him. To further complicate matters Pariston Hill showed up along with Cheadle Yorkshire and Kanzai of the Zodiac in tow. Pariston simply found the whole situation entertaining, unlike his fellow hunters who wanted these troublemakers to stop making problems like this.

"Well, I suppose we need to get down to business. Can you show me how to open doors like you just did to this one?"

"Pariston!"

She gasped at the man's lack of concern over the more important matters.

"Oh come on Cheadle. You know that I would love to understand the crude methods these people use to steal things or how they've gotten into locked rooms like this one. I'm guessing these gentlemen have a few things in common with those wanted A-Class fugitives." The Vice-Chairman was aware of how serious the "Dog" was compared to the other hunters, but the "Tiger" was ready to beat the hell out of Kurapika by the way he was twitching around in his chair.

"Don't tell me that Kurta brat needs to take a piss! If you don't want me to punch that friend of yours tell him to calm the hell down already." Kanzai had to be talked down by Pariston while he found the whole idea of having a meeting in this room stupid in the first place.

"Hold on a minute! Kurapika, can you explain to me exactly where you're feeling this pain." Killua watched the Kurta train his eyes on him for a moment still focused on capturing him until he closed his eyes feeling the needle throb against his brain.

"Someone...help me...please just make the pain go AWAY!"

'It must be that same thing I went through, but I can't look at it here not with everyone watching us.' Killua decided to wait until the hunters were no longer observing to further investigate what he thought was his brother's manipulation. Saying that Kurapika needed something for a severe headache Leorio squinted his eyes in suspicion about what Killua really thought was going on with Kurapika.
"Hmm, that does sound troublesome to hear. I guess our "Rabbit" Piyon would be more aware of how to deal with such a painful thing."

"Rabbit?"

"Oh, that's right you two haven't even met or heard much about the Zodiac organization. I suppose introductions are in order..." Smiling to hide his true feelings of annoyance with the Kurta Pariston introduced himself as the Vice-Chairman along with other Zodics in the room along with their purpose in the association.

"You're the Rat? Honestly, I thought you would be the Rabbit of the team, Pariston," Leorio remarked with a grin of amusement. "Rat or Rabbit it doesn't matter really since it merely is a name to me."

Giving a wide grin he hoped Kanzai wouldn't say how he really felt about having the codename of the "Rat" as he changed the subject to a more serious matter. That being the absence of the previous chairman and who will replace Issac Netero, which lead to everyone looking at Pariston Hill as the one to assume the position as the new Chairman of the Hunter Association when that was the last thing he wanted to happen.

"It will only be a matter of time before the Election begins to seat a new chairman as decreed by the previous chairman himself," Cheadle sighed at the understanding of how busy this place would soon become seeing the mass chaos in the wake of Issac's death as nothing in comparison to an election process. "That and the currently delayed Dark Continent Exposition will need to be addressed as well."

"Boring paperwork it sounds like!" Kanzai figured that is what would happen, and how he despised having to sit down and write down and fill out so much wasted paper from poor trees that were harvested for such a resource. Being in charge of the Defense Division for the upcoming traveling team for that unknown land he wanted to focus on that instead of this business with who's in charge, since he felt Pariston had it in the bag at this point with no one likely going to try and take that position from him in an election.

"Kanzai! You know the previous chairman would want things to be decided by the power of voting, and not given away in such an easy matter. That is why we are hunters because the world is not an easy place to live in." Cheadle knew her comrade was impatient in some matters, but she couldn't accept anyone breaking these kinds of rules when they should be enforced in these uncertain times.

"Indeed, and since this election will be important I would like all hunters possible to take part in this event including all of you here in this room. That is when your friend gets over whatever seems to be troubling him."

"What about that bastard who caused Kurapika to run away and his subordinate?" Killua decided to address the big elephant floating in the room, the fact both Chrollo Lucilfer and Shalnark were here and not being tortured for their actions. Pariston merely shrugged his shoulders knowing the answer Killua would get won't satisfy his anger towards the Phantom Troupe for taking away his friend, breaking his mind likely scaring him further and trying to make him into a criminal fugitive.

"Those two are indeed official hunters, the licenses checkout and it does seem like they've earned their way into the association properly."

"Meaning?" Killua wasn't liking where this line of thought was going for his revenge against them.

"They are both hunters like yourselves, which means you can't exactly kill them or even attack them
unless you're provoked or inside the grounds of Heavens Arena." Leorio thought the VC was joking
about that, but Pariston's usual smirk wasn't even showing on his face when he finished with that
statement. Cheadle had to admit Chrollo's scheme of becoming an official hunter to avoid being
hunted by those black-list members of the association or any bounty hunters coming to claim a high
amount of jenny for his dead body. She wondered what his endgame would be considering he likely
was still in charge of the Phantom Troupe's operations.

'Their chief must be plotting something big with his spiders, the hunters, and Kurapika. We're all
merely pawns in this game, but Chrollo and Hisoka aren't the only players involved..' 

"So, what the hell are we supposed to do then? Let those pricks walk around like they own the place
after everything they've done to Kurapika, to your association, and to us!" Killua's angry became
visible as the sparks that were being expelled from his body at a rapid pace, the hunters knew that
had to calm the Zoldyck down before things would get even more out of hand.

"Relax this also means that they can't harm anyone here. In a funny way, the situation is now a
stand-off, the first one to make a move would be the one in trouble kind of a marvelous plan on
Chrollo's part."

"You can't be seriously happy about Chrollo scheming his way out of facing judgment, Pariston?"
Leorio couldn't believe what he was hearing out of the Vice-Chairman's mouth. Even his fellow
hunters were surprised by how much their superior was giving to a criminal wanted by the law. The
last thing they wanted is fuel to support more criminal activity throughout the world.

"We are some of the world's most feared hunters, aren't we? For years we've tried hunting down the
spiders; only for the leader of the Phantom Troupe to come right here with open arms. If he could
pull this off then why shouldn't we congratulate him on such an accomplishment." Pariston's words
got nothing besides angry looks of disgust, the reactions were not surprising in fact they were
encouraged by his boasting of a wanted fugitive's intellect. That stunted, bored look in the Rat of the
Zodiac's eyes quickly was replaced by renewed interest when he remembered what was going on
today between all four of the people in this room.

"How rude of me to interrupt such a wonderful moment for you all. It likely has been a while since
you've all gotten to see your dear friend, so how about we get things started." They thought such a
remark was done in a joking manner considering Kurapika tried abducting Killua a few moments
earlier. Bringing out some coffee and hot chocolate that was filled with enough medicine to make
one drowsy enough to fall asleep in one hour after ingesting the drink Pariston explained the situation
about what likely would happen with everyone in the association.

"That is why I would appreciate if each one of you could take part in the upcoming election process,
which would certainly boost morale around the association by having a hero such as yourself take
part in this event. The public knows you and Gon being the heroes who helped exterminate the
Chimera Ant menace would be a welcome addition to this election." He wanted to earn their
approval in order to help boost support for himself despite not wanting to really win the election
process rather keep up the public image he's gained over the years.

"You're gonna use us to boost your approval ratings? Spoken like a true politician! Well, I don't
really give a damn about if you're in charge or not the only things that matter are the people close to
me!" Kanzai scoffed, the thought of hearing a speech about "friendship" would drive him up a wall
while Cheadle was impressed by Leorio's words even in the face of their superior in the association.
He was a brave man, but a naive fool in her eyes.

"What about Kurapika? People have already been spreading gossip about him being associated with
the spiders, the rumors won't stop until someone speaks out for him. Unlike any of us, your voice
will be more accepted in a non-biased fashion." Leorio and Melody weren't expecting Killua of all people to ask for help in clearing Kurapika's name. It also showed that he was concerned about what could happen if the world saw him in a much more darker light than he already had to be the avenger of his fallen clan, the turn into a fully-fledged murderer in the media's news reports was something Killua didn't want to happen.

"My, my, my! That is an interesting position, but what's in it for myself considering I might be compromising my position in the association by coming to the aid of a possible mass-murder if word comes out about the incidents revolving around the Phantom Troupe's recent actions. I have to be assured that you each will fulfill your purposes in this organization. It will be likely that should I take the position of Chairman my position as the Rat of the Zodiac will be empty. While I can fill that seat another position among the 12 will be open, so I have an interesting proposition for one of you lucky men."

"Forget it! I don't really care about being some kinda animal, Pariston. No offense, but I only want to see Kurapika get back to normal along with Gon..." Leorio wondered if he knew what a tremendous sacrifice Gon made in Eastern Goruto to achieve his own revenge against the chimera ants. That certainly would be another difficult thing he would need to learn about when he snaps out of his mental funk or rather controlled state of mind, but right at this moment, he wanted to believe Gon was here waiting for him.

"Once again I can't help but feel impressed by your simple desires, Leorio. I suppose we can continue this conversation later when Kurapika is awake, so you can spend some time with your friend, however, don't leave this door unlocked. I would hate to bother security about spending their time here with the recent bomb threats we've gotten about us "holding terrorists" in these walls." Between that and the mountains of paperwork that needed to be done by people, he would order to do for him Pariston bid the four goodbyes until later in the day. When they were far away Cheadle decided to ask about what they should do with their other "special" guests.

"Chrollo's been prowling around the place, and despite remaining in a Zetsu-like state security's been looking for a reason to kick his butt. Please tell me you're finally going to get him out of here when we are done with his interrogation along with his subordinate." She knew having so many combustible elements in this mix would only result in one giant explosion of emotions. Kanzai in contract to her thoughts wanted to beat the hell out of the A-Ranked criminal-mastermind.

"I wish we could just make him cough out his real intentions for being in the association. I hate needing to play these kinds of games with people, the fists and punches should explain everything you need to understand about someone's life."

"Blunt as ever Kanzai, but this is a delicate situation we're in now. As Cheadle said if something goes around it could spark a chain of events that would lead to a major disaster. Besides now that we can speak with Chrollo...and he's gone." Once the came outside of his holding room, the greeting left behind were two guards, an open door, and a small note saying he only wished to use the restroom.

"These guys don't deserve their current pay..." All three of the Zodiacs agreed with that statement as they tried asking the guards exactly how a handcuffed man was able to overwhelm them. One of them wasn't even in their regular clothing having been stripped down to his purple heart underwear. The now wanted fugitive knew that he was taking a gamble now as he left the restroom, which he wasn't lying about needing but he was now focused on his real goal. It had been a few months since he's been able to see Kurapika in person, the deal with Hisoka meant he needed to work through the association to become a hunter. All to fulfill the promise of a fight that could release him from Kurapika's judgment chains wrapped around his beating heart, the whole reason he's was about to get jumped by a few guards who sought revenge for some deaths caused by him and his group.
"If they are correct about the holding room, then Kurapika is a few floors down from my current position."

The criminal mastermind knew he only had a few minutes to spare, with his hands stuck in cuffs since he didn't have anything to unlock them, but he was grateful he wouldn't need to worry about having a disguise even if it smelled like old cheese. While Chrollo headed for the nearest elevator Kurapika was also making his escape by using a sharp part of his chains that wasn't held down by restrictions to unlock the cuffs on his wrists. Melody was on watch since Leorio and Killua also needed to use the restroom for a minute.

"Oh, Kurapika. I can't imagine what you went through being held hostage by your worst enemies. At least you're with your friends again Killua and the others will-"

Before the aid of the Kurta could say more she heard the metal chair fall over, which revealed Kurapika free of the bonds keeping him bound in the locked room.

"Kurpika...are you there?" She knew that he looked rather vacant in his eyes, the result of his current "mission" override his other feelings. Realizing that he would likely try breaking free she pulled out her flute hoping it would calm him down for a moment. Being an Emitter, the flute she plays could either leave someone in a fatigued state or in Kurapika's case relief them of mental stress. She saw that he was clutching his head in pain meaning she was getting through to him.

"Make it stop...they won't stop TALKING to me...help me..." His voice was shaking out as the whispers grew into shouting ringing in his ears. She grew concerned about his mental state hoping that if she could talk him down then the association would provide him with help. His berserk state was slowly turning him more animal-like, but unlike before he was solely focused on completing his "assignment" no matter who stood in his way, the following response was the Kurta grabbing Melody by her neck to force her into opening the door.

Stepping out of the room, Kurapika and his hostage moved around to look for an elevator while Melody tried screaming out for help while being squeezed by the Kurta's chains wrapped around her neck. She couldn't fathom what is driving her ally into this kind of state or what is driving him to do all of this.

"Don't you remember...we were trying to protect Neon Nostrade..."

"Silence..."

"What about your-ahh friends...what would they think about this? You...need to snap out of this...KurapikaAAAA!"

"I said silence!" Kurapika's eyes darted around to look for an elevator or stairway to find Killua who likely was still in the bathroom. Instead, he came across a guard who wasn't with any kind of back-up.

"That's weird...guards usually come with more than one man around this place. Why are his hands stuck in handcuffs as well?" Melody could tell something was off about this, but Kurapika only saw an obstacle standing in his way, except it wasn't an ordinary person behind the riot guard styled helmet; as it was, in fact, the very person who lead him down this path of increasing madness, to begin with, Chrollo Lucilfer. Another promised reunion although this certainly was going to be a happy one, to say the least. Kurapika hissed out to the "guard" suggesting he forget about capturing him and just leave before he gets hurt.

"I'm afraid that can't happen, dear Kurta. It has been a while since we've seen each other, so this new
state of mind you have now looks surprising, to say the least...” Kurapika would be shocked to hear the voice belonging to the man behind his changed lifestyle if the voices in his head weren't giving him commands. Shoving Melody into a wall he tried wrapped the "guard" in his chains, but even without his hands Chrollo was still able to use his abilities such as teleportation, his body swapped places with Melody resulting in her being in Chrollo's place in the chains.

"Not bad I will have to be careful about those chains of yours." While he still remained in his stolen guard disguise Chrollo took hold of Kurapika's free arm to hold him down while trying to understand what is happening with the Kurta. In response, Kurapika tried to kick Chrollo in the face only to knock off his helmet revealing his face to Melody.

"Impossible! Why are you here..." She didn't think he would also escape from his own holding room, but that question and hatred she felt for him would need to wait for another time. She needed to play her flute again to soothe her partner's pain, so she requested help from Chrollo Lucilfer to remove the chains keeping her arms from using her instrument.

"I don't care about anything else right now, the only thing I want from you is being helpful in calming down Kurapika!" She gave a defiant look despite being rendered helpless at the criminal. To do that, she would need to accept Chrollo's assistance despite his reply about her needing help from a fugitive like himself rather ironic. Kurapika roared out as he began to scratch, claw, and grasp at Chrollo who was still holding him down with his knee on his face. Giving Kurapika a weak punch to keep him down he went over to Melody and noticed she was free of the chains already.

'That must mean...damn it!' He was now wrapped up in Chain Jail, which reduced him to a Zetsu-like once again. Kurapika was snarling, itching for a reason to kill the man who took away almost everything he cared about, the time would be right to do this despite the orders still being given to hunting down the Zoldyck in this building.

"Are you really going to kill me, now? Don't you have some other reason for doing all of this? If you wanted to just murder me then you have done it back in Yorknew."

"Are you a fool, Chrollo? Don't provoke him unless you want to die here!" Melody couldn't believe she said that however, this situation was the most strange moment she's ever been involved in. Chrollo chuckled at the suggestion of his death coming at this very moment. He should have realized it earlier, and yet now with Kurapika acting out of character he finally understood what is going on along with Killua.

"He must not have wanted anyone else to learn about what's been controlling you ever since you've met Kalluto Zoldyck. Since that moment you've been a sleeper agent for the Zoldyck Family. Unaware, unable to stop yourself, and unwilling to ignore your "mission" that you have been given. A clever gambit, the flaw being your emotional state has a trigger that caused the suggestion to become so erratic you can't do anything else besides kidnap their missing brother." The Kurta moved around not responding to Chrollo's words only moving when Kurapika's eyes grew red with killing intent.

"...Just die, you heartless bastard!" Kurapika's hand was ready to end both of their lives not caring that it would break his friend's hearts, but as he looked at Chrollo's peaceful expression something stopped him from making the killing move with the sharpened piece of his chains. He wasn't angry, enraged, or pissed off he simply closed his eyes to embrace his demise. Something inside of Kurapika's head was keeping himself from killing him, and he couldn't understand what the hell it was.

'Am I finally crazy...have I always been insane using excuses and reasons to justify my madness? There is no way I can do this...no matter how much I hate this man for ruining so many lives...'
'Do not give up! You must fulfill your role given to you at this moment. Don't let anything or anyone get in your way...'

'There is a problem with that, however. If I kill this man then I will die with him as well...that is something I can't allow to happen.'

The images of Illumi and Kalluto were now shouting at him to complete his purpose with the needle vibrating in his skull. He had to hold onto his arm before it could move out to finish off Chrollo, and he knew that he couldn't do much else to stop the chains for much longer despite Melody's music playing. He was considering apologizing to Gon once he found him, and to his comrades, since he was not strong enough to resist the order forever...the last thing he saw was Chrollo's smile before he collapsed onto the floor. Killua was the man who unwillingly just saved Chrollo Luciffer's life with his quick Thunder Palm strike, but he quickly removed the golden needle from Kurapika's head now that he couldn't move around, his mind regretting that he didn't do this earlier when he had the chance to stop all of this.

"God-damn it, Illumi! You were behind this madness just to bring me back home!" He was disgusted by this action made by his brother, too much chaos happened because of this manipulation of his friend, and it could have resulted in the last Kurta being killed. Chrollo not being ungrateful provided his thanks to the Zoldyck, his face was pounded in by Killua in a matter of seconds. Before Pariston arrived to break them up Killua gave each ounce of hatred built within himself for what he did to Kurapika.

"You son of a bitch! You, selfish, heartless, sociopathic son of a bitch!" Killua's cursing was directed at the slowly moving but still hurt criminal mastermind.

"I'm glad you managed to save Kurapika's life..."

"Shut the fuck up. You fucking murderer!"

The day would only get more bizarre from here...

The situation with Chrollo, Kurapika, the association, and Kurapika's friends reached a fever pitch over the past couple of hours. Over a series of complicated circumstances all these parties came together in the same building, and now the most of them were gathered in the same room in the association's headquarters. A fight that resulted in Chrollo looking like a bloody mess, Killua ready to murder him to return to his assassin days and the Zodiacs had to play mediator while Kurapika remained strapped onto a cold table.

The medical staff explored the Kurta's body for any other foreign items that should be in a human's flesh, the golden needle discovered by Killua didn't go unnoticed by Pariston and his cohorts. Knowing they would demand some answers Killua explained what the deal is with his family, and why they were determined to bring him back home which his friends learned about first-hand during the exams. This scheme, however, got under the Zoldyck's skin, but surprisingly he wasn't the only one upset about Kurapika being turned into a pawn.

"It seems that Kalluto's involvement was mainly about capturing Killua." Despite nearly being murdered by the hunter he was sitting next to in a guarded room Chrollo hid his anger under a smile, the bruises covering his face made his expression rather disturbing to Leorio who also couldn't believe how events had transpired over the last couple of minutes.

"Well, at least he knows how to be deceitful like Hisoka was, Chief!"

"Chief? Who exactly are you kid?" Leorio never met Shalnark in person, and he figured he was just
some hunter that he didn't see before around this place. Having an ego about himself Shalnark was taken aback by that remark from one of Kurapika's closest comrades.

"What?! You must have heard about me along with the other spiders! Come on, hunter!" Chrollo quickly ordered his subordinate to relax with a quick glare of obedience, the command was obeyed without hesitation. Leorio was sickened to hear that not just the head of the spiders but one of his followers were in the same room as him and Kurapika who couldn't say much while in his current state of mind. Melody was horrified to learn about these two being in the same space with them, the feud in Yorknew still fresh in her mind with both groups.

"Why don't we simply kill this man and his geeky subordinate? They've done nothing besides make trouble for everyone here." The fact both Chrollo and Shalnark were getting better treatment than what most of the public received considering their criminal reputation surprised her.

"Ahh, the girl Kurapika brought up during our conversations, so you must be Melody. Such a fitting name for someone who likely plays such wonderful music with that flute in your hand." She growled at him despite the criminal simply making a compliment about her skills not in a sarcastic manner either, which she didn't believe was the case. Shalnark glared at her for accusing his leader of being not honest about his praise while Pariston broke up the increasing tension in the room.

"The jovial nature is appreciated, Chrollo. I must protest however that we must get down to the matter at hand, the fact of you and your accomplices who managed to bring us the last surviving Kurta left in this world. I don't know if we should be thrilled or question what kind of trap you have laid for us, but then Illumi Zoldyck's golden needle happened!" No one was laughing at the "humor" being displayed by the Vice Chairman of the Hunter Association.

"Nothing else seems to be hidden within the Kurta's flesh, the doctors and medical staff have given him a clean bill of physical health. His mental frame of mind, however, is a much different situation..." Geru, the head of the Science Division of the upcoming Dark Continent voyage explained as she walked over to her fellow hunters in the room. She questioned the wisdom of keeping such a threat in the same area as everyone else involved with him, but she figured there was a method to Pariston's madness.

"Excellent, keeping tabs on him will be your duty while you're here "Snake' of the Zodiac. Geru if you haven't met her already is one of my most trusted people in the association."

"Is that another one of your jokes Pariston; suggesting that a person like me who can't stand being around you is someone you can trust. Furthermore, there are several times I've been ready to bite your face off because of how much you irritate me!"

"Such a wonderful person you are dear Geru!" Pariston didn't even blink when she brought out her snake from her elongated hand, with several hearts on the head, and a ribbon wrapped around its neck completing the rather childish image of a deadly predator. Kaizai began to laugh at this while Cheadle remained as calm as usual during these small moments of hostility between the Zodiac members. Mizaistom observed Chrollo, Shalnark, and the newer hunter's reaction to such a moment like this.

"I believe our guests here would like to understand what will happen to the person of interest, Kurapika." The Ox said deciding to get the focus back onto the matter at hand. Everyone agreed, but there was also the pending issue of the upcoming election with the death of Issac Netero. Business was about the pickup...

"Well, the voting process would be a nice breather for him. And I'm sure Killua and the others wouldn't mind being part of such a historic occasion like this election." The Zodiacs agreed on that
point, but they didn't expect Pariston to say that he was including Chrollo Lucilfer and Shalnark in that idea. Before anyone could scream out their disgust with that Chrollo spoke up in approval.

"What a wonderful idea. The first true assignment of being hunters and we would be a part of history. I think that is a nice way of introducing ourselves to everyone here," Shalnark looked at his leader as if he was completely insane by getting punched so much by Killua, and if some brain cells were killed in the process of that vicious beatdown.

"You can't be serious about this? There is no way any of the other hunters will accept those two and their voices let alone votes in the ballet! Mizai, aren't you the conscious of the Zodiac?" Cheadle asked her fellow Zodiac members for help in looking to talk Pariston out of this idea.

"It doesn't mean that I don't see the reasoning in Pariston's idea with the spiders. In these uncertain times people will question this association without someone like Issac to be our figurehead, so why not recruit former enemies into our fold to help show the public we are still in control of matters, but at the same time taking advantage of the resources these criminals can provide."

"AHAHAHAHA! This has to be the funniest thing you ever said, Mizai!" Kanzai thought the "Ox" found a sense of humor. "For a second I actually believed you were trying to justify this ass-backward plan the VC has cooked up." The stern man didn't say anything to deny that wasn't the case, the expression actually pissed off Geru and Cheadle.

"You can't be serious about trying to publicize the fact we're keeping these murdering, stealing, and insane criminals out of the hands of the law, Pariston! What about the ethics? Moral circumstances? Public backlash? Pariston? PARISTON!?"

"...Do you think we can make tonight's evening news with this story?" Geru actually bit Pariston on the hand when he spoke that line, Cheadle was considering slapping him upside the head for even having the gall to reply to that comment, and Kanzai was laughing his ass off at what he considered the highlight of the day for him.

'They are just as nutty as each of the spiders can be at times. Perhaps we do have a few things in commons with hunters...' Shalnark couldn't ignore the realization his mind was coming to while observing the Zodiacs bicker like he could with Phinks over drinks, Nobunaga on the subject of treasure, and with Feitan when he breaks one of his appliances; every time he feels scared or hurt the torture expert know how to vent his frustrations on Shalnark's helpless technology. The Phantom Troupe and the Hunter Association possibly joining forces had been something no one expected to happen, yet here they all were like they weren't at each other's throats.

"If we are to confront the upcoming dangers on the Dark Continent we can use all the help we can get, and the masses who aren't involved with us don't mind the spiders being killed off during our trip in the unknown world." Chrollo knew Pariston was selling them rather short, but the mastermind of his criminal group knew how dangerous beasts like the Chimera Ants were, the "Queen" Zazan alone showed that to him as his hometown was nearly turned into a hive for those beasts.

"Funny, the opportunity would likely have not even been considered if the Chimera Ants never rose to prominence. This is quite a devious play on my end, so I can hope you provide enough of a resource for our benefit, Chrollo. I know your other subordinates aren't here right now, but it would be helpful if they don't interfere with our business in the future." Being a Vice Chairman he needed to keep those fugitives in line, his status as a politician needed to remain as clean as possible, but he also knew that Chrollo's men had to continue stealing things that might be of use to both the spiders and the hunters.

"Symbiosis. The same thing I once told Kurapika back in Yorknew, and he didn't think that was
possible back when our little arrangement started." Killua's ears perked when he heard that comment from Chrollo Lucilfer. He, Leorio, and Melody had no idea of the Judgement Chain that binds Kurapika and Chrollo from actually killing each other, and even the Zodiacs remained in the dark about that with only Pariston being told from Chrollo himself.

"What did you do to my friend, bastard!!"

"Ask him yourself when he gets up since I doubt you will believe it even when I tell you. Still, if you feel like killing me just be aware there will be a consequence of that choice to seek out your vengeance." Smiling at Killua's confusion he knew that the pact made with the Kurta was proving to be the best thing he's done with his life, his Skill Hunter, major heists, and battles with some of the world's most dangerous opponents paled in comparison to the day he learned about the one Kurta that him and his men failed to kill on that fateful night.

"What do you think about this, Leorio? I know that I want to punch that arrogant look off that son of a bitch's face." Leorio was about to follow up with a quip when he wondered the words Chrollo used when he referred to Kurapika mainly a "pact" between them.

"I'm more concerned about what must have happened between them. The fact Kurapika spent so much time with the spiders, and it seems like they didn't physically torture him much bothers me..."

"You don't know what they've done to him Leorio. Being someone who's gone through his share of pain thanks to my "loving" family, the body can be tested to withstand pain whereas the mind is what truly can be considered breakable under such mental pressure that he must have gone through..." Killua swore if they scarred him any more than they've already had by killing his family he would kill every last one of them, the association's protection or not.

"At least he's out of their hands, so perhaps we should let him see Gon when he wakes up from his slumber."

Melody wondered how to handle explaining to him what happened to Gon and his Nen. She thought it would be the best if she gently explained to him the details while Killua thought differently on this matter. He didn't coddle him; he usually was blunt about things with the Kurta while Leorio was the middleman between Killua and Gon, and Gon, in particular, was the more optimistic one out of their little group. He would likely be the one trying to make light out of this situation, but the events of the last couple of weeks have changed even him from the kind of person he was before the Chimera Ants. The circumstances of the battle for supremacy of species across the world had been filled with losses on both sides.

"I'm not sure he will be willing to hear about what went down in the madness. I wasn't even there, but I still can't believe Issac and Kite are gone, well the Kite Gon knew..." The glasses Leorio wore came off as he was feeling so useless about being unable to provide much help during Meruem's insurrection in East Gorteau. Hearing the news stories, being far away in another part of the world, then learning about Gon sacrificing his future potential made him guilty that he couldn't be there despite the fact he likely wouldn't have been of much help against such hybrid beasts.

"Mnmnmnm...hnnnm?! The hell is wrong with my head, the pain feels like a jackhammer was drilled into my damn skull..." The subject of their discussion happened to be waking up after being under Illumi's mental control over the past couple of hours, the first thing greeting Kurapika was an angry "Tiger" hunter demanding all sorts of answers creating a rude awakening, to say the least for Kurapika.

"Mind explaining how the hell that prick managed to put a needle in your damn head! For that matter what in the holy hell are you doing with Chrollo mother-fucking Lucilfer?!"
"Kaizai, perhaps we should let him breathe first before we begin the interrogation properly." Cheadle sighed knowing how hot-blooded he could be at times—though she had to admit she was suspicious about what he was doing with the people who brought him nothing but misery over his life.

"W-Where am..." He didn't remember being put on this table or the fact he was about to kill himself along with Chrollo Lucilfer under the influence of the golden needle's mind control. Geru wondered if he was going to strike again even while being strapped onto a table with tight belts on his limbs, along with more sturdy security compared to the rank-and-file grunts they had watching him earlier.

"I know what you can tell, Pika! We hung out for several months, got involved with a bunch of people who died, found a couple of your clan's eyes, and then finally agreed to bring you back to your friends in one piece!" Everyone's eyes darted over at Shalnark's position, like a turtle he sunk into his shell with the attention now focused on him. Bringing out his hands to wave off the dread building inside he merely suggested that was a shortened up version of the events that lead to all of them coming here.

"Pika? Don't tell me you actually have some kind of nickname with this man? Aren't you one of the men who killed all of his brothers and sisters, so what would make you believe there is any kind of admiration between you two?"

"No offense weird snake lady, but you don't exactly know what happened when we had been traveling with each other over the past few months. You might think nothing has changed, outwardly, between us but you're wrong about that." He knew that something had changed not just within themselves but also Kurapika himself. The hostility towards the spiders was indeed present, and yet it wasn't as strong as back when he first met the murderers of his clan. With the Phantom Troupe most had gotten over their hatred for Kurapika, the action of killing Uvogin while never forgotten didn't keep them from speaking with the young man on several occasion, working with him on a certain mission, but there were still a few exceptions like Feitan and Nobunaga.

"You don't know anything about him, spider! Kurapika would have killed you all if he got the chance back in Yorknew, on sheer principle you all should have been killed a long time ago for your actions!" Killua was unable to stomach any more of this "understand" Shalnark was trying to suggest was happening with Kurapika and his captors.

"I don't really give a damn if you call it Stockholm Syndrome, the last of the Kurta should have his revenge for trying to split us apart from each other!"

"Interesting speech, but do you really think that he hasn't been getting own goals accomplished due to his interaction with my organization? Kurapika, why don't you explain what you've been doing yourself." Chrollo felt like the man at the center of this conversation had the right to speak with everyone anxious to learn his feelings about this matter. Despite being unaware of how he ended up like this Kurapika agreed with Chrollo's sentiment, so he decided to speak for himself on what his relationship with the spiders have become...no matter how they would end up reacting to the news.

"He has been helping me collect some of the Scarlet Eyes as was promised in our...arrangement," His eyes momentarily looked over to Killua, Melody, and Leorio before continuing on with his confession. "I-I needed to...kill people and beasts during these adventures. I am not proud of what I had to do- for the sake of my clan, however, I put my hatred to the side. It was necessary for my survival after all...right Chrollo Lucifer?" Passing the ball over to his partner in those crimes he nodded before confirming what they already knew to everyone else in the room.

"We've formed a sort of contract with each other, the second Kurapika kills me his own Judgement Chain will impale his heart to kill him as well."
"You god-damn monster! You must have forced him to do it against his will!" Killua was held back from beating him within an inch of his life by Mizaistom, his hand brought out a yellow card trying to keep the Zoldyck from making a mistake by harming the criminal again. Killua’s hand was charged up with enough juice to stun a wild animal or in this case seriously hurt a fugitive like Chrollo Lucilfer.

"I find Chrollo's manipulation of your friend just as repulsive, but you mustn't instigate a fight young one. This is still a civil discussion; the reason for our gathering isn't to judge if a man to die or not." That certainly did not mean he was against making Chrollo pay for his sins later on, but Geru wondered the ramifications of such a deal could mean for all the parties involved. They knew if this chain binding either man from dying was the truth, then it would mean that Chrollo and Kurapika both had to remain alive.

'A clever gambit, the fact we need Kurapika, as does his comrades, would that mean he was unable to be killed by those within the association.'

She didn't fully comprehend Chrollo's motives quite yet...

"Why go through all of this trouble? Are you afraid of accepting your punishment for slaughtering people and stealing everything possible, Chrollo Lucilfer?" She looked him directly in the eye while awaiting his answer. Having seen this man in person, and by watching him get beaten up like this she wondered if this truly was the mastermind of the Phantom Troupe.

"More like I've begun to see the potential the Kurta Clan really has "Snake" of the Zodiac. In a way, Kurapika serves as the redemption of his entire bloodline that was nearly brought to extinction. Certainly, before I would have tried killing him to claim those eyes for myself, but I've begun to realize an error that I made with the massacre. If I had let people like Kurapika survive they likely would have tried coming after my group for revenge, but their potential to grow like with Kurapika could have been reached if I left a couple of more survivors."

'He is trying to redeem my clan by keeping me alive? No, the true reason he's done this has to be more devious than that hell I know this bastard better than to assume he's suddenly gained a conscience.' He wondered the man's endgame by admitting all of this to everyone in the room except for convincing everyone not to kill him.

"What do you really gain from having this hold on our friend!" Leorio wasn't buying everything Chrollo said knowing how much of a liar he is today with Neon Nostrade being one of many victims of his lies. He was capable of using a small truth in a bunch of lies to fool everyone, and that was something the hunter both hated and admired about the criminal.

"Having a companion whom I can speak with several times, his abilities that have provided a lot of good fortune for myself and the others, but most importantly someone who can help me understand something I've been unable to figure out ever since I've grown up." He knew they wouldn't believe him no matter how much effort he put into explaining that kind of reasoning for his decision to add Kurapika into the Phantom Troupe. Grinning at a sudden idea he asked Shalnark and Kurapika to show off their gold coins to everyone in the room, which Kurapika was surprised to discover was still in his pants when he was being checked out for any hidden weapons.

"What an odd series of tokens. I suppose this your equivalent to the Hunter Association's licenses, Chrollo?"

"Well, the spiders aren't exactly like official hunters Pariston. Those coins are only provided to those I can trust, so you can imagine why I only give it to members of my organization."
"That is what those coins are for?" Cheadle couldn't believe that since she thought the item was simply a treasure Kurapika discovered for himself.

"Not exactly! Pika and the others also used them to settle debates with other members like who's turn it would be to cook a meal or clean dirty clothing." Shalnark brightened up at that comment, his mind thinking back to when he would discuss several things with Kurapika during this moment that almost made him feel like a normal boy not another murderer in a pack of killers. In those slow moments, Shalnark could understand Kurapika, the interactions between both men were something he actually cherished having with the Kurta.

"Amusing. In a strange way, you've both managed to get along with the person who you would have not minded killing just to rip his eyes to sell on the black market a few years ago." The Vice-Chairman never considered that Kurapika was capable of reforming these criminals, but they had undergone a small change in their ethics if he was able to live for so long being within their ranks granted not by choice. He knew then and there Kurapika was to be the successor to his rank and name within the Zodiac, the new Rat in more ways than one.

"So, what the name of blue balls are we supposed to do now? If we can't kill these guys...well I suppose that half-pint Shalnark is open season..." Kaizai heard the young man shriek out under that threat offered up on his life.

"If you're going to put it that way, then it would only be fair that my spiders get to kill one of your own in return."

Chrollo mused to the "fellow" hunter trying to protect his men.

"I believe that we shouldn't make such idle threats like that. Being a man of political power I certainly don't wish to make more enemies besides the lawyers, lobbyists, and protesters holding up homemade signs outside of my office." Pariston sighed once he realized how those issues would only increase in volume when today was over.

"Please don't tell me that...we're going to form some kind of truce with these men." Melody shuttered in fear at her comment with the idea also bringing disgust to most of the other hunters in the room. Many would consider such a union an insult to everything that the association has worked off; a betrayal of all the things hunters stand for in the world.

"Not exactly that more like a contract between our groups, and like Kurapika it will be quite a useful arrangement for both sides. Two of the spiders might as well be hunters already, so with their help, we can easily keep the others in line. Unlike most of our undercover agents using actual fugitives to hunt down treasures or threats against society might make the Phantom Troupe very helpful to our cause." Taking the concept of animal symbiosis and turning it on its head, since Pariston was going to force the dissolution of such an organization once they were useless to him unaware Chrollo was scheming of when he would ditch his role as a hunter.

"Being a hunter at the age of 26 you have lots of experience, wisdom, and talent you can use for the right reasons now instead of simple greed, Chrollo. The same goes for your little associate here as well, but that can wait for tomorrow. It would be awfully selfish to not let you all converse with one another now that the immediate danger is gone with that needle. I and the other Zodiacs have a lot to discuss, so enjoy your conversation and I'll bring you some nice hot coffee later." Kanzai and Geru thought about wanting them on what Pariston usually drugs the food and drinks he brings to someone, but Mizai and Cheadle were more concerned about what will happen when "he" arrives.

"His son likely is still in need of care in the hospital. I know that he's been distant from his son, but I really can't fathom him not showing up any day..."
That!...That is enough, Cheadle. Such a thing can be discussed in a more private setting. Be assured gentlemen we do have cameras in this place, the last thing we want you all to do is to break more things around here, and so why not try and pretend to be civil with one another...” Giving off the biggest fake smile Pariston gave another wave goodbye to everyone left in this room having several armed guards stand outside with several bolts keeping this door locked...he didn't want to be too careless after the last time.

The second they left the room Killua was about to charge the mastermind behind the spiders, and only Leorio and Melody were able to stop him from continuing his assault on the chained fugitive-turn hunters. Chrollo didn't seem phased or surprised by Killua's violent streak considering he was nursing a few minor injuries from the last beat down he received.

"Oh come on leave my Boss alone! It is easy to pick on someone who can't fight with their hands!"

"Actually I would have done the same thing in fact when Chrollo was my prisoner I took a few pot shots myself..." Shalnark was horrified to think of his leader being in such a state, while everyone else was more surprised to see how calm the man was despite his condition. Shaking his head Chrollo merely brushed off his bruised cheeks as nothing to him.

"I wouldn't mind if you wanted to make me your stress ball or punching bag, the physical pain you put me through won't be that much of an issue to my well-being."

"Tch, then let me test that little theory of yours bastard!” Killua was about to get froggy on the 26-year-old who's destroyed countless lives with his friends feeling the bolts of electricity from his body and nearly burning their skin.

"Killua...you will only make things worse. Right now we have to maintain ourselves in the presence of the people in charge of this building for our sake." Leorio's eyes almost fell out when he heard Kurapika of all people defending Chrollo Lucilfer. Melody thought he must have been under some other mind-control, the idea of him coming to the aid of a person who killed his parents was unbelievable.

"I should have killed him in Yorknew, but Leorio can tell you what that could have meant. The possible future of my fortune told by Neon's Nen was something that I couldn't risk happening to any of us.” Kurapika knew his reason for accepting the offer to see his future likely resulted in this outcome, but at least his friends were safe...at least from the spiders.

"Hey, you all didn't know what it was like to have a power that can predict a fortune of your future. Sure that outcome might not have occurred, but Neon Nostrade didn't think that was the case about her former ability." Killua remembered how her predictions were made, and figured that whatever Kurapika saw frightening him enough to do something extreme to stop it from coming true. Even though things hadn't gone badly during their stay with the Phantom Troupe, he knew they were capable of killing them; besides-just knowing that their leader was under Kurapika's control made them dangerous enough to do anything back then.

"You were trying to protect us back in that city?"

"Of course! Even now I still want nothing but your safety from these criminals along with Gon..." Killua and Leorio looked down at the floor, the both of them were unsure how they should break the news about what happened to him.

"Ohh! I have a question for you guys. How was Greed Island when you all visited that place? I never got to head there since I was with Kurapika, but it does sound like a fun place with the whole if you die in the game you die in real life aspect." Shalnark knew that virtual reality had nothing on
the chance of actually being transported into a digital world via the Joystation. Killua and Leorio were in the dark about the spider's love of video game, but Kurapika couldn't stop the chuckle from coming out of his mouth.

'He would have loved to have gone there in person, and hell I would not have minded traveling there myself.'

"Ummm it was a strange place, to say the least. I personally don't get why being in a simulated island that could kill you would be a fun place to be in." Little did he knew Shalnark was positively giddy over this concept of actually being in a "video game" like in some of his dreams.

"One of the iconic places this world has to offer along with a land like the Dark Continent. I suspect Pariston will find a way to make all of us follow him on his expedition there once the next Chairman Election process is over. That means we don't have a lot of free time on our hands..." Chrollo knew that his back was against the wall, being in the enemy territory, with little backup, and most of all at the mercy of someone like Pariston Hill. He did have one ace in the hole if things spiraled out of control, the Kurta who was likely to be abused and accused of being a traitor of all of his morals.

"There is no way I'm gonna accept you two monsters as comrades." Killua would rather kill himself than accept Chrollo as anything besides someone that needed to die, which was also the opinion of Leorio and Melody.

"Hmm...I guess time will tell if your feelings might change about that."

- November 11th -

Everyone needed a break after the long day, so Killua stuck it out with Kurapika along with Chrollo while Shalnark was taken into another room by Melody, and she began to drill him about what they've been doing to her personal associate. Just before Killua could take advantage of the now sleeping, and mostly defenseless criminal Leorio walked into the room with some coffee to wake them both up for the morning meeting to come with Pariston. Grabbing the Zoldyck's arm before his hands could wrap themselves around the older man's throat Lerorio calmed him down before he could give into his assassin-based instincts.

"Not this way...it won't help anyone, Killua."

"How do you know that? Sure there might be some trick that might get Kurapika killed, but I can't just stand by and let these people control him like that. He shouldn't be the slave of the murderers of his clan..."

"He might not have had much of a choice, and believe me I would have reconsidered my part in that decision if I knew these were the consequences however we're all still alive. This is what he wanted for all of us...to continue on living despite being away from each other." Leorio was able to understand this wasn't easy to accept, the thing he wanted Killua to realize was throwing away this sacrifice for momentary satisfaction won't help anyone in the end. Shaking in angry Killua took the cup, drinking the entire beverage in one gulp, and looked at the slumbering thief with contempt in his blue eyes.

"Perhaps we should take a break. The chance of either of this man getting out of this room is very slim, so why don't we see how Gon is doing back in East Gorteau? You know, the second all this crap is behind us." Killua knew that it had been a while since they've heard about their other friend and that wasn't a bad idea to help get his mind off this situation.

"Be careful Kurapika, and don't let this bastard screw with your head anymore..." Heading off
Chrollo woke up once he was in the clear, he was very much aware of the threat made against his life, however, he figured that Leorio would interfere unwillingly saving him from a possible death. Cracking his neck a few good times he looked over at Kurapika who was still unable to move any part of his body, the image reminding him of when Uvogin was in the exact same position after he was captured when he killed the "dreaded" Shadow Beasts.

'Karma must really like us, Kurapika.' Watching the blonde partner of his glare at him for putting them into this position in the first place. This wasn't exactly the warm welcome the Kurta was expecting to have when he got to meet his friends again.

"Do you regret accepting my offer, Kurta? Do you wish that you could have taken my life back in Yorknew City?"

"Actually...even if I refused that offer my intention was stripping you of Nen, splitting you away from your group, and killing them if they came after me. I saw back then your group had so much strength in numbers, and I needed more to bring you all down. I suppose that might be why I might have considered involving Gon, Killua, and Leorio in my fight...but I knew that was a huge thing to ask of them." That is why he easily sacrificed himself to protect them from the spiders who would likely seek retribution.

"Do you regret not killing me all those years ago? When you could have removed the one man who's interfered with your operations." Kurapika passed the ball to Chrollo wondering if he would have said the opposite of what he just admitted to his worst enemy.

"...I don't see the point of pondering things that can't be changed now. Do you wish for all of our secrets to be discovered by the hunters working here?" Being a savvy individual Chrollo was aware of the monitors observing them, the room also likely had been bugged to record their voices in order to find anything to use against them. Kurapika frowns once he remembers their conversation wasn't exactly private despite being alone in the room.

"I'm looking forward to being a hunter if you're a sign of what this professional lifestyle can be like."

"Hardly. Being a hunter just gave me have the right to hunt down and kill all of your people down the line. I certainly don't respect a guy like Pariston with all the rumors going around on him."

Sighing in boredom Kurapika decided to end the short conversation, casting his eyes around the room to look for something else to think about today when a knock was heard at the door. The door opened to reveal a tall man in a bright yukata, two katanas in hilts, and the biggest thing that stood out...was a huge nose on his face.

'Several people tend to harp on Pakunoda for her facial design while men like this are still around the world.' Chrollo couldn't help but smile at his thoughts while Kurapika was unsure why this hunter was here, the "Horse" of the Zodiac: Saccho Kobayakawa.

"Miza or Mizai can't be here to bring you to Pariston's office in person. Kurapika, you will be speaking with him at once." Ordering a few guards to release the Kurta from his bonds, keeping Chrollo in his spot by grabbing hold of one of his sheathed swords in a threatening gesture not underestimating the master thief locked up in handcuffs.

"You will stay here until Mizai comes back to interrogate you."

"Hmmm... To be honest, I'm really growing bored with all these questions. Here I expected the opportunity of being one of you to bring more excitement."

"You will abide by the rules of the association, hunter!" Chrollo shrugged his shoulders while
Kurapika was carted off to begin his next round of questioning. Walking through the hallways of the building with his personal entourage of guards he knew that Pariston would have all sorts of tricks prepared to get the truth out of him, and without his friends, associates, or his personal enemies behind him it was going to be difficult not to crumble under this pressure. Being put into a chair Kurapika was able to feel a source of familiar Nen that was behind the chair, but it wasn't turned around to reveal the man sitting down in it.

"Enjoy yourselves..."

'What does he mean by that?' Kurapika was aware this wasn't Pariston, the big tip-off was the red hair of the person sitting in this chair. Then, he heard the giggles of a clown.

"How do you like the new digs, Kurapika? This certainly feels more lavish than those broken down junk piles you've had to lay in over the past few weeks."

'Hisoka?!' He was considering running the hell out of the room until he heard the door click behind him, of course. The young man was trapped in the room with the traitor of the Phantom Troupe, the twisted magician...who actually wasn't in his usual make-up or jester outfit. No, the fellow hunter actually looked normal for once, his hair was not sticking up, there weren't any star or teardrop tattoos covering his cheeks, and the smile on his face looked...human. Between all of this and the black suit, he was in Kurapika would have easily mistaken this enigmatic hunter as someone else.

"Legally, the both of us are official members of this association, but it doesn't mean we aren't still criminals at heart. I must say that in all my weeks of studying you, the Kurapika I'm looking at today hardly resembles the one that I saw during the exams." Kurapika wasn't sure how to react or respond, which only made Hisoka giddier to break down his defenses further with his following comments during this discussion.

"Just as it seems, it is a rather bizarre turn of events to see you of all people side with the spiders. Whether or not you chose to do it for your collection of eyes or to save your precious friends, the world is going to assume you've turned become a thief that is no different than the people you wish to kill. I find that rather tragic," Clapping his hands together Hisoka revealed his Ace card with a grim-reaper looking phantom on the cover. "In the end, you've lost the right and will to truly be an avenger of justice."

"What about yourself, Hisoka? Are you still looking to pick a fight with Gon...or are you going to pull through with that deal you've made with Chrollo?" Turning the spotlight around Kurapika's scarlet eyes glowed in the sunlight peeking through the blinds so that Hisoka could see the crimson color in their brightest state. He hadn't paid much attention to the last of the Kurta, and he rarely admitted this often but he felt like he had overlooked a rare gem, finally replying to this question with a hardly audible exhale.

"Yes. I've had to take care of a few issues, but rest assured that I now have everything in place to get what I've wanted for a long time. Still, you need to play your part in order to become free of the Judgement Chain wrapped around your heart."

"Heh...Upset about me using you back in Yorknew City?"

"Oh come now, Kurapika. Do you really think I'm the kind of person to hold a grudge?"

'Oh, hell yes you would! Perverted, clowning, freaky-looking fuck-' 

"We're going to have our little battle here in the Hunter's Association. Pariston has already given me
the approval needed for this battle, but unfortunately, we can't take it to the death. The rules are simple really, the winner of our little duel will gain something important, but the loser will have nothing. I'm certainly your leader wishes to have the service of the Nen-Exorcist that I've found on Green Island, however; the offer he made about your strength and skills might not be worth the risk.”

Twirling around a few cards from his deck Hisoka began to count off the numbers from 1-10, his playful attitude was getting under the skin of the Kurta.

"Can you really prove the strength that Chrollo seems to prize in keeping for his organization? Do you have what it takes to truly be a shadow thief?"

"Are you going to shut your damn mouth and just fight me?" He had officially been done with people screwing with him like this. Glaring at the clown he got a series of sarcastic claps from Hisoka who merely tossed a few cards down on the table he was standing above. Looking up at the sadist he wanted nothing more than to punch that smirk off his face.

"If you get another one of your boners while taunting me right now, then expect me to target your penis when we fight..."

"Firstly, well done on growing a backbone compared to when we last met each other. You must have also gained some of your newly-found snark from the other spiders. It might not help you during our battle, so at the very least your words won't bore me when you're laying on the ground, humiliated, humbled, and broken with your pride shattered along with those bones in your body."

"Why are you so serious, jester? Don't you find this a little comical...a magician who's secrets are about to be revealed to the public. I couldn't think of a better punch-line!" Their Nen levels increased to make a stand-off that really wouldn't amount to anything here since Pariston would bill the crap out of them for breaking all of this stuff. Although both hunters wouldn't mind doing that just to see the expression on his face change into a pissed-off look of someone who lost several thousand jenny on broken furniture.
Hisoka crushes the small glimmer of hope the avenging Kurapika had in freeing himself from Chrollo's chains that bound them both together, but would this result in a new Kurapika being created. One that bears a black-colored brand that would corrupt his body and mind forever?

FYI: Might be my last update for a while there might be a job for me in this coming week.

Kurapika needed to sit outside of the Hunter Association building to calm down. His body was shaking violently, the mind was unable to comprehend what Killua and Leorio just told him a few moments ago, but he couldn't fathom nor accept the news about Gon's suffering. The Kurta knew that dealing with Kite's death must have been difficult on his psyche, but to hear about him sacrificing his Nen to slaughter the Royal Guard Chimera Ant: Neferpitou. From what he heard from his friends he was glad that he wasn't at the hospital to see his current condition.

'He seemed like a mummified corpse if what Killua and Leorio told me was true about how he looked.' Kurapika wasn't allowed off the grounds of the association, the cuffs on his hands would ensure he could not break free and escape without help along with the security observing his private grieving about his friend's condition. He knew that today would be his personal battle with Hisoka, the duel that would decide his fate along with Chrollo's was the last thing on his mind. He wanted to know if Gon would be okay since it was likely he would never be the same again.

'Would things have been different if I was there? Perhaps my involvement could have made a difference no matter how small it likely would be in the grander scheme of things.' He began to question if he should have ever agreed to read his future in the first place. Like a domino that one choice likely resulted in these series of events occurring, but he also considered the fact they might have happened like this anyway although he might have continued down the path of being his clan's avenger.

'Perhaps more of those spiders would be dead if I refused Chrollo's offer in the first place.' Kurapika knew it was pointless to lament things that he could not change. Of course, that meant he would need to focus on how to overcome Hisoka's skills with his Nen-based gum attacks. Gon was the only person Kurapika knew that could pose a threat against Hisoka in combat, but that wasn't even a true battle of life and death which was his situation given the stipulations explained to him by the jester-themed hunter.

"I can't lose this battle, so I have to overcome a man that even Chrollo Lucilfer fears to battle. How can I possibly do this on my own?" If I can't overcome my weaknesses this will be my last days on this earth, the Judgement Chain's command is too powerful to overcome even for the user of such abilities. As he was lamenting how to deal with this problem one of the Zodiacs arrived to confront him while he was sitting on a bench. She knew that his reason for being here was more than what
was told to her, but she needed to discover the truth from the horse's mouth himself.

'That's weird the flock of birds is moving around in a circle...’ The Kurta even while feeling a strange spike in nen activity he knew this kind of behavior for these animals was bizarre. Turning around he saw a woman who was hardly wearing any clothing on her body, the outfit is meant to represent her codename within the Zodiac despite most of the men who saw her usually pawed over her slim, and curvy figure. She walked in front of Kurapika while forcing the birds under her command to fly near their location.

"Quite a lovely school of pigeons, wouldn't you agree?” She watched his confused expression with a smile, he might have been considered a threat to everyone else, but she was aware of the relationship he had with several people involved with the association. Talking with Melody earlier she was brought up to speed with the torment which was building inside of Kurapika. She was also not underestimating what could have gone down while he was under the stay of the Phantom Troupe. Not only were the people who slaughtered everyone getting away unscathed, but she knew that deep down he was slowly adapting to this environment with their methods becoming infectious to the last Kurta on this planet. "This is your ability? It certainly looks to be a long-range kind of Manipulation skill."

"Why thank you! Many consider my abilities rather uninteresting, but personally, I prefer this kind of talent to be used from my nen. It befits my status as one of the Biology team members for the Dark Continent voyage."

"Ahh, I'd forgotten that trip was being planned out this quickly after what happened with the Chimera Ants..."

He knew someone like Pariston would be impatient in trying to hurry up and make history with a trip like that. A feather in his cap and he knew that combined with being elected the new Chairman would send that man's ego up on a rocket ship right into the cold depths of space never to return.

"I heard from that criminal you encountered some of those beasts in Meteor City. That is a rare thing for someone like yourself considering how many lives those beasts have claimed." Such luck was fortunate considering the people he was spending time with during that period in his young life. Would he be able to regain his mortality or fully succumb to the nature of the spiders? Oh, she dreaded the image of Kurapika having the black ink tattoo covering a part of his body, and the idea of him embracing their ideology. Despite being close to his friends and fellow hunters he was heading on a dangerous path.

"I wonder if I should have even lived considering what I've needed to do in order to survive - and even then, am I really alive right now?"

"So what if you've killed people! That doesn't mean you're a monster; it is when you decide to enjoy killing people for sheer enjoyment...” He looked downward at that reply knowing he couldn't refute her statement since deep within himself there was something that liked what he's been doing lately. Cluck had forgotten that he was going through a much deeper battle within between his remaining humanity and the serial killer he was slowly turning into over the last few months. Deciding to change the subject she asked him what he was thinking about doing with his upcoming fight with Hisoka.

"You know you're getting your ass kicked? You know you're getting your ass kicked?!” She spoke twice as he didn't answer her question as his mind began to ponder what he was going to do about that. He nearly got a dropping of a bird's gift from above moving out of the way before his hair got splashed in the less than pleasing liquid.
"Are you trying to piss me off, lady? What on earth were you thinking trying to make those pigeons crap on me like that?!" Pointing his finger at her she merely shrugged her shoulders like that was nothing to her. This was her method of getting people's attention when they ended up ignoring her when she repeated herself more than once.

"Are you keeping a secret plan to yourself for handling that clown or not? The other hunters are expecting you not only to lose, but the general consensus is you won't even land a blow on him." She knew he fooled everyone in Heavens Arena with that whole "magical" wizard stick, but he did seem pretty savvy in battle from the battles she watched his involvement in.

"Why should I tell you anything considering that you could go behind my back to warn Hisoka or your buddies in the association."

"That is true, and yet that is exactly what I'm not going to do Kurapika. Believe it or not, I do hope you can surprise everyone in this bout if only to knock that perverted clown down a peg or two." She doubted anyone actually really wanted Hisoka to win his battles as a true fan would, the reputation he's gotten makes him only slightly more favorable than the people he pretended to work under. The other problem for the Kurta was Hisoka knew most of the tricks behind his Conjuring skills from the time in Yorknew City.

'He was under the command of my chains, so he likely knows how they work plus he is not working with the Phantom Troupe so they wouldn't affect him now anyways...' Before he could think to himself further Cluck pulled out a feather from her outfit, her hand moving on Kurapika's body to tickle him with said feather on his purple cloak outfit.

"Pfft! AHAHAHAHA! What in the fuh! AHAHAHAHA! What are you doing, you perverted son of a bitch!"

"Getting you out of this funk. Or, as you might assume I'm doing currently tickling you into submission." He glared at her while ripping up the feather in her hand to prevent such a devastating attack on him from happening again. Then, he realized something as he looked at the ruined feathery item scattered on the ground ignoring Cluck's ranting. A sudden spark of inspiration came into his mind about how he might stand a chance in his battle with the magician of gum, the idea being of killing the clown with kindness.

"Where do you think you're heading off to, boy?"

"Getting ready for my fight, and thank you for the idea umm. Forgive me I didn't ask for your name, even if I expected you know mine." He had been in such a rush he forgot to ever ask her name out of politeness.

"Cluck, the "Chicken" of the Zodiac. Now, would you mind explaining to me why tickling you with my clothing attire caused your eyes to brighten up like there is a lightbulb turning on in your head."

"Sorry I can't reveal my secrets if Hisoka is unwilling to do the same for me!" Waving and saying he was sorry about the ruined feather Kurapika headed back inside to find Melody to get some help from her about his battle plan for the fight. To his surprise, he heard from the guards that she was actually with one of the spiders wanting to interrogate Shalnark in a private room. As he walked down the hall he could hear screaming coming from a room that was padded down to make hearing things difficult; the girlish shrieking from Shalnark was the one thing this special room could not contain along with Melody's flute.

"What is wrong with you lady?! I already told you everything Boss said to me before we came here!"
"Liar! There is something you haven't told everyone else, so until you explain what you've been doing with Kurapika this flute is not going to stop playing!" Opening the door, sure enough, was Shalnark huddled in the corner of the room with Melody demanding the truth while threatening to continue with this music to harm both his body and ears.

"Give him a minute to breathe, Melody!"

"Pika! Oh, thank the video game gods you showed up!" Despite both of the blondes still being cuffed Shalnark was gripping his personal cell phone while pleading with Kurapika's associate to give him a minute to rest. Melody was flabbergasted he would come to the defense of this person rather than join in with the questioning. Her method was something Kurapika didn't mind, but he told her that Chrollo wouldn't even let him in on why he decided to show up here besides to complete the pact with Hisoka.

"What makes you think either of us knows what is going on in that man's head. This won't crack him or get him to talk, Melody."

"I don't care about that! He's one of the people who killed your clan not to mention they likely abused you during your stay with the spiders." He knew she was still upset by what they've done, which might get pardoned if this arrangement with the hunters might let them get off with little punishment for their crimes.

"It just isn't fair," She yelled out while pointing a finger at Shalnark's face. "You've likely hurt so many people just to steal pointless crap over your lifespan. All of those lives hurt or taken for mere greed!" She was furious by this lack of justice more so than ever Kurapika who was beginning to wonder about everything he's been preaching over his life.

"It won't solve anything just to attack him when he's just one of Chrollo's followers. Besides I need your help with this battle with Hisoka..." She remembered the "Ox" explaining to her that fight would happen today since he would be the official in charge of making sure things don't get too out of hand. Her concern quickly began focused on Kurapika's do or die situation.

"How can I help you take on that man exactly?"

"Well, I kinda of need Shalnark's help as well..." Despite his ears still ringing from the music being sent down his eardrums, Shalnark was delighted to hear about his "friend" needing his aid.

"Why do you want this monster's help? He doesn't even deserve anything besides death and-"

"I need you to trust me on this one, Melody. It sounds insane certainly, but I need to know more about Hisoka, the nature of his gum, and he's one of the only few people who's seen him in action. I can't go to the hunters because they've lost their trust in me. Killua and Leorio are going to be coming back from the hospital which leaves only you guys that can help me out." With Chrollo being detained by Pariston for more questioning these WERE the only people around who can help him out.

"I don't know what we can really do to help you out with this issue, the guy is pretty clever even without using his Bungee Gum. I don't know what you can do with her terrible-terribly good music and my Black Voice." Shalnark hoped she wouldn't play again after correcting himself while covering his ears just in case. Kurapika sighed having gotten used to the information manager within the shadow thief brigade.

"This is better than simply accepting my death. Also, this will ensure none of you get killed by this man out of spite for me not living up to Chrollo's bargain."
"Why are you playing into that man's hand!? You can easily refuse his request for a battle, and I'm sure the hunters will keep you and that criminal out of Hisoka's reach." He knew that was impossible to have protection against someone like Hisoka, so the only way out was to embrace his role in Chrollo's mental warfare with the traitor of his group.

Everyone had gathered in a prepared area where hunters usually had practice bouts with one another, but this was for everything besides training. Killua, Leorio, Melody, Pariston, some of the Zodiac, and even Chrollo were taking the part of the audience but Chrollo had to remain in a special outfit to ensure he wouldn't escape. He didn't mind the mental institution white outfit except for the strange mouth guard with three bars covering his face, which he considered was put on him out of spite by Pariston Hill.

Hisoka was watching Mizaistom Nana go over the details for the upcoming bout tuning him out when he looked down at the troubled Kurta and his opponent for this bout. Finally, he would either confirm if Chrollo's faith in this boy's potential was a fool's errand or something that could be worth the risk of taking him under his wing.

Inner Kurapika was screaming at himself for going along with this crazy scheme knowing this would hurt later and Outer Kurapika agreed, the mindset would end up doing more harm than good to himself.

'You should have killed Chrollo Lucilfer and dealt with the consequences of that decision.'

'Yes, but that would have meant a whole different outcome for everyone. At least my comrades are still alive...'

'For HOW much longer? If Gon is any kind of indication, then none of your precious friends will survive the trip and you will lose them once you all reach the Dark Continent.'

Shaking his head to get out of his inner conversation he quickly focused on the jester, he knew Kurapika better than most of the spiders, had come to an "agreement" with him to help achieve their own goals, and now both now facing each other to continue down their own separate paths. There would be only one winner and only one loser when this battle was completed.

Yes, everything that Kurapika has learned since his stay with the Phantom Troupe would come into play as Hisoka gave off a smirk of confidence, his hands were twirling around a Jack card in his hands while looking at his new prey for today.

"Keep things clean gentlemen this is not a fight to the death. With that said you may begin!" Waving at both individuals they each began to feel each other out by letting their Nen-levels match each other as when one rose up while the other was raised up to make them both even. Hisoka made the first move, easily tossing out his razor-sharp cards, the entire of which had been easily dodged by Kurapika's agile movements. To respond to such an act the Kurta sent out one of his conjured chains, which was blocked by one of Hisoka's hands leaving a small slash on his left palm.

"What is he thinking by confronting Hisoka with force?!" Killua knew better than to make the perverted clown excited, but Leorio figured that was the only way Kurapika could ensure he doesn't get beaten in short fashion. Any kind of boredom will result in Hisoka likely being uninterested in continuing with this battle, and that is the last thing Kurapika wants to happen considering the violent nature Hisoka is known to have when he feels uninterested in someone.

"Damn it all we can do it watch and hope for the best..." Leorio felt so helpless in knowing it was all up to their friend whereas Melody hoped her last-minute training with Kurapika would be enough, the small assistance from Shalnark was something she wishes hadn't come into play with that but if it
helps him out she would admit that he was helpful...to a small degree.

Hisoka charged after Kurapika, moving out his leg to land a few kicks to his chest. But Kurapika was prepared for this; instead of being caught off-guard he quickly held out his hands to catch the foot belonging to the jester before sending out his chains attempting to slash at his make-up colored face. Hisoka blocked, then reached out to grab Kurapika's right arm to disable it getting a kick from the Kurta's own feet to his hand - the contact with the foot made Hisoka back off into a crouching position finding amusement with this physical style opening to the fight.

"Not bad. I thought you would cave in already," Hisoka admitted to his opponent that he underestimated his talents, but this was simply the first series of blows that wouldn't matter later on as time went on in their duel. "That said I hope you can provide more than simple punches or kicks, Kurta. That will get rather boring real fast." As he was saying this he didn't notice Kurapika reaching behind his pants to draw out a weapon to handle Hisoka's playing cards that were being shuffled through his hands. The man tossed around a few more cards, his yawn implied that he was bored of Kurapika's tactics already when his cards were knocked away.

"Hmm? Well, that is certainly a "big" stick you have there, Kurta." The weapon was something he picked up from a hunter, and his "crash course" training from Melody and Shalnark helped him understand how useful it could be in place of his other weapons. The key reason he did this was it wasn't something he used before, and both Hisoka and Kurapika himself wouldn't be sure how it could factor into this fight.

'A game of following the leader won't solve anything like Cluck showed me. If I want to overcome this problem I need to consider thinking outside of the flock...No, the phrase is box damn it!' Twirling around the long stick Kurapika moved in by making a running move towards Hisoka, his stick was slammed onto the ground, and he propelled himself into Hisoka landing a punch right on his cheek before getting in a few more jabs on his chest. His eyes widen as he could see a pink glow on Hisoka's hands, the dread of the Bungee Gum was now in effect forcing him to back off from his opponent. The seconds were crucial as Kurapika dodged every attempt to stick his body with that gum, which would drastically change the tide of the battle in the clown's favor.

"Very amusing how you are dancing for me! This is what I wanted to see, Kurapika..." The black-listed hunter growled at the grin on Hisoka's face matching with the hardened stiffness in his pants. He was indeed beginning to enjoy this in more ways than one, and this set Kurapika off knowing what was happening with the man's bulge. Wrapping his chains around the new staff in his possession Kurapika ran up to Hisoka, avoiding the series of gum attacks, and moving under the last one he sent out his staff that was connected to his chains landing a direct blow...to the crotch area.

"Well...that is one way...to MAKE a statement!"

Everyone was left stunned by this sudden act even the usually calm individual Chrollo Lucifer, which made him fearful of how this man whom he dreaded fighting would react to this. Kurapika was waiting to see how this man would react, the feeling of having one's special area being hurt like that must phase someone even Hisoka. Then, laughter broke up the silence followed by a series of giggles mixed in with slight wheezing as the magician couldn't help this sensation of chortling.

"AHAHAHAHAHA! Oh, hehe that was simply glorious! You must really hate me to try and wound me in such a way, but I'm now in love with this newly discovered mean-streak you have, KURTA!" His schwing was at the maximum height, everyone in the room figured Hisoka's private weapon was indestructible, and his lips were licking at the thought of what else Kurapika would to in order to hurt him. Holding out two more cards he attacked them with his Bungee Gum at maximum speed to use them as projectiles.
"Now, show me those beautiful eyes of yours! The crimson scarlet that has seen so much blood and death, the real value of the Kurta Clan!" Throwing out his lightning-fast cards Kurapika had to use his new staff to block each attack from cutting his body up.

'Even after everything I've done to reach this point, do I still want to let loose the animal within myself?'

His eyes watched the cards come at him from all directions, but Hisoka was still holding back on the true strength of his Nen. Holding out his weapon to block the strike from above Kurapika watched Hisoka try and connect his leg to him via Bungee Gum on his foot, and he forced to use his staff to block that losing it to the magician as a consequence. Silently cursing himself for letting that occur Kurapika used his chains to destroy the cards that were about to cut open his midsection. Mizaistom held out a yellow card to warm both combatants to cool it with the violence.

"Remember that this is not a Heavens Arena match. Severe injuries and under-handed attacks won't be tolerated." He ordered to both individuals, which made Hisoka sigh in annoyance.

"You couldn't remind us earlier, and here I was starting to have some fun!" Forgetting that he was not simply fighting in a un-restricted fight Hisoka knew that he would need to hold himself back in order to satisfy Pariston Hill and Chrollo Lucilfer, the both of them had investment in Kurapika's development once this battle was finished, unless the fight ended up being taken out of the referee's control.

'Should I employ my Texture Surprise to fool this boy?' While pondering his next move Hisoka decided to play around with Kurapika more by extending Bungee Gum all over his body the next time he went in to punch him to connect each other, so, for now, he played around with the staff he got from him. Charging at Kurapika he began to move it around, connecting with his arms and legs a few times leaving a few bruises all over his body. Kurapika's eyes glimmered red for a split-second as he was getting frustrated by his game plan not working against Hisoka.

Sending out his chains the only other thing Kurapika could do was to attack with physical moves, but he knew that likely was some kind of trap considering how much effort Hisoka was making in order to get him pissed off. He needed to think of a way to remove the killer magician of his weapon so that he could get back on the offense. In fact, Kurapika throughout most of this battle so far was simply defending himself again Hisoka and his usage of his special Transmutation Gum. Having no opening to do some real damage thus far Kurapika knew he could only maintain the fellow hunter's attention for so long.

A sudden clothesline move that the Kurta barely dodged caught Kurapika off-guard forcing him to strike back only to discover his hands were now caught in Hisoka's palm. Try as he wanted to break free in a little tug-of-war game each of their sticky hands were now keeping them close to one another, the Bungee Gum was strong enough that not even the sharp tip of Kurapika's chains would be able to cut it.

"Damn it!" The elastic, sticky gum that he feared was now binding together their bodies. Growling in anger Kurapika used his other to send out his sharp chain on Hisoka's arm to wound it, and possibly break him free if this gum now stuck to his other hand. The scars didn't hurt Hisoka that much who simply taunted him by forcing their hands together via the elastic gum.

"We never formally introduced one another, did we? I wish to correct that mistake now Kurapika Kurta. As the man who is going to kill you sometime soon my name is Hisoka Morow." Since he was momentarily letting down his guard, Kurapika decided to return the gesture of sportsmanship.

"Tell me then will you go after Chrollo next? Gon is not going to be the same as when you first laid
your perverted eyes on him, so that must mean you plan to kill him and by extension end both my life and the Phantom Troupe in one well swoop." Looking at the playing cards laying on the floor an idea popped into his mind, as Hisoka was explaining what he planned on doing next.

"Perhaps, but then I remembered that it has been a while since I last saw Killua and Leorio." The possible threat drove Kurapika into a rage, his comrades were the last people he wanted to get involved with the mess he was deep in. Changing its direction Kurapika sent the sharp tip of his chain onto a card on the floor, which Hisoka only noticed when he felt a sharp pain in his back once the card made contact with his body, the wound wasn't serious but it made the bloodthirsty clown pause for a second.

"I don't get this plan at all. Hisoka is not the most stable of individuals, and the idea of making him more exciting will only result in more bloodshed..." Leorio was rubbing his chin pondering what Kurapika was thinking while he was watching the fight behind the see-through glass from a window in the room. Killua knew this was the best someone like him could to in these non-killing conditions put into place for this battle. A loud crack could be heard as Hisoka tried to shatter a few bones in Kurapika's arm with the staff he brought into battle only to end up having it wrapped in Kurapika's chains. The staff was mixed into the steel so hard that not even Hisoka's gum could remove it, so he decided to break it in two instead...or appear to try and break it in two by using Texture Surprise.

'He must have a good reason for bringing this into our duel beside merely having it as a secondary form of attack; the item will be his undoing once I try and "crack" it in half.' Looking at the crimson glare being provided from his opponent Hisoka knew that things finally were getting interesting as he removed the contact with his hand keeping the Kurta stuck to him while placing his free one over the staff where he struck it earlier, the cloth that now was mimicking the surface of the weapon had been put into place.

"I hate needing to "break" it to you, but this is all she wrote for your little toy here along with my patience for your stalling. Such a shame this is the best the last of the Kurta can offer to me..."
Moving down his card to "chop it" the weapon was suddenly pulled in two for real as Kurapika was not fooled by Hisoka's attempt to fool him by a trick of the eye, and he knew exactly why he brought this certain staff into combat...a secret weapon within the staff that not even the staff who searched him before this fight could find on him.

"What's that ball doing in his hands?!" Mizaistom could blink only once before the whole room was covered in a white gas being emitted by the smokescreen ball Kurapika got his hands on from one of the hunters in the building along with a shuriken that was being held up by the skin of Hisoka's throat by Kurapika. Everyone else was shocked to see this sudden turn of events, and Chrollo Lucilfer was grinning from ear to ear in the wheelchair he was strapped in.

"Excellent work, Kurapika. Everyone might consider you a cheater, but you have shown real ingenuity in this battle. You might be ready to earn that ink tattoo..." He watched in excitement as Kurapika actually was holding back the man he would likely face in combat sometime in the near future.

"While I have your undivided attention why don't you explain to me your purpose in picking a fight with me besides to please that bastard Chrollo Lucilfer." Beginning an interrogation of his own despite the protests of the referee Mizaistom. Hisoka knew he could easily break free of this hold, but watching those scarlet irises look at him made him feel intoxicated by their color, the light of their shine on the face of a more experienced killer than when he first met Kurapika.

"That is the question indeed..." He chuckled as he watched the sharp throwing star reach his neck ready to slice it open even while the Ox of the Zodiac brought out his yellow card to restrain them
both when he knew that all of this was simply a falsehood and his life wasn't really in danger.

"Do you think this is a putrid joke, clown? Trust me I wouldn't be laughing right now with that shit-eating grin on your face!"

"I don't know getting you to go through all of this trouble, and only for you to discover how fruitless your efforts now are in the end."

"Kurapika! Put down the weapon now!"

He turned out the referee as he tilted his head in confusion, which made Hisoka laugh further as he decided to spill the beans.

"You certainly do seem like a genuine killer now, but alas your potential will be wasted once I'm done with your "leader" Chrollo Lucilfer," Looking down at the playing cards he saw the Ace card finding it rather ironic that he was observing that one from the rest of his deck right now. "Your boss and his deal with me, unfortunately, is null and void."

"What are you saying."

"I tried to make the Nen-Exorcist understand the situation, which Abengane did but then something rather unexpected happened. He simply ended up disappearing when I tried to capture him for the deal to be completed." Time crawled to a halt as Kurapika tried processing those words explained to him at that moment.

"I suppose that was the consequence of bringing along the Zoldyck family along for such an exchange of information; that idea of bringing them along for a non-aggressive meeting seems counter-productive in retrospect..." Blood rushed through his body at a quickened state, his mind finally realized what he was saying, the hope he stuck to after all this time was now lost.

"Despite my efforts, Illumi felt like the exorcist wouldn't comply with my demand, so he removed him from existence. He did explain to me that he could seize control of his corpse with his needle, but then his dead body mysteriously disappeared during our travel back from the meeting point." All reason was gone as Kurapika went in to rip out as much blood from Hisoka as possible, the only thing stopping them was a sudden nen-constricting box covering their bodies and splitting both men apart.

"Cross Game!" Mizaistom's cross-designed yellow card restrained both individuals since they both ignored his warnings. Hisoka merely shrugged his shoulders while Kurapika was banging the box in a rabid animal like sensation. All of the audience watching couldn't believe what they just heard from the jester-styled hunter.

'Sly bastard...' Chrollo knew that by having Illumi take the fall Hisoka tried to push all the blame for this "fubar" assignment when he knew the former spider better than that. It seemed that his worst enemy wanted to have all the cards in his favor in order to screw over his former boss. Looking at the hatred being displayed by Kurapika he realized that now shared another thing in common with one another, the equal disgust for Hisoka Morow with Illumi Zoldyck coming in at a close second place.

"That is enough from both of you! The final decision lies with the chairman, but Kurapika you clearly have a temper problem that interfered with your better judgment. If I were the one who determines the victor of this contest, then the answer would be obvious. Hisoka has shown himself to be the better man."
"You stupid son of a bitch!" Kurapika didn't care about wins or losses at this point, the sight of Hisoka's smirking expression raised the ire of the Kurta. Everything he worked for in order to finally be free of his own chains wrapped around his heart and to hear that this battle was simply a waste of his time and effort drove his rage into a frenzied state. His friends were shocked to see this kind of personality being displayed, but they were also upset to hear that Hisoka played him and Chrollo for a loop.

"Now, he can't be free of the bond between himself and the leader of the Phantom Troupe anytime soon." Melody shuttered to think about what this meant for everyone involved in this situation.

"Not exactly, Melody. There have to be more Nen-Exorcists out in the world, but finding one will prove to be very difficult since they usually tend to avoid getting involved in conflicts." Killua knew that hope was becoming dimmer in Kurapika's mind while Leorio wanted to give a hard punch on the smug face the clown was providing to his mentally-defeated opponent.

"Do you think he might be lying?" Leorio figured this could be another one of his tricks to manipulate someone to his advantage-not that being the "winner" of this battle would really matter regardless considering how things escalated between Hisoka and Kurapika. Pariston Hill walked into the room with an uncertain look on his face, and Mizaistom warned him to be careful around such men even while holding back with his nen-ability and the yellow card. Geru, Kanzai, Cheadle, and Cluck wondered how their Vice-Chairman would react to all of this.

"You took advantage of the fractured mind of your opponent to drive him into a position where he would have nothing left to lose by actually trying to kill you. This, sadly, doesn't mean you had the advantage since Kurapika was about to slice open your throat despite knowing my referee would interfere with the match to save your skin," Rubbing his hands together in delight Pariston had come to a conclusion about who truly was the "winner" of this contest. "While Hisoka won the mental battle Kurapika clearly was about to physically obtain the win albeit in a more gruesome fashion thus this match will end in a draw!"

"Not surprising really, but you didn't need to make it sound so dramatic, vice-chairman." Hisoka sighed in boredom as he was finally allowed to head off to do something else with his time leaving Kurapika alone with Pariston Hill as he requested the "Ox" to leave with the other Zodiac members.

"I would like for you to come by my office now, the matter of something close to your personal life must be discussed."

"..."

Kurapika said and did nothing while he was slumped on the floor in the room. Pariston figured that battle could have broken his mind a little so he needed to gain the Kurta's attention.

"You wish to reclaim the Scarlet Eyes, yes?" Two red eyeballs made contact with the current figurehead of the Hunter Association since Kurapika now had a new target to vent out his anger no matter what the consequences would be later. All of Kurapika's friends looked and called out to him, but he didn't look or respond back to them as he left the area right behind Pariston following the trail to his personal office. Deciding to leave him alone they went after the only person who might know what is going on with him, Chrollo Lucilfer.

"Going to electrocute me if I don't give you an explanation, Zoldyck?" Seeing the short hunter's arm getting stretched out the criminal got that feeling he was going to be in for a world of hurt either by Killua's nen or through another round of an un-interesting round of interrogation.

"Why did you want Hisoka to find this exorcist with the Zoldycks? You should know by now how
dangerous my family is when given the chance to take me back to their home!" Killua yelled out as he was holding Chrollo responsible for all of this so that he could have a person he can beat the hell out of later if things got even worse.

"They were the ones who helped arrange the deal with me and Hisoka," Chrollo looked upward, trying to figure out the best way he could describe what needed to be done in order to secure himself, his spiders, and Kurapika into this picture where they would all survive while keeping themselves out of getting killed by the hunters working here. "We were up a deep brown creek with no paddle to swim with, so I figured why not take a dive off the cliff to dive into the lake below. Fight or flight, the need to survive is something I never considered having before since I wanted my comrades to live should I face certain death."

That all changed when he got to learn more about that one lone survivor of the clan he was meant to fully exterminate; he began to feel like he was able to truly understand what a human being is when he was able to study him during their journey together.

"You care about him?" Leorio was stunned that Chrollo seemed genuine about this sudden change in personality.

"Indeed," Chrollo responded without losing a step. "The death of his family and friends was a less than positive beginning to our relationship begin, certainly." Killua flinched in response; of course, the idea of the man who killed the Kurta Clan suddenly feeling guilty made him feel sick inside. He couldn't believe that this man of all people gained a conscious like this.

"Do you really think you can ever be anything to Kurapika besides someone needs to kill?"

"Honestly...yes." Leorio was ready to knock a tooth out of the mastermind's mouth as it curved upwards into a grin when the Zodiac hunters arrived to bring Chrollo back into a holding area where Shalnark had been placed in for the rest of the day.

"That is more than enough! The last thing we need to deal with is cleaning up this blight on this organization's reputation." Cheadle had Mizaistom and Kanzai step in to hold the angry trio back from causing more harm to their captive, and Cluck closed her eyes knowing how they were all feeling about what happened with that brawl and the outcome.

"He won't be able to cause more trouble. This is the best outcome you can possibly hope for at this point."

"Like the hell, it is, Cluck!" Melody knew things were only getting worse by the second, and as they watched the man get wheeled away she would be proven right in the following days.

- November 12th -

Chrollo was about to head off into slumber for the night with his companion already dreaming about winning a video game's hardest level, which would result in the "princess giving him a cake" and the head of the spiders could only assume this meant anything but a bakery dessert. The young adult was skimming through the pages of his book since he learned this area had no hidden mics when he sweet-talked one of the male guards who...had asked him for a small kiss in return. He was grateful that he was still wrapped in his long-sleeve prison outfit during that period, but Chrollo missed being able to use his hands that could be free while in a room like this.

'If Paku ever learns that information she would have a field day along with the other spiders.'

A knock at the door revealed a figure in light with red eyes that let Chrollo know who was standing
in front of him. The Kurta didn't move from his spot as the ability-snatcher watched the black-list hunter observe him silently for a while.

"Is this place bugged?" A simple question, but Chrollo figured the Kurta wanted to have a small conversation with no one else listening to them so he nodded his head as Kurapika closed the door behind them with the guard standing outside. He slowly moved next to Chrollo before sitting in the chair nearby Shalnark's bed where he was resting.

"I'm sure we all should be doing with poor Shalnark is doing after what he's been through with all the questions about secret plans, agendas, and other plots against Pariston Hill. To think we've been doing everything except act like official hunters." He agreed with that sentiment as he would need to spend tonight with Chrollo since they were due for another session with Pariston in the morning.

"I am saddened to have seen your wish to be free get ruined by Hisoka. I wasn't that surprised to hear that he ended up playing us both for fools, the one true weakness I have is having faith in my followers. It has resulted in me suffering these kinds of losses and defeats often these days."

"No. This is not over just yet. I've learned about the final location of the Scarlet Eyes..." Chrollo couldn't believe what his imprisoned companion was saying, the final pair of eyes had been uncovered but how could he know of such a thing.

"Pariston...he wants me to be his "Rat" for the Zodiac during the upcoming Dark Continent trip. The agreement would be I act as his spy, and learn as much as I could from my friends, the Zolydck family's youngest member: Kalluto, and the personal informant on the Phantom Troupe's next move."

'Why is he admitting that to me?' For a hidden mole, Kurapika wasn't doing much of a good job of keeping this a secret, it was then Kurapika looked up from the ground he was starting at to meet Chrollo Lucilfer face to face.

"I-I need YOUR help, Chrollo Lucilfer. If you can help me gather the last two eyes...I...I..."

"Despite the loss of that exorcist, it's very much a certainty that you will be free of the Judgement Chain. There are other Nen-Exorcists in the world besides Abengane to find." Chrollo wanted to fulfill his end of the deal since Hisoka and Illumi decided to break their word to help solve this mess he's gotten Kurapika involved in. Instead of looking angry or upset Kurapika seemed uneasy about himself, the next words would explain to Chrollo why that was the case.

"No, it is not that. This is something I never believed would come out of my mouth, b-but if you and your subordinates can help me reclaim the last items from my fallen clan, then you can give me that ink tattoo. Once the last of the Scarlet Eyes are back where they belong...I'll join YOU...and the Phantom Troupe."

With that Kurapika looked at the devil himself with his soul now being offered as payment to reclaim the last set of eyes that were from his fallen clansmen. "Are you serious about this marriage proposal?" "Yes, I'm ser-what the fuck?! What in the name of fuck are you thinking I mean by this, Chrollo?!" Watching the short, tempered Kurta stomp around made the infamous criminal laugh with genuine joy, and expressing a rare warm smile on his face. "It was merely an expression. I'm not expecting you to wear a white dress, put on a gold ring, and make out with me in some dingy hotel. All I want you to do is fulfill my wish, and the same will be done for you. Nothing more or less. Do we have an agreement, partner?" Seeing the pale skin reach out to offer the "contract" so to speak, his hand felt Kurapika's grasp onto it while their eyes locked in making the pact final. "Fine. Partner..."
With the night still young a shocking contract was about to be formed even more unexpected than the one which began this bizarre adventure with an avenger meeting a spider.

- Yesterday -

"I need you to perform as my spy, the role of the "Rat" of the Zodiac will be passed down to you Kurapika Kurta." The Vice-Chairman spoke in a more serious tone while playing with a few documents on his office desk. Within was the information the last of the Kurtas desired to know more than anything else in the world, but this reward wasn't going to come without a price.

"Once I assume the position of the next Chairman you will act as my eyes and ears." He wasn't simply going to be a hidden informant on the activities of the other members of the Zodiac organization like Kurapika expected when he was told about this strange offer, the deal would be much more interactive than he expected. Pariston looked into the normal eyes that weren't gleaming red with malice or hatred as he continued with his explanation. This more determined expression didn't fit the man Kurapika had gotten to know over the course of the last few days; his actions and tone seemed more sinister like he was slipping off a mask to reveal his true persona.

"The hunters are the only people I expect to hear about. Your precious friends, the hunters you don't like namely Hisoka, but most of all I need you to stay in touch with the Phantom Troupe." He thought that was a joke, a cruel idea of humor until he saw the frown on Pariston's face that looked unnatural.

"They will likely show their true colors during the Dark Continent exposition with the Kakin Royal Family taking part of the trip. I doubt they won't take the opportunity to make off with a fortune, and you're only of the only people involved with them that can be trusted."

"You want me to work with the people that murdered my parents and relatives?"

"Haven't you been taking part in their crimes as of late? What's one more heist going to do unless you don't want to admit that you're a criminal to your friends..."

"What do you get out of this, Pariston?" Kurapika was no fool, and he knew when someone was pulling him along like this man was trying to do on him. Then, he saw a folder containing a report on the fall of the Omekata Cult.

"Good work over there by the way, but did you honestly think you wouldn't have gotten this far without MY help, Kurta." The information, having contact with Chrollo and knowing the location of these eyes. Kurapika slumped down in his chair while he began to realize that all of this might be orchestrated by the Vice-Chairman of the Hunter Association. Not everything certainly however if he did know where a majority of the Scarlet Eyes were behind held currently, then it was clear this man had a lot of leverage against him.

"I need you to keep those spiders in line until our trip reaches its conclusion. Afterward, you can finally eliminate Chrollo Lucilfer with the Judgement Chain around your heart being removed from your body." This confirmed to the younger hunter that Hisoka had let the current "Rat" of the Zodiac about his situation and the on-going solution being found with a Nen-Exorcist. A possible hint of deception between Hisoka and Pariston was also made by this conversation.

"Do you think you can make me your newest puppet?"

"I'm not interested in puppets rather people that I can have do what I need them to do when I want."

Kurapika had no other choice besides accepting the deal, which revealed the last pair of eyes was
being kept in of all places the Zoldyck family mansion. He wasn't sure why this was the case, but there was one member of the spiders who can help him figure out why...

That is where Kurapika left the office of the man trying to amass even more power to control people and tinker with their heads, so he began to wonder who could he turn to for help in this situation. While his friends should know what he's learned from Pariston this might also leave them in danger if they went after the association they were a part of now. Gon was also in a helpless situation, which is why he decided to go visit him in the hospital for council and some advice. It was there Kurapika got a glimpse of the sacrifice Gon made to assure he would achieve vengeance against the Chimera Ants.

"Is this what it meant to ensure those creatures paid for killing Kite?" Looking at the deformed body of his friend all of the preaching the Kurta made to Uvogin was suddenly casting doubt in his mind. All of the things he said to that brute of the spider before he sent him to his death suddenly came back to his mind, and now he wondered if that was all worth it in the end. He killed one of the men who helped slaughter his people, but it didn't bring them back from their graves. Staining his hands with the blood that his clansmen would be frightened if should have lived to see Kurapika grow up.

"Gon...I don't know if you can hear me, but I needed to come see you today. I've been wanting to a get a lot off my chest lately since we have been speaking with one another for some time." His eyes looked at the nearly-lifeless body of his friend and hunter buddy.

"My pursuit of revenge and desire to restore my clan's former glory has reached a zenith. The last pair of eyes lies before me, so that means the spirits of my people will gain some amount of peace." That didn't mean he got any kind of resolution with himself, the truth is he was now even more lost than before he went to the auction under the guise of a bodyguard of the Nostrade Family's daughter. Seeing no reaction from his friend Kurapika decided he could admit what he's been thinking about since coming to this place.

"I can't involve any of you with the heist at the Zoldyck mansion. Killua went through hell the last time he went there, and Leorio and Melody are needed here with you, Gon." He couldn't storm that place by himself either, which left him with little options besides getting help in the form of some free hunters, but that was also out of the question.

"Will you hate me if...if I decide to do what I've been thinking about lately..." His reputation among the other hunters was completely shot ensuring none will take up his offer considering what it would entail for them. Kurapika realized he was desperate enough to do anything to get the final eyes, so he would be willing to make a huge gamble to claim them back. He knew it could backfire horribly on him, but he did not have any other ideas on how to solve this issue plaguing him and his ultimate goal besides killing the spiders.

"Do you think that I could return from becoming one of the Phantom Troupe's operatives..." Leaning down Kurapika whispered that last part to ensure none of the guards would hear it. This didn't provoke a reaction out of his friend making Kurapika wonder if Gon was in some kind of coma now. Water began to spring up from his eye sockets as he realized how badly Gon was hurt if he couldn't get any reaction from his friend. All he wanted was to hear more of his comrade's laughter, another smile on his face, anything to show that he was alive...

"You, Killua, and Lerio are the closest things I have to real brothers these days, so please wake up when I return from this heist...and you don't have to forgive me but please don't hate me for what I will do in the future..." He struggled to keep himself together while he was still looking at the battered shell of the person he knew as Gon. The best he could pray for was his friend to make a speedy recovery, the last thing he wanted to see when he came back from the Zoldyck household
was Gon still in such a horrible state. Looking back at the bed where he spilled his soul to someone who could say or do nothing Kurapika wished that nothing else could go wrong for him.

"Kurapika, I know you were angry at Hisoka but are you sure that was the best thing you could do?" Leorio spoke to his friend while they were outside of the hospital, watching the sun begin to set in the sky. While Killua and Melody were at the association headquarters they both wanted to see how Gon was doing at the hospital, so Leorio agreed to go with Kurapika.

"Are you saying I should have let Hisoka win?" Kurapika glared at his fellow hunter who was beginning to get worried about his friend's mental state. Watching him during that battle made Leorio wonder if he needed to step up to question what exactly is going on in his head.

"He was playing you along on a fiddle, and you fell into his game. The Kurapika before Yorknew happen would not have easily been set-up like that."

"You don't know everything about me, Leorio..." It wasn't a complete lie since there were details he hasn't shared with him even now; the relationship between them was close but he knew Leorio wasn't part of his clan along with his other friends. "You weren't there to see the kind of people my clan was like. None of them had a desire to cause any conflict, the people I knew from Lukso wanted peace and nothing more." If only he could take them into the valley and none of his people had been slaughtered they would see how much of a happy life he could have instead of this one.

"That doesn't mean I don't care about you! If I really didn't give a damn about your well-being I would not be screaming at you right now." Kurapika felt a little started by that however he knew Leorio meant well be saying that.

"I think you need to stay away from the association for a while. I know being around people like Pariston and that spider bastard Chrollo is poisoning your mind."

"You expect me to let that criminal walk over the group that has been out to capture him for years," Turning around to give his friend a defiant look. "There is no way I can allow him to take advantage of the association or any of you." Despite knowing that has already happened Kurapika wanted Leorio to understand he was still very much in control of himself.

"Can you really be sure that is the case, Kurapika?"

"I'll show it to you and everyone who doubts me..." Kurapika knew he needed some time alone before this conversation got more personal. Leorio tried grabbing his arm to keep him from walking away, but Kurapika proved too fast for him to catch up with so he called Killua back at the hunter building to watch out for him. He knew the last thing Kurapika needed was to be alone when he was in the slumps. His efforts were not meant to seem intrusive; Leorio just wanted to understand the mood and feelings going on in Kurapika at the moment.

'Don't do something batshit stupid, Kurapika.'

By the time Kurapika had arrived back in the headquarters guards were already on him to seal his hands back up despite them sticking around during his trip to the hospital. After the Hisoka battle, no one wanted this man to go anywhere without being observed by cameras or with a patrol of guards, the glares and looks he got didn't bother or phase him anymore...

Walking through the hallways he finally realized that he was now in the same position someone else was right now: Chrollo Lucilfer. He was being treated like nothing more than a common criminal despite his role in the association of being a man who hunts down wanted fugitives.
'Despite everything I've worked for it didn't matter anymore...' Kurapika realized how cruel the world could be despite everything he's been through, but for a while, he believed this group of hunters working here might change that opinion. He was now certain that they were also using him as a puppet or unwitting pawn in a game, which was already proven correct with Hisoka and Chrollo but they at least were honest in admitting that.

'There is only one group of people good enough to perform a heist on a building like the Zoldyck mansion. Only one series of murderers who can take on some of the best assassins in the world and that group even has one of the Zoldycks within their ranks.' It was only logical that he came to this decision on how to process, the idea of the Zoldyck handing over the last two Kurta eyes left out in the world was impossible to fathom. If the world continues to take what belongs to him..why not steal it back?

- Now -

Looking at Chrollo's face he knew the head of the group he was trying to enlist into was speechless. Kurapika slumps forward in his seat, his eyes looking at the blue irises while awaiting his response to his request. He didn't blame Chrollo for having this hesitation, he must have thought someone had possessed and changed the Kurapika he knew over the past few months. The head of the spiders felt like slapping himself to wake up from this "dream" he must be experiencing.

"You aren't serious about that? The coin and working with my men were one thing, but you are talking about fully stepping into my world."

Looking around the room he hoped the cameras weren't being watched right now since his conversation with Kurapika should be as private as possible given the circumstances.

"Once you head into this method of living there is no turning back. Even while I and Shalnark have become fully-fledged hunters the instinct to steal is something we can't let go..."

Yes, this was the last chance for him to walk away to go back to just being a hunter with his friends. Once he crosses this line his life will be changed forever and he wouldn't be able to go back...

"I'm well aware of this fact. I don't have any more doubts about this decision, so do you have any concerns?" His voice was filled with the determination that would make most people horrified about Kurapika's frame of mind. Chrollo was stuck in his own world, hearing the sounds of violins strum in his ears, the echoes of drums banging through the room, and a choir singing their hearts out to an empty area.

'Leorio Paladiknight, Gon Freecss, Killua Zoldyck. You really do have a precious comrade in Kurapika Kurta.'

"I wish the occasion could be grander, but I suppose that can wait until everyone gathers at the old church. Now, if you wish to explain to me what you plan on doing with my subordinates you arrive there it would be very appreciated."

Sighing Kurapika went over his gameplan hoping to earn Chrollo's trust in his idea on how to get them both what they wanted at the same time. The next coming week is going to be very important not just for hunters but for a group of scheming criminals as well.

With the rise of the sun in the morning sky Killua went over to where Chrollo, Shalnark, and Kurapika had been staying in since Pariston wanted everyone together for a big announcement. It seemed like there were lots of huge meetings with the hunters these days, but Killua took heed of Leorio's warning about Kurapika.
'I swear if Chrollo is messing with him again I might need to give him a few more punches to the gut.' As he walked to the door a blonde blur moved passed him revealed Kurapika running out of the room unaware Killua was the one who opened the door for him, his hands were still wrapped in the cuffs along with Chrollo and Shalnark.

"Killua...hey."

"Don't you hey me like nothing has happened! Chrollo's got you by the balls, and yet for some reason, you're okay with hanging out with that asshole! Why?! Why did you fight, Hisoka?" Killua slammed his hand on the wall near his holding cell wanting a full explanation for Kurapika's recent actions.

"The battle, you want to know why I nearly cut Hisoka's throat besides hearing my only chance to be freed of my Judgement Chains is gone for now." Looking at his friend's angry expression he knew that this concern was done with sincere worry about him. "I've considered my actions from yesterday and how they might have seemed to everyone watching. I think...I know how to process things in the future, Killua." Something about that sounded wrong to the former assassin.

"I think you need to stay away from those bastards. They have to be fucking with your head in some terrible way."

"I think you've been talking with Leorio, but contrary to popular belief I am still in control of my sanity and body. No golden needles are making me think or feel the way I am right now!" Storming off Killua knew that he might have struck a nerve with him, but at least he could alone with Chrollo and Shalnark-only to discover they were already gone as well.

"Goddamn it!" Killua slammed the door in a rage knowing he could not do much besides head off to the huge meeting about to take place in the meeting area. Sure enough everyone between all the hunters, many politicians running the city, Pariston who was standing in front of a mic podium, and off in the distance was Chrollo, Shalnark, and Kurapika. Grinning at the huge audience Pariston looked back at Leorio, Melody, and Killua who were sitting behind him in the state waiting for him to get on with this show.

"I know the wait has been long, but today I'm proud to announce that..." His eyes suddenly felt the aura belonging to Ging Freecss, giving the Vice-Chairman a smile that made him forget he was in the middle of a live televised announcement. Kurapika looked over to find Gon's father observing the huge production off near their location. He didn't know the connection with Gon, but he looked like someone who shouldn't be judged by their cover.

"Ahhhh. To think that he would show up as well, the occasion must be special after all." Chrollo smiled at the sight while Shalnark pulled out his phone to explain how he knew about this man to the confused Kurta.

"It took a long time to find a trace for that guy considering all the data on him was wiped out from the internet, so Chrollo managed to get the info on him from Pariston Hill. All we've managed to find out is that he was one of the Zodiac with the codename of "Boar" until he decided to leave the group."

'A former hunter and Zodiac member...' Kurapika's eyes narrowed in suspicion while trying to avoid getting those same looks from his friends onstage, the sudden tapping of a microphone interrupted his inner dialogue.

"As I was saying before my momentary lapse in thought each one of you has assembled here to hear the announcement about the upcoming election for the next chairman of this association. That
"Wait? That's it!" Killua, Leorio, and Melody refused to believe that was the only reason they were all here. Pariston waited for the crowd to calm down before continuing with the long-winded speech he had on the podium about what a great moment this was for the history of this organization.

"Ever the pompous asshole, you would think he would tone his ego down sometimes," Leorio wanted to throw his water bottle at him for stalling for the cheers he was getting.

"Alright! Alright! I know everyone is happy about this, so let us move onto the details of this upcoming process..." All of the Zodiac sagged back in their chairs knowing this was essentially a filibuster considering mostly everyone knew how this worked if the majority of the audience were hunters or aware of the lifestyle of their line of work. As Chrollo began to look at the stranger next to them since his hands were still unable to be used and Shalnark played with his normal cellphone after beginning to get it back Kurapika decided to ask the former "Boar" a question.

"I know what you're gonna say, kid. Trust me, even though I don't look like a smart man I sure as hell don't want to listen to this sideshow all day." He sighed knowing if he realized who he was talking to he would be in for an even longer day than he wanted. Downing the last bit of coffee provided in his drink, which he would need in order to keep himself from falling asleep will remain a "mere spectator" during this speech.

"What? Expecting some kinda autograph or something? You're looking at me like I stole something from you...then again considering the people you're hanging around with at this moment."

"Oh, don't mind us actually. We're merely here as fellow hunters of this prestigious association." Chrollo proudly showed the strange his officially licensed hunter's badge, which made Ging flip out in a small fit of rage.

"You had to have faked that! There is no way someone like you can get something like that with no problem!"

"Actually Boss needed to work with the association on several missions that are now top-secret to everyone except the higher-ups!" Shalnark pulled out his own badge, the response was a loud slap across his head by Ging's hand as he didn't want to remove his hat to make that face-palm on himself.

"They really have lost their standards if a geek like you can get in," Rolling his eyes back Ging was at least finding this strange conversation more interesting than Pariston reading his written essay for this formality of an event. "Do you have to know what being a hunter is about?"

"Ummm do whatever Pika does? Honestly, they haven't even told us what our roles really are in the association's hierarchy." Groaning Ging looked at Kurapika realizing this was one of Gon's friends, and he was aware of what happened with Gon's sacrifice of all of his future potential. Not many saw him weep about his son, the fact he got an image of his body from Pariston who wanted to "rub" in the whole deadbeat dad vibe he's gotten over the years. Now, he wondered if he should reveal himself or wait for a better time to explain his true identity instead of the old grandpa lurking around the place.

"Are you?" Kurapika was interrupted by Ging turning around to avoid looking at him knowing he was beginning to catch onto the truth.

"I'm a nobody, Kurta." Ging knew it wasn't time just yet, however, he hoped that Kurapika would be around to help bring Gon back to his feet.
Pariston Hill finally was done with his explanation, and he asked for Chrollo, Shalnark, and Kurapika to come to attention.

"Shame. I hope that Kurta kid is aware of what he's doing with the men who ruined his life..." Kurapika was aware of what is about to happen as there were several guards separating Kurapika from his friends in order to keep the peace knowing each trio's auras were slowly rising up.

"I know you're all shocked this is happening before your eyes, but since the fall of Netero, we are entering a new era. Why not let go of all feuds and problems by letting these two gentlemen reform themselves, and by proxy begin the redeeming of the Phantom Troupe! With Kurapika helping them out Chrollo will begin his new role within the association in Heavens Arena. Meanwhile, Shalnark will be heading out on a secret assignment with Kurapika for the benefit of this association. Both men have committed terrible crimes, so if you all can give them a chance they might surprise you as the latest in our new generation of hunters!"

Jeers quickly followed along with a few cups of empty coffee as the crowd wasn't buying what Pariston tried to sell to them.

"What a lively group of hunters we have today." Chrollo didn't mind the pieces of trash hitting him while Shalnark used his body as a human shield against the onslaught of the angry room of hunters. Pariston looked back at his Zodiac members for morale, the whole row of high-ranking hunters turned their chairs around literally turning their backs on him. He was on an island all by himself...

"Everyone! Please understand this rehabilitation for such criminals will benefit us all!" Everyone in the audience had turned against Pariston while Ging merely shook his head to leave before it got uglier.

"Boy, we've certainly gotten a rotten reputation. This might escalate into a full-scale riot if someone doesn't save this guy." Shalnark had said while playing another game of Vine-Sweepers on his phone. Chrollo considered speaking to save face for Pariston but knew that the audience would only get worse considered the venom being spewed at them.

"Attention...everyone? Listen, I know this seems a little weird but-" Then, the strange savior came in the form of Kurapika Kurta now standing in front of the possible mob about the form in the room.

"Shut the hell up and listen for a minute!" Kurapika's voice was loud enough to make everyone cringe once the echo went through their ears.

"I know who the hell you're all trying to boo and throw things at right now. These two murdered my entire clan, and this Vice-Chairman is the definition of an egotist. That doesn't mean I don't want to join in on this parade of hatred, but on the other hand, Pariston is right about one thing. The era of Issac Netero has ended, so we are now heading to a new unknown tomorrow. We are all frightened of what lies within the future or rather what lurks in the darkness of a new world. Each one of you has that right, but doesn't mean you should let that fear control you!"

Chrollo knew what the audience needed was an empowering speech; the fact Kurapika who would be the one to lead a group against himself and Pariston was speaking up for them was surprising.

'He's truly capable of turning around the situation to his advantage changing the subject of the disgust for the Phantom Troupe into optimism about the journey to the Dark Continent instead.' Watching the young man continue on with the passionate heartfelt speech he felt like this had to be mostly thought up on the spot. It sounded genuine, real, and likely from his heart.

"Do you want to waste your energy focusing on two people that will face their justice in the future or
focus on what is important right now! Each one of us stands here as members of this organization! The Chimera Ants come from the Dark Continent, which means that will be the start of our next big step forward as hunters!" The crowd didn't move or make a sound as everyone was under the thrall of Kurapika's voice. The Kurta stepped back to look at his confused friend Leorio.

"If you don't wish to hear it from me, then I at least beg you to listen to someone else who ended up dealing with a lot of strife, my friend." Killua was unsure what Kurapika is up to, but if it could stop the crowd's increasing rage then he hoped it would work. Stepping up to the podium under Kurapika's support Leorio gulped down his nervousness. Unlike his comrade, Leorio wasn't exactly the best at improvising dialogue especially when it was needed to sooth a room full of angry people.

"Kurapika really made that a tough act to follow, but he's right about this being a new era. With that said I know Pariston is trying to assume the position of Chairman of this association. He's certainly got a lot of headway into getting that position, however, I believe that he shouldn't get the position if this announcement is anything to go on," Realizing what he was about to say he looked at Killua and Kurapika before continuing on with a louder boom in his voice. "That is why I am announcing I will also become a candidate in this election!" Some of the crowd looked unsure while others were impressed by his desire to become the next chairman.

"I'm certainly not the odds-on favorite to win, and I'm certainly not the best man possible for this position. That said at least I care about being honest with you unlike Pariston Hill and those hidden schemes of his!" Cheers were mixed in with several boos resulted in a mixed reaction, but Leorio took it with the stride of a confident person in his steps thanking the audience for giving him some time while exchanging glares with Chrollo on his way back into his seat onstage.

"You...you aren't serious about applying for the election. Right?" Killua wasn't sure what to make about that revelation made by his friend. Leorio rubbed the back of his head with a laugh admitting he might have gone a little overboard by entering the election, yet he also didn't want to that any of that speech back.

"Believe me, Killua. There will be change like Kurapika said although some of it certainly won't be for the better," Seeing Shalnark walking behind his superior and Kurapika as they moved back into the crowd made him disgusted. "It means we might need to move along with that trend and change ourselves as well."

"Is that what Kurapika is doing by hanging out with those bastards..." Killua was getting a bad feeling about all of this while Pariston continued on with the details on the election's other candidates, he didn't really care who was the winner since in his mind there were more important things he wanted to focus on while dealing with his Zoldyck family doing something horrible to Kurapika just to drag him back home. Only later when he saw the letter that was left for him by Kurapika did he realize what Kurapika was going to do for the sake of his clan.

"Melody! I know you're worried about this just like how I feel about this." This was a small letter of apology, regret, and a semi-goodbye to all of his friends. In this letter, he admits that he might have gotten too deep into the life of being a criminal, but he needs to perform one more heist before reclaiming the last pair of eyes and telling Killua, Melody, and Leorio they are needed at the association.

"How can he act this recklessly! We should have been able to stop him!" Melody knew security was tight, but they had plenty of changes to keep Kurapika from getting away from them like this. She was on the verge of tears while Killua was confused about what to do about Kurapika, and Shalnark being allowed to leave on a "secret mission" for the association.

"At least Chrollo didn't slither away from here, so the question is where can we find Kurapika since..."
he didn't leave a return address of his whereabouts," Killua yelled out with a few sparks being sent through the chair he was sitting on, as Leorio had to calm everyone down so they could think about this more clearly.

"Kurapika will be fine, the guy has survived before when dealing with those spiders so he will be okay. My concern is what he's going to do with them..." He wouldn't know the answer to that question until much later on in the month...

- November 17th - Yorknew City

The air was filled with the smell of gasoline, the sky gray and raining down on the earth below, and outside of a train sat a man wondering about his future in the world while his traveling companion was trying to cheer him up. Despite their long travel back to the Yorbian Continent, Kurapika was more worried that he was even coming back to Yorknew in the first place since this whole series of events began for him and everyone related to him. This small detour was needed in order to both regroup with the team that would help him take back the last pair of eyes, their end of the bargain fulfilled leaving Kurapika to complete his part of the deal.

"Don't worry you're practically already one of us at this point. We just need to make it official with this homecoming, Pika!"

Kurapika took a note of how much of an admirable effort he's made in not being upset about getting such a nickname but compared to something like "Chain-Bastard" or Red-Eyed Killer it was an improvement he guessed. Looking at the uncaring passengers sitting near them the Kurta wondered if they would bother stopping either of them for simply being known as "recently pardoned" fugitives of the law turn official hunters protected by that affiliation.

'How quickly the opinions of the public can change with a few simple news stories...' Observing the silent judging from the common folk trying to get around the city Kurapika began to prepare his mind for what was to come soon. Already passing what the Phantom Troupe considered an audition this upcoming ceremony was merely a formality in the grand scheme of the spider's next big heist. What this was is a symbolic celebration of their dominance even without their leader taking part of this huge party.

"Do you think Boss will be able to climb up to the level of Floor Master?"

"That's a trick question. He must risk up to that rank in order to gain the advantage in his battle with Hisoka." While the idea of getting the Nen-Exorcist to help him break free of the Judgement Chain Chrollo still needed to fight through Heavens Arena like Pariston Hill expected. Despite the treacherous actions of the clown, Kurapika felt confident he wouldn't try killing his opponent before their battle since that man never would go that far just to spite a person. His faith in Chrollo would be put to the test over the next few days, however, the door to walk away from all of this was now closed to him.

After a few more hours of calls between Shalnark and Machi, the meeting area would be in the old church building used during the first night in the heists on the Yorknew auctions. Despite being their former enemy-turn ally-now about to be full member Kurapika felt uneasy as the blonde duo made their approach. The desolate building now serving as a hive of scum and villainy made the area seem sinister to even look at up close. The moment was ruined when he got a look at a huge blimp that was being piloted by several of the spiders, the chosen method of travel used before during their first heist escape in this very city.

"Hey! Feel like riding in that?" Kurapika was taken back from the offer made by Shalnark, grinning when the Kurta began to look nervous about the idea of hovering that high in the sky with only a
wooden box being powered by hot gas to keep him from death waiting below him.

"I...err think I will pass on that offer, Shalnark."

"Come on it isn't that scary! Sure, the idea of falling to your demise from a high location, having your bones shattered-"

"I got the bloody awful picture, and I certainly don't want to try it now!" Shrugging his shoulders the both of them continued on their way into the church realizing they were kinda of late with Pakunoda, Nobunaga, Franklin, and Kortopi already there waiting for them on the rugged terrain of the building's floor.

"You two certainly took your time getting here..." She was busy cleaning out one of her pistols while Nobunaga was angry Chrollo wasn't able to show up despite him being needed at the association per Hisoka's request.

"That damned politician is working with our traitor! Look, I know Chrollo has to play nice with those hunters to keep them off our backs. I just want to know why did he send back that chain-bastard who caused all of this in the first place!"

"You know why, ya hot-blooded monkey. It is because we're finally getting the last pair of eyes that is why we've gathered together here." Franklin wondered if Nobu was going to let his personal issues get in the way of the bigger picture. The mop-haired man looked up at Nobu who was using his weapon as imitation despite no one, not even the intended target taking him seriously.

"This is also an important day for Kurapika. He's finally getting into our organization."

"Like hell, I'm going to vote to let this murder in, Kortopi!" The samurai refused to acknowledge that no matter if even his leader told him this was happening today, which so happened to be the voice message left to them by Chrollo himself. Kurapika brought out his chains just in case Nobunaga was ready to leap towards his death.

"Hold on a second," Shalnark knew he would need to play the peace-maker for both men, "Everyone else is about to arrive so we should wait for them to show up before deciding how to process this."

"It doesn't matter, the Kurta is supposed to be inducted into this group as a replacement for, Uvogin; whom Kurapika in fact killed!"

"You have it backward, Nobunaga. I'm nothing like Uvogin because I am not now or ever going to be anything like a friend to such a dim-witted, short-sighted, numb skull that should have died a long time ago with your intelligence or rather lack thereof..." Daggers were being thrown by Kurapika and Nobunaga's glares only for their heated blinking contest to be interrupted by the arrival of the rest of the spiders.

"Getting into another shouting match? Why am I not surprised?" Machi shook her head at the both of them knowing their energy and voices were being wasted on the useless effort.

"Those two always start something that never gets finished." Feitan expected as much when he saw them give glares his way after that remark. With the rest of the Phantom Troupe filing into the room, Shalnark pulled out his phone to play the last message delivered by Chrollo Lucilfer while they were stuck in a private room together. This would be where he would give his full instructions with the assembly of his spiders and Kurapika.

"As you, all are no doubt aware by now I can't exactly be there in person for this moment in time,
but that won't interfere with your upcoming assignment. Before that we need to finally clear the air about Kurapika's involvement with our group, the hunter could have left us after Hisoka didn't hold up his end of the deal but that didn't happen. He does have those he considers his friends and partners in business, so he decided to ensure their protection from us by agreeing to induct himself into the Phantom Troupe."

All of the brigade members looked over at the Kurta they failed to destroy, and he simply nodded to confirm what was being said on the phone. None of them wanted to believe this moment would actually happen.

"If the kid is getting a tattoo I should be the one to do it." Machi knew her capabilities with nen-stitches made her the best option for the least amount of pain when adding ink to human skin.

"Damn it guys hold on a second! We need to put this crap to a vote, so we can decide if he gets in or not." Phinks knew they had to go by their own rules and not just put their complete faith in their leader's belief as that was something they've expressed since their strange journey began for all of them. Handing out pieces of paper Bonolenov wrote down his vote along with everyone else to determine if they should let Kurapika into the group, and Kurapika simply looked away feeling angry he would need to go through this just to earn their complete trust.

The ballots were tallied up to be a neutral party as Shizuku looked at the votes given to her by everyone in the room.

"One note says why can't I get a tattoo: From Kalluto." The Zoldyck gave everyone stares as he felt left out of this celebration, the reaction from Kurapika was actually to grab hold of his outfit to hold him up in the air.

"Then, YOU knew about that!"

"What are you talk-"

"Your brother stuck a goddamn needle in my head, so you should know something about the last pair of my clan's eyes being owned by your family!" His hands were easily able to overwhelm Kalluto while his guard was left down.

"I-I I knew you wanted them back, so I made a deal with Illumi. If you could get b-back Killua he would give them to you..."

Those words sent Kurapika into a rage, the man had to be held back with Franklin and Phinks keeping him from strangling the young assassin.

"How about your brother killing the nen-exorcist needed to free me? That part of your little plan, Kalluto?!" Kurapika had been waiting to see how he would react, the shocked expression on the youngest Zoldyck hadn't disappointed him.

"Look we can settle this matter later, and besides you're kinda young for a tattoo Zoldyck brat." Nobu knew he was enjoying this show, but the night was still young and he didn't want to waste it by sitting around doing nothing with his sword.

"I may be the youngest in this organization, a thing you must remember however is not to think that makes me weaker than any of you!" Shizuku began to read more of the votes like nothing happened just a few seconds ago between the Kurta and Zoldyck heirs.

"There are 2 votes about what we should eat tonight between chicken or beef..." Everyone deadpanned that while some of the thieves felt their stomachs rumble at the thought.
"Four votes against...five votes that are in favor." Shizuku wasn't expecting her vote to be the deciding one to accept Kurapika into the Phantom Troupe. Shalnark broke out the beer to hand out signaling the beginning of the huge party while Nobu and Feitan were silently mumbling about the voting being rigged for the Kurta. Shalnark passed along a beer for his "pal" who wanted to just get this over by taking in a swig of the alcohol. Kurapika expected it to simply help him pass the time around...

"Woohoo! How low can I go!?" Little did Kurapika expect to end up on the "happy" side of the toxic drink, which made him be willing to play a game with limbo against Shalnark as he was having the time of his life.

"Incredible. It is almost like he's forgotten that he is supposed to hate us or something." Feitan thought this was simply a horrible fever dream, yet here was Kurapiaka moving under a stick Franklin was holding above his lowering body as he played with their cell-phone user as if they were the best of friends. Pakunoda also dived into the beer trying to get over a headache she was getting from Nobunaga and his "bitching" about favoritism and other pointless things.

"This is going to be the longest night of my life..." Kurapika meanwhile was having the time of his life while under the influence of beer for the first time in his life, his laughter, smiles, and overall enjoyment was genuine despite the beer affecting him. By the end of his fun, Kurapika drunkenly asked Machi for the tattoo, which he knew exactly where he should be on his body while he flopped around on his chest.

"Put it...right on my back. Boss said...Your Boss said number eleven for me like Uvogin's old number."

"You certainly are intoxicated." Machi wondered if she really should be doing this now, but Kurapika pleased with her in a sad tone like he wasn't getting the candy he wanted from a store.

"Please give me a-" A burp interrupted his speech, "A tattoo! I will uh pay you back all the jenny I owe you for this promise! I really wanna ride that blimp again, so that I can see the pretty cities below me from the sky!" She looked into his normal eyes observing him give off a pout of sadness making her sigh in acceptance.

"Fine. Just know you won't be getting a newbie discount after this." Her needles came to life, empowered of her nen. Kurapika laid on the small table with his pants and shoes being the other articles of clothing on his body. His eyes watched the ribbons cut into his flesh, his sane mind was grateful the beer was numbing the pain he would have felt but he would certainly be sore in the morning. As Kurapika observed the black color get woven into his flesh, the irony of his chains to crush and destroy the spider would now include himself on that list as well. He was now a Phantom Troupe thief completely, such a goal was only meant to get his revenge against those who's slighted him namely Hisoka and even his new "Boss" Chrollo.

"Welcome to the madhouse, Kurta." Machi knew things were about to get a lot more insane around here. She might even need to get pissed drunk in the future like Uvogin used to with Nobunaga. She felt reminded of the good old days when looking at the silly laughter from Kurapika happy to get the grief, sorrow, and despair out of his soul at least until the hangover kicks in...
Act 14: Paradise X Lost

Chapter Summary

Kurapika, a man who felt betrayed from mostly all sides chose to forge a new path in the wicked web of the spiders. Now, the only ones standing in his eyes of finishing off his first goal were Kalluto's own family who along with a surprise family member will help bring about the penultimate part in this play of misfortune and sorrow of the Kurta Clan.

Act 14: Paradise X Lost
- Several Days Ago -

In the hospital located right in East Gorteau where Gon had been resting was two items of value sitting on a table near his body. One was the first of two letters with this one being addressed only for him to read, and the other was a blue cap belonging to a girl that wanted her promise fulfilled by a man before fading from existence. His mind was still lost in a strange world of his own making due to the trauma he's endured over the past few weeks. If he could wake up from this unconscious state there would be many questions he would like to ask his friends about what happened to him and the rest of the world with the fall of the Chimera Ant threat.

'Kurapika? Where are you..' His pleas to hear or even see the Kurta again plagued his mind along with finding Kite and his other friends in this world that he was forced to stay in until he could gain enough power to wake up from his recovering sleep-like state. He couldn't allow things to end this way since there were still quite a few adventures he would need to take in his life before he would consider the notion of retirement from the life of a hunter. He decided to focus his efforts on reuniting with his comrades, but first, he would need to get out of this unconscious world he's made for himself.

"It has been a while since I've gotten to chance to see you, Gon." His eyes turned back to find a man who he never expected to be inside of his mind let along his dreams, the person who was responsible for the separation between him and his precious friend: Chrollo Lucifer.

"You! What exactly are you doing-"

"Ahh, the vaunted hunter who managed to overcome the Chimera Ant menace with the other hunters from the invasion squad sent to their hideout." Standing near his location was Kurapika, the Kurta was standing up by a tree while Chrollo was holding his Bandit's Secret book in his hand. Watching his friend be so close to one of his enemies is like swallowing down toxic waste, a slow painful process that cuts up Gon's mouth and catches in his throat. The outfit was the same for Kurapika, the tribal blue of his clan, those same Chinese-flats on his feet, and his eyes looked no different or plucked out of his skull; his hair; the blonde color just as bright as when he first met him on the boat ride.

'There is something wrong here...something not right with Kurapika, but what exactly?'

"Why are you here right now? Kurapika, don't you want to yell at him or be angry he's ruined your life?!" Gon knew this behavior being displayed was not normal for the last of the Kurta.
"Hmm, perhaps this isn't the world you think it is, Gon. If this might be the future or simply a dream you're having is up to you. I might not be all that omnipresent, but I wouldn't deny the idea of someone creating some world where they think everything is real to them."

"Can you translate that for me, spider?"

"None of this might really be happening to you."

"I might figured as much."

While they were speaking "Kurapika" began to walk over to Chrollo and Gon while looking at the ground around them.

Chrollo laughs; steps in-between Gon and Kurapika keeping the two from each other.

"Are you happy that you're all still alive considering the last time we've been together like this. Is it everything you could hope for?"

"...Youuuu," Gon balled up his fist to give the smirking criminal a hard one in the jab, which resulted in Kurapika grabbing his arm before he could land the blow. "Chrollo Lucifer! You're just manipulating Kurapika into following your damn orders!" He figured that the chain around their hearts was bonding them not just with their lives, but perhaps even their minds as well.

"You're wrong on this. I-I chose to do this all of it is because of my decision." He knew that however, Gon didn't think it would actually go this far, the sight of him protecting the man who helped slaughter his clan was preposterous to even comprehend.

"So what? This man refused to understand why his actions have brought nothing besides misery to you." He couldn't fathom what inspired this new behavior in his friend. He looked back at the whole thing with more confusion than ever when he noticed Kurapika slowly turned his back on Gon.

"That is something that can't be changed," Chrollo admitted not feeling guilty about his choices, but knowing that things could have gone down much better than what history would become due to his actions. "It does not mean we're all chained to the past as the world around us continues to change and shift in nature. The fact is your mind is slowly beginning to understand that nothing remains the same forever." While speaking Kurapika began to remove his outfit to reveal his white shirt underneath, the only article of clothing left on his upper body.

"Adapt or perish the statement considered to be the unofficial motto of the chimera hybrid beasts," Chrollo knew what Kurapika was about to show his friend while he continued speaking. "Personally I have a different theory on the evolution of the current dominant species on this planet. That what doesn't kill you will only make you smarter...what expecting me to say stronger, Gon?" The black ink was covering the backside of the Kurta despite what the symbol both meant and represented.

"Grow and learn from your enemies, the tactics, and skills they use can easily be useful once you understand your prey. It seems that Kurapika got a firm grasp on that concept over his time spent with me." His eyes became red with rage at this once he realized what exactly was now attached to his friend's back.

"What is that supposed to mean exactly? Don't tell me you're actually joining up with this monster?!"

"Gon," Kurapika sighed, Chrollo smiled while this "betrayal" was continuing on. "This is not the real world, but possibly your mind trying to figure out what is going on outside while your body is unconscious. The truth is waiting for you when you wake up, but know that you're still my friend no matter what happens in the future." Gon wasn't sure what that meant, so Kurapika waved his hand to
his friend before the hand suddenly began turning black like his new tattoo. It began to grow bigger in size, the shape quickly distorted before a cracking sound was heard in Gon's ears.

"No...it can't be!" Even while the image that resembled Kurapika told Gon this was not really happening to him, the mere sight caused Gon's eyes to spring wide open as several miniature spiders began to crawl around Kurapika's body. Despite being a nightmare the sight almost made Gon throw up in disgust since Kurapika was still smiling as was Chrollo while they were being covered by the insects.

"M-Make it stop...please!" Gon was crawling backward on the ground to avoid being touched by the bugs now plaguing the whole world around him. The hunter went away from the fake Chrollo and Kurapika to look for some way out of this hell he somehow was stuck in. As he continued his escape he noticed a bed of water near him and took shelter in the rich liquid now running over his face.

"Come on wake up from this madness!" Gon's mouth suddenly felt a strange thing on his tongue that wasn't H20, the sensation on his taste buds was, in fact, a spider now twitching inside of his mouth.

"AHHHHHH!" He wanted to gulp in terror only to realize the bug would be disgusted by his body. Fear was now filling his mind, the sanity that Gon had left was quickly falling apart in this parsed-dream he was still in only to discover his body was now being swarmed by the black-colored spiders. He began to thrash around trying to shake off the spiders, his body was about to fall into the lake where he hoped the bugs would leave him alone when suddenly Killua and Leorio pulled him away, the bugs no longer covering his skin.

"Come on sleepyhead! We need to get going and we're all waiting for you!" Their laughter suddenly brought Gon's mind at ease; the torture of seeing his other friend tournament him was no longer happening as he knew what he needed to do next.

"W-Where are you guys?" Gon's first moments of being in the real world involved him clinging to the white sheets he was under, and his body was slowly learning how to move its limbs again. His life was likely shorted due to gaining his vengeance for the loss of Kite along with the other casualties brought on by the chimera ant's insurrection. It would be a long while before he would resemble the Gon everyone has gotten to know over the last several months. Awaiting him would be the world that he doesn't know along with a person that won't be the same Kurta he's considered like to be like a brother.

Back in the real world Gon was still very much a broken, sleeping young boy recovering from the exhausting ordeals he's been though as his mind was simply having a nightmare that could be very real. While his mind was restless, the hunter's body remained motionless as he would not wake up again for quite a long time while the world around him changed in many ways along with his friends...

- November 18th- Yorknew City

The last thing Kurapika was able to remember was acting like a complete fool, dancing around with his "comrades" while singing a musical piece playing on a busted radio they pilfered in a raid long before in the first years of their group, and then asking Mach to give him the tattoo of the spider right onto his back while giggling like a schoolgirl over it. That was all that "happy" Kurapika did, the beer that entered his system removed his inhibitions that would make normally make what he did result in a stab to his throat to end his insanity. That madness involved him actually chugging down several cans while competing with Shalnark in who can get the most buzzed the fastest.

Kurapika was the "winner" of said contest, the reward being a nasty hangover that he got while crawling up near the made-up bed offered by Shizuku whom he was told he should sleep next to
since every other spider might not be willing to spend time next to their former enemy. She kindly offered him the bed, however, something he was scared to consider was his conscious bugged him about letting her sleep on the cold hard floor, so he took up the offer to lay on the surface unaware there was a cover over his body until he got up with his first headache after taking in his first doses of booze.

'One thing I've learned from last night is Shizuku makes the cutest snoring I've ever heard out of a person...'

'Is it still there?' Kurapika took off his white shirt, reaching onto his back to feel the skin only to discover several bandages covering his body. The aftermath of Machi's handwork that represents his official membership into the Phantom Troupe, and with it the final proof of his new life as a criminal rather than chasing after them. Many wanted to check it out, but Machi acted as his "doctor" saying the bandages needed to remain in place until she could remove them later on in the week for the peeling process to be nearly finished by then.

'Ugh. I definitely need to stop taking on these challenges of manly-ness offered by these guys. All I seem to get his pain and punishment for going along with it...' Shaking his head, the Kurta looked over at the sleeping Shizuku and took in the rare sight of looking at her without those glasses covering her eyes.

'Well, I've been up for about five minutes, the lack of anyone yelling at me or a pissed-off samurai trying to cut my head off must mean everyone is away or still napping.'

Taking a gamble he wobbled back up to his feet, his legs were still trying to adjust to this after what he went through last night during the big party. As his vision was suddenly filled with the bright light of the morning sun reflecting off the stained glass at the top of this worn-out church. At least it wasn't a thunderstorm or seemingly endless amount of rain in the sky today like before when he was spending his last days in this city. Kurapika began to walk over further into the church, using the walls to keep his balance as he was still not sober.

"Glad to see that you're the not the only one who enjoys peace and quiet in the morning hours." A rich, even alto entered his ears belonging to Pakunoda, the woman whom Chrollo trusted with keeping the other spiders in line while he was absent or ensuring his plans continue on despite not being there to enforce them in person. She was drinking some tea rather than wine like most of the spiders had during the celebration in the last hours, her duty was to help discuss how they would not only travel to the Zoldyck's home but retrieve the eyes while coming back in one piece.

"I...might have gone overboard with things last night," Thinking back he wondered if he might have done something to the point she could have erased his memory of that event. "It is just I never expected you all to act so accommodating since...we still kinda our mortal enemies."

"I suppose that won't change considering the past between us, but now that you're fully a part of this brigade it is only right you get the full story..." Pulling out her trusted revolver, the ammunition was created out of nen crafted by her thoughts, and being pointed right at Kurapika's forehead. He didn't have time to blink, think, and even move as she explained this would likely help him get sober real fast.

- 5 Years Ago -

'This is...the night of the massacre...why is she showing me this?' This time he was actually looking at the events through Pakunoda's eyes instead of arriving later, the other spiders were the killing his people, their eyes being plucked out with violent force to be eventually traded on the black market. He tried crying out for his clan to run away as he could see the second-in-command place a bullet
into one of the blind Kurta who was still alive out of "mercy" for his state.

"UGHHHH! This is so fucking boring," Uvogin was having a fit at this lop-sighted affair of slaughter as ever for someone with his strength this was way too easy. "Why did we have to take on such a dull assignment. Can't the men who hired us to get the mafia to do their dirty work instead, Boss?" Calling out to Chrollo while crushing the body of another Kurta who tried fighting back against the full strength of the Phantom Troupe.

"You know they need to have all of the eyes for sale in order for this deal to be complete. Our employers demand nothing less than complete success with this mission." This would be the first time Kurapika heard the name of the group that ordered the hit on his clan since the spiders were merely the hired muscle on this attack, and the masterminds were still lurking in the shadows of the world. Not many believed they were even real, to begin with like the rumors about a special treasure being in the Dark Continent or the Chimera Ants.

"The orders are simple to understand, Uvo. There are three steps to this mission: secure the eyes, trade them for a high price, and then report back to the contact for our payment when all of this is done." Chrollo's reasoning for accepting this request was two-fold. First, the group needed funds not only to fuel their efforts but to also help out Meteor City which harbored all of the members of this rogue organization from the authorities. Secondly, the reputation of the spider was not taken seriously by anyone else in the world, but after what happens tonight no one in the world shall forget their name or legacy being cemented with this slaughter.

"You know this could have been done with any other group, Boss. Why do all of this with the Kurta clan?" Feitan spoke out, his umbrella dripping with the blood of someone's skull he just pierced with the hidden sword within his personal weapon of choice.

"The order was to eliminate this clan in particular. The group who ordered this extermination didn't explain their reasons besides wanting the eyes to get sent into the criminal underworld for auctions." Chrollo was aware they likely are ulterior motives behind this order, a reason he knew to keep tabs on them by gathering more information about them should the moment arise in the future. As the fires began to burn in the background a female and male figure were struggling to survive, their eyes removed but they still were clinging to their lives.

"P-please...don't harm...our little boy..." The spiders knew that the woman speaking with blood coming down her face likely was a mother considering what she just said to them. "He d-deserves to live...unlike the rest of us."

"Who is she talking about?" Machi was certain all of the Kurta clan were here at this moment unaware of the lone exception to her personal headcount. Suddenly a loud voice broke up the medical ninja's thoughts as the father refused to let them get away with trampling over their lives this easily.

"I'm not dead yet, and there no way these bastards are getting their hands on our son, Pika!"

"Akuro!" His defiant stance was quickly met by a vicious punch to his chest by Phinks, the man whistled at the resilience Kurapika's father was displaying.

"Whew! You've got a lot of manly balls standing up like that old man, Too bad that hero shit won't save your ass." Sending out another punch while Akuro attempted to send out a punch in return for getting hit first, the right cheek on his face was now bruised pretty badly as the next hit sent him flying across the ground a few bloody teeth actually were laying on the area near his head. Feeling a bit of pity for his prey the spider began to wind up his arm, his special ability would come into effect the more times he flexed his arm around. "Where you want this one since...it will be our last!"
Franklin walked up to the nearly lifeless Akuro wanting to get this over with already. Meanwhile, Omokage was considering using a set of eyes to create new dolls out of the deceased lying around him. Before the finishing blow was made in Akuro's skull by Franklin's finger bullets Pika cried out for them to listen to hear a plea of mercy.

"P-Please! I beg you all...don't hurt our son. You can have our eyes, burn down this place, even kill us if that makes you happy, but if nothing else leave Kurapika alone." Despite being close to death her maternal instincts kicked into full-gear refusing to allow these men to take away her precious boy. "He is the only Kurta left now, so I plead with you all to spare his life." Feitan found this boring since their orders were to kill every single Kurta, which meant no exceptions out of something they didn't bother showing to this clan, the act of kindness.

"Why should I honor this request?" Chrollo felt curious about this motherly intention by one of the last remaining Kurta on the chopping block while Pakunoda shot up a Kurta who was "attempting" a sneak attack on them with a rusty knife, his body slumped onto the ground with the cold bullet stuck in his forehead.

"We have nothing left to give you...you've practically taken everything that we have to offer; this small request is the least you can do in return if you have any kind of humanity within you all," Trembling at the injuries her body was suffering she knew her life was short as she realized the last thing she would see both literally and figuratively would be a group of soon-to-be infamous murders known throughout the world. "This is all I want is for my child to be safe..." Akuro felt guilty that he could not do more to help his wife as he was already rendered blind and helpless.

"Not one of you sons of bitches can take our son away from this world...We might not be there for him, but I will be damned if you kill our wonderful boy as well! Bastards!" He spoke even while crawling on the ground with no way of knowing where the group of thieves were near his body. His crawl was put to an end by a sword now being stabbed right through his heart, the samurai wasn't in his usual arrogant mood for once as he overlooked this carnage.

"Just fade away, old man. You're only making things worse by fighting off your death." Watching Akuro breath his last gasps of air while mouthing his love for his wife Pika cried out in despair while being a witness to all this chaos unfolding before her. Kurapika, on the other hand, was struggling to break free of the ghost-like state he was in while seeing all of this occur, his mind thinking there was a way to save his mother from what is about to happen at least.

'Mother...you and father...gave yourselves up to save me. You actually pleaded with these monsters...'

"Very well. I see no reason to not agree with your request," Chrollo surprised his comrades by agreeing with her command with the usual methods they employed on their victims. "Still, you must have some reason for protecting your child besides the obvious fact of caring about your family." No one could figure out Chrollo's intentions with that buffer to her demand, but Machi and Pakunoda had an inkling of what he was thinking in that crafty, sharp mind of his that they obeyed without question.

"W-What kind of question is that? Kurapika is an innocent boy who has nothing to do with this event. What could you possibly want from us that you haven't already stolen..."

"Potential. The Hidden potential that I seek to mature with enough maturity, experience, and training," Despite his group being mostly full he knew there was the likely chance of someone being killed as was proven by Silva Zoldyck in the future after this incident, but he felt like discovering what strengths the next generation could provide might be worth the investment. In other words, he was asking if it would be alright to try recruit or simply giving him a trial run within the ranks of his
brigade in the future.

"You're not serious about that?! There is no way I would let him get involved with a bunch of murderers like yours-" She coughed out some blood before she could even finish that statement.

"You really don't have much life left to even deny that you will be living through this. Besides if I really desired to go back on my word you would already be dead, and those eyes of yours already would be removed from your lifeless corpse." Pika realized this wouldn't help her case on keeping her son alive. This devil in front of her laid out the terms of his contract to save her son.

"...Alright. You can meet him, but only he becomes old enough to understand what happened...tonight."

"I can assure you he won't see us again until our paths are destined to cross such as you have requested." Pika could feel her body getting cast into the bottommost depths of Hades' underworld, the flesh getting melted from the female body, and her skeletal remains being served as a trophy for the black-clad demon smirking at her horrified expression. Yes, she could imagine her soul burning in the hot, unbearable heat of the flames of the underworld because of this deal she's made.

"Oh god...please forgive me."

"Would a deity understand the sacrifice of someone to protect their child? Quite an interesting question you've provided me, so thank you for this along with Kurapika. I will give you and your husband a decent burial it is the least I can do for him after all." With that Nobunaga gave Pika a quick death while honoring her motherly love for his future nemesis. As the group left the parting message for Kurapika to read to ensure they would meet each other when the years pass on, the head of the spider looked back at the carnage taking in one last view along with Pakunoda.

"Do you really think this deal will work out, Boss?"

"It has to play out, Paku. If he truly is worth sparing then he might prove to be the one to grant my deepest desire greater than any treasure we've ever stolen..." Chrollo watched his men finish burying the parents of Kurapika knowing this might prove to be the most important moment in not just his life but Kurapika's as well.

- Now -

Kurapika fell on his back as he was finishing scanning the Memory Bomb given to him by the woman looking down at him with a sympathetic look on her face.

"That is the memory Chrollo asked me not to share with you until you were full inducted into the spider. He felt that you wouldn't understand it until you got to know us much better." She knew that his eyes now red with emotion could mean he would attack or even seriously try killing her for harboring such a big revelation for him to grasp onto now, but this had to be kept a secret for this very moment to ensure nothing would go wrong.

She could feel her own heart start to pump out faster in fear of what the Kurta would do since he was very much aware of what happened all those years ago. He looked right at her face with a scowl evident in his current expression, the idea of her death being here and now wasn't that hard to grasp despite what Chrollo warned would happen should he strike down a spider with his hands. His steps were slow, methodical in their approach, and she thought that he was like a hungry lion stalking fresh meat offered up on a silver platter.

"Mother...why? Why did you...do this for my sake..." Instead of seeing the Kurta wrap his hands
around her throat she got a saddened Kurapika who sounded like a broken boy. His eyes were still red, but now a streak of tears was pouring down his face showing his despair at knowing and seeing the little details that he didn't know when the massacre took place. Anger was still present as he began to walk near Pakunoda considering the notion of strangling her with his chains keeping her helpless in Zetsu...

"I just...please don't leave me, mother..." The mind-reader took a step back wondering if this was a trick of some kind, but then she looked at his hands trying to reach out to her while he titled his head like a child who wanted to be hugged by their mother or father.

'He really believes that I am his mother?' She knew that the idea was joking made before with the idea of the Phantom Troupe being his new family of a twisted, warped, and bizarre origin. That was all simply for humor, her mind didn't think that Kurapika would ever seriously be trying to grasp hold of her while crying out in anguish.

"Wake up, Kurapika," She called out while stepping back further in her pink flat shoes. "You've experienced a memory of the past you're not really seeing your mother in me." Instead of getting him to back away he actually clung to her, his face rubbing hers in a desperate attempt to not let the memories that were pouring back into his mind to stop. Looking at her the insanity he was going through only became worse, the state of his mind reverting back to his childhood.

"What are you saying, Momma? You said that you would be here for me...with Papa!"

His grip on her body tightened around Pakunoda's waist, and she was considering pulling out her pistol again out of fear of this being part of some trap to make the spider drop her guard. There was no trick, no real plan to eliminate her as he continued to weep out in mourning, but now Pakunoda was unsure what of doing now. She felt reminded of the cats she would usually feed when they were around her, the gesture was something many of her comrades thought was strange but knew that out of the group she had a lot more compassion for people and animals than most of the other members.

"Momma...please don't go away I need you...say something...MOMMA!" His increasing cries made her act in order to keep the others sleep for a while longer, taking a hand to run it through his hair she decided to go along with this facade.

"Kurapika...Listen to me. Eh, how does it go again like a mother's intuition would say right now? Right! Just be a good boy and listen to me." She tried making her voice seem more gentle, and it worked as he began to calm down when he looked at her not seeing the criminal Pakunoda rather his deceased mother. Pakunoda wasn't the best at this kind of stuff having usually acted with coldness towards everyone who wasn't involved with the group she worked for or her leader.

"I need you to relax, Kurap-my child." Continuing on with the lie she cups his cheek in her hand like she does while playing with a homeless cat-she felt more comfortable in this position. "I need you to wake up for me, and despite what happens next know that I will always love you..." It wasn't Pika speaking to her son, the pseudo-mother role being played by the number two of the Phantom Troupe wondered if this is what she would actually say to her only child. The crying stopped rather quickly, the embrace was still tight around her body from his limbs as he looked up with his red gaze.

"Pakunoda...is this all you know about her? Nothing else that I should be aware of that you've been keeping a secret from me..." His voice was cracked because of the screaming he just did, and there was some amount of snot coming out of his nose as a side-effect of his sadness. Looking around for a significant amount of fear from anyone else after seeing what just happened Kurapika broke their embrace His smaller head moved upwards with a stare that would make anyone else turn white in fear.
"If you blab about this to anyone about what just happened you will regret it! You're not my mother so don't pretend that you can ever be her!"

"This was what Chrollo wanted you to know there is nothing else that I can provide from my own memories. If you wish to learn more about his scheme then ask our Boss in person." That phrase "our" Boss made Kurapika pause in his threatening expression moving down his hand that was about to project his chains for a threat he wouldn't be able to backup; now that he was a spider it wasn't against the rules to strike down one of his own kind.

'This chain would likely kill me if I allow my insanity to get worse...'

Still, looking at Pakunoda who helped bring the Kurta to extinction he needed to swallow his hatred and pride to ensure his future, after making the deal with the demon who claimed his mother and father he couldn't harm a hair on any of these people even if he was provoked. Slowly, moving his hands behind his back he asked her when they should discuss the plan on their next heist to which she replied the conversation would have to be later on when everyone was mentally prepared for this upcoming assignment.

"I would suggest enjoying the peacefulness while it lasts, Kurapika. I hear Machi wanted to see that tattoo's condition along with more physical therapy." Waving a hand through her hair as it was out of place during the "heartfelt" moment with Kurapika as she watched him walk away like nothing had taken place between them, but part of herself felt guilty about everything that's happened to him plus the fact she pretended to be his mother. Was she beginning to think like a caring person...

'Is this a conscious I'm beginning to develop due to interacting with the last Kurta?'

The quiet, but deadly medical ninja was already up and working out her skills on some training dummies with her nen strings. She knew that getting rusty with her skills was not good for the sake of the guild of thieves. Knowing that her training was no longer private, her dummies were quickly wound-up into the air in rapid succession as she turned around to meet her audience.

"Staring at people is pretty rude, boy."

"What do you want me to do? I didn't wish to interrupt your own training since I've got my own to do apparently..." Machi realized Pakunoda told him about her request for another round to help him control his mind and body so that he would be more reliable as a Phantom Troupe operative.

"I doubt we will be able to finish this up as quickly as you might think, Kurta. Boss needs us to get these last eyes to keep you happy."

"Yes, that is why I...need your help..." Despite having a more clear head compared to last night's drunk antics he wasn't in the best shape for early morning sparring of any kind, which was shown when he began to clutch his head in pain. Sighing, she pulled out a cold water bottle while ordering he use it for his headache before drinking it to replace any fluids he might have lost over the night.

"By the way you're lucky, no one else saw you puke in that toilet beside me. Nobu was pissing up a lake by the time we managed to fix the toilet since he refused to take a piss anyone else accusing us of "spying" on him while he relieves himself."

He couldn't help the smirk that crept up on his face, and his imagination of that scene he missed while he was off in his drunk world made that all the sweeter to think about now. While gulping down the water Machi walked over to her trainee, her eyes inspecting the back of his body wanting to inspect the skin from her surgery from last night.
"You feel any pain coming from behind, Kurta?"

"Kurapika. I would like it if you don't refer to me by my last name all the time, Machi." He wondered if she even had a last name, though most of the members of this group lacked a full name or they simply didn't tell people about it.

"Fine. Are you really sure you want to get started on an empty stomach? Considering what you threw up last night..."

"Just get started and then I will eat!" Pulling off his shirt he was ready despite wobbling around a few seconds to stabilize his balance. Machi started with an emotionless look, buzzing her nen-strings to life while ordering him to remain still. She moved the nearly invisible strings around his arms and legs stringing him up like a fly in a spider's web.

"All you have to do is get out of this webbing simple as that."

"You're joking," Kurapika expected something more complicated coming from someone like her but he noticed that he couldn't move a muscle despite putting his strength into his limbs. "This won't keep me stuck forever."

"Exactly. Now, if you will excuse me I'm going to get some food to eat..." Despite his requests to bring him some breakfast, she waved him goodbye leaving the Kurta to escape on his own.

"Some kind of therapy you've giving me!"

While the second-newest member was struggling to get out of his "training" situation Machi saw Franklin and Shalnark getting the meal of the day ready, the dishes were a nice classical meal of omelets, bacon, and sausages for everyone to chow down on.

"Hey, where's Pika? I hope you didn't rope him up in strings just to get some food first."

"I left a string loose for him to use in his escape, the training will let him understand there will be situations where he needs to rely on his own wit and ingenuity to survive."

"Sounds like you're messing with our new member." Franklin hoped the Kurta wouldn't feel that upset about it; they would be at odds with each other for the rest of their lives despite being in the same group now. It would not be wise to antagonize someone who is only working with them to get back what they stole from him in the first place.

"If he wants to retrieve the last eyes then he must learn to control his feelings. We're likely going up against the Zoldyck family, the last time that happened one of our own ended up dead." She knew that he had to be ready for that especially with Chrollo not being around since he was stuck back at the hunters association.

"You need to lighten up sometimes, Machi. Sure we're dealing with some assassins and butlers this time, but we've gotten this far with only a few losses among our ranks." Shalnark was full of happy optimism about this next heist, which would mean they would have fulfilled their obligation of helping Kurapika with his second goal in life, the first being the elimination of the Phantom Troupe and its leader however that might not be possible at this point after what just occurred last night.

"Once this is overall with we need to do is reunite with our leader to plan out the next big robbery!" The tech informant cheered on, his hands working on the eggs that were being poured into the hot pan they used in the kitchen area. Bonolenov drunk some of the orange juice they took from a local store for this meal they were about to have, drinking in the liquid before giving his thoughts on this upcoming job.
"What about that Zoldyck, Kalluto? We are going up against his family, and that surely means his family blood is thicker than any of us..." The idea of betrayal coming from him wasn't that hard to assume. If the only true purpose he was a part of the spider is to find his brother, then turning his back on them for the sake of his blood relatives is very possible. Phinks sighed while he was moving his arm in exercise.

"We'll just beat the hell out of him if that happens like Hisoka if we come across him again in the future." He pounded his fist on the table to illustrate his point visible to his comrades. "We can't tolerate any more traitors jumping in to stab us in the back later..."

"Agreed." They all knew that was the case, but they weren't sure if Kurapika would fall into that category despite accepting their group's symbol on his own skin that isn't something he can simply take back or remove through a simple usage of Texture Surprise.

"Are we going to use Kurapika as a trap again?" Shizuku knew that wouldn't work like with the Omekata cult who were desperate to have the Scarlet Eyes for their "salvation" ritual.

"Nah if anything we might need someone like Kalluto for info on the Zoldyck household. Chances are he might know where the most valuable items are being kept." Machi knew that was a lot to ask from him, but they didn't have any other ideas besides their old method of charging the place to steal whatever they wanted from their victims.

"This might be the one heist where nothing goes according to plan, the hell with that we might not even have a solid plan this time around," Nobunaga said with a groan wanting to blame Kurapika for this misfortune that has befallen them to which even the other spiders found rather unfair to say.

"We've gotten this far by relying on our instincts and the faith of our Boss," Pakunoda interrupted the conversation, her eyes darted over at the disgusted samurai who was upset that Kurapika was still alive let alone now fully a Phantom Troupe member. "This group has not been cut down despite the odds being against us over the past few months. Once this is done with Kurapika and by extension, ourselves can find some resolution with the history between us. Isn't that worth risking our lives for one more time?"

"Tch, you can't be serious about that, Paku. We're not supposed to be replacements of that brat's dead family or friends." Nobu scoffed while trying to sneak-and-steal a fresh piece of bacon, his right hand was suddenly stuck in Machi's nen-strings.

"I know that! That doesn't mean we have to be hostile to our newest member. He isn't going to simply be Uvogin's replacement." She knew that him getting the number was something approved by Chrollo, and with all the other positions now filled the likelihood of him getting another number was slim. As the breakfast was finished who should arrive last but Kurapika with Kalluto in tow. Machi was curious about if he discovered the trick she left behind about how to get free of his entanglement, but she did provide him the dish she saved for when he got out.

"Your reward, so don't get pissy with me about leaving you high and dry."

"If no one spat in this food then I won't be, Machi." Simply taking the dish and heading over to a private area to eat by himself Shizuku was quick to question Kalluto about how the Kurta was doing when he got out of the "training" session he had earlier. The young assassin shook his head simply telling her it was a secret, and that a good magician never reveals his secrets.

"Magician my fucking red eye! That boy did something rotten and I can smell it!"

"You sure that isn't the food I helped cook, Nobu?"
"Shut it geek boy!" The others sighed going back to their usual method of ignoring the samurai’s ranting during the early, evening, and nighttime hours. Kalluto asked Machi if she could manage to get a call with Chrollo since he wanted to explain how he was going to earn the approval of their leader and with it, the chance to finally earn the tattoo like Kurapika had on his back. Indeed there was a plan he’s figured out that would achieve this goal along with getting Kurapika the eyes, but most of all having the chance to see Killua in person once again...

- November 22nd - Kukuroo Mountain

"This is a really bad idea. Kalluto you better know what the hell you're doing..." Nobunaga hissed out to the Zoldyck while Kurapika and Machi were walking up the pathway to the huge Testing Gate surrounding the mountain area. This is the place where Killua said he would...meet Kalluto in person. Most of the spiders figured they could simply try raiding the place, set on getting this over with instead of creating more problems by involving Kurapika's fellow hunter and friend.

"Do you want to get eaten up by Mike or not, Nobunaga? I can assure you this is the best way to infiltrate the mansion without raising too much attention, but if you want to die a swift death be my guest." Kalluto moved his fan over his mouth as he smiled when Nobunaga blew up in a rage-filled storm cursing out several different words. The forest's trees moved along with the wind as Kurapika was dressed in his more proper black suit and red tie for this occasion, the outfit was meant to show that he was here on business not related to simply the hunter's association.

"Do you think he'll show considering you did leave him with only a paper to explain yourself." Machi was skeptical if their friendship even existed anymore, her answer was given in the glare of a crimson-eyes Kurta.

"He won't walk away from me without getting something more concrete. Besides, that is why Kalluto was the one who spoke to him about meeting up like this to ensure all parties get what they want."

"And we're supposed to play bodyguard? Give me a break we should cut the crap and just take-" Nobunaga sensed a spike in nen, seeing a yo-yo come into his direction before Kurapika threw out his chains to direct the object away from the samurai's cheek. The two estranged friends were staring at each other face-to-face once more.

"Killua..."

"Kurapika...mind explain why the hell you're hanging out with those bastards and my brother? I suppose that it won't be something you can just write down on a flimsy piece of paper!"

- Several Days Ago -

It was inevitable considering the way he left the goodbye note to Killua and his other friends back at the city of the hunters association. His choices would likely have resulted in this consequence, which came from accepting the deal with the devil just like his mother all those years ago starting this cycle of death, destruction, and overall decay of a boy's innocence. The cold steel once used to stop the spiders were now enforcing their criminal activity, and it was because of Kurapika that both himself and Shalnark escaped from capture. Of course, he saw the playing cards that were around the guards stationed out of their building, and he realized Hisoka did aid the both of them in their escape for as of yet unknown reasons.

Kurapika, just as confused as Shalnark during their break out of detention took the opportunity given to them by the treacherous clown. While Chrollo Lucifer was too well protected to be saved Kurapika figured he wouldn't want to leave anyway since he was determined to fight in Heavens
Arena, holding out hope that Hisoka might fulfill his end of the bargain to leave him and his group alone. Despite hating the man for putting himself and his friends through so much misery Kurapika had to admit he must have really cared about his men.

With that Kurapika and Shalnark got all of their "contraband" from the storage room, which included their weapons and cell phone in the tech-savvy blonde's case. Shalnark was happy to have his Black Voice device back and ready to inject needles into the pool fools who stumbled into his way, the guard who was, in fact, a few weeks away from retirement simply performed his duty in trying to shoot them both down. Kurapika was considering merely knocking the man unconscious, the elder then spoke of the Kurta as a man who should not be allowed to live for betraying the hunters. Something inside of his mind snapped when the guard told him that he would spend the rest of life as a low-down common criminal who should die with the rest of his clan while ranting that he wants his retirement money by killing them both on the spot.

"Oh, don't worry he's just gonna think about not quitting for retirement money while mowing down his fellow cops."

The bat-themed antenna stuck in the back of his neck reminded Kurapika of unwillingly being under the control of Illumi's golden needles and being unable to stop himself from complying with orders against his will. Despite not being on the receiving end of such a controlling influence he still winced a little as the guard suddenly began helping the both of them out while taking out anyone who came across the escaping hunters. Looking at his badge Kurapika knew that he could no longer be considered a hunter despite what Pariston Hill told him while suggesting he go undercover into the spider's ranks. Shalnark pulled out his own license considering just tossing it aside, ripping up, and maybe even burning it since it was practically useless to him by this point.

"I gotta say being a hunter isn't all it is cracked up to be considering I just say in a bunch of rooms to answer questions most of the time," As he watched the now puppet-style guard mow down any more resistance in their path Kurapika knew this sin would only be the start of his own journey into hell if he wasn't heading there already. Sloth, the sin of laziness or inaction which he did while seeing the poor man who cast him out as being nothing but a traitor get shot down by his own allies unaware he was under the power of Shalnark's Black Voice. He could have intervened to save his life, but he simply stood by and watched him bleed out.

Running off into the night Kurapika knew that his actions would eventually catch up to him maybe not today or tomorrow but eventually karma would come back to get the rogue Kurta; his life becoming a shadow of what it once was once hunting down fugitives of the law to now becoming one himself.

"Boss will be just fine since Hisoka and Pariston still need him. I'm sure that your friends won't hurt him either since he knows about the deal you made with him." Shalnark looked at his new "comrade" with a smile to lighten the mood, but instead, all he saw was a sulking person who stabbed everyone in the back even if the higher-ups were in on the escape or not. This was his decision, so he would need to live up to whatever comes from it.

- Now -

Killua didn't waste much time before trying to knock his hand into Kurapika for blocking his yo-yo attack on the samurai. The blue eyes of the Zoldyck were filled with rage over what is happening in front of his eyes. This must have been a horrible dream because he refused to accept the reality of Kurapika trying to keep the murders of his clan safe. Killua wanted answers, the letter of remorse and guilt wasn't enough to satisfy him so he decided to go after his comrade once Kalluto called this meeting.
"Mind explaining to me what the hell you're doing with these bastards? Oh, sorry gonna run off to get the last pair of eyes with the help of criminals and your own brother who tried using you, when I get them I will explain everything to you over the phone kthxbye?!"

"Well, I'm sure my letter had a lot more written down than how you put it...

"It doesn't matter damn it! You ditched us and let that jerk with the phone hurt innocent people just to get away! I may have come alone, but Leorio...and Gon should have to be here to watch this sight," Clutching his hand in sadness Killua looked down at the badge of his hunter's license, his mind knowing that Kurapika was considered one of the most wanted fugitives in the world. Despite Pariston's word that Kurapika would not be considered black-list the public's opinion on the last remaining Kurta had gotten worse.

"T-This is not you, Kurapika. Whatever you might be thinking this isn't the person I met on that boat ride all those months ago."

"You right, the person standing in front of you is an entirely different version of that young man who simply wanted revenge. He died a while ago, but that doesn't mean I think you as anything less than a valued person in my life." Closing his eyes for a moment Kurapika was struggling to keep himself composed while speaking to the fellow hunter while Nobunaga rolled his eyes at all of this, his tolerance with this "bromance" was very low despite the older criminal's history with Uvogin. Seeing them care about one another brought up bitter moments with his friend that he won't get to have thanks to the Kurta.

"Why did you leave all of a sudden? We could have come here with Leorio and Gon when he was back to being somewhat normal..."

"THAT is a damn lie and you know it! Gon, there is no way he's ever going to be the same...

Kurapika saw first hand the sacrifice Gon made, the strength of his body was now crippled likely to never return to being 100% once he is able to get back on his own two feet. His future potential of nen was given up just so he could get revenge against one of the Royal Guard of the Chimera Ant King. That kind of risk just to obtain retribution for the loss of something Gon cared about made Kurapika realize that if he simply went down his path of exterminating each spider, the chances of him living to kill Chrollo and being able to spend the rest of his life with his friends were very slim to none.

'I can't afford to die like that or end up in such a state...' That image now burned into his head along with many other factors made him realize the contract with his personal demon was truly the only way out. He could have become the mole Pariston wanted, and in fact still could turn his back on the spiders to fully turn into the new "Rat" of the Zodiac. He could have stuck with his friends back at the association, screwing over Chrollo Lucifer and his gang of thieves, but the result of that could have led to more suffering and pain to those he cared about in his life.

"This isn't right, to hang out with these people like nothing happened to your parents, clan, and friends. You've changed completely and this Kurapika is certainly not someone I would consider a friend..."

"Don't you really how much your friend has given up to keep YOU alive, boy?" Machi hissed out at the furious Zoldyck, her tone was defiant and sticking up for the Kurta to which Nobunaga, Kalluto, and even Kurapika were shocked to hear from the normally unfeeling woman.

"He could have left you all to die at our hands back in Yorknew City," She reminded him of how their lives were in their hands however they were not killed solely because of him. "The choice was
his to make, and he did so without hesitation on his part to keep all of you alive." Killua was ready to retort by stating she had nothing to do with their conversation-silently cursing at the medical ninja while letting Machi continue with her reasoning for why he shouldn't just kill them both now.

"All he wanted was for us to help him take back the Scarlet Eyes he wants to claim, which we have fulfilled without fail each time until this point. Nobu, Paku, and even Boss can confirm this proof if you want to hear it from someone else!" Killua didn't like that answer, so he decided to get up in Kurapika's face to demand what is really going on here when Nobunaga draws out his sword from the hilt wrapped around his side. He knew Killua wouldn't do anything foolhardy, but he wanted to be prepared just in case.

"Do you want to know how far I'm willing to go in order to achieve my goals, Killua? What the eyes of my fallen clansmen mean to me? Well, here is the proof you seek..." Turning around Kalluto knew what Kurapika was about to do when he saw his fellow spider remove his clothing starting with the black tie around his neck, to the suit and red shirt, the backside of his body was no longer wrapped in bandages leaving only the lasting effects of Machi's nen-styled tattoo on his smooth skin. The rebellious member of the Zoldyck family was horrified by what he was now looking at.

"Tell me that's just a temporary thing on your back! You can wash it off, right!"

"It is true my friend. This is what I've had to do in order to survive in the world I've been living in."

The black symbol of the Phantom Troupe was on the bottom of his back, the number eleven signaling what place he took ironically being Uvogin's old number. He was fully a member of this guild of thieves, and he would commit to proving it from now on. He certainly would be in the favor of many political figures, the community would hate him even more than before all of this happened, but he stopped caring about their opinions a while ago. To Kurapika it was simply noises of people who expected him to be something that he wasn't anymore. He still had a moral reasoning however it wasn't as apparent like before his advent to Yorknew City as it is these days.

"W-Why don't we all just calm down for a minute. Brother, I'm sure you can sympathize with Kurapika's plight since it is our family who holds the last remaining eyes of the Kurta Clan." Kalluto tried to ease the building tension with his older brother and the spiders, he actually just wanted to capture him now to take him back to Kikyo yet that might result in the Phantom Troupe coming after his family in retaliation, as that could mean the start of a war that neither group wants to happen.

"You probably just brought me here to drag me back home, little brother," Killua barked out ready to smack him in the head with his yo-yo if he tried to pull anything on him. "This likely is some kind of trick, but it doesn't mean I can't drag you back kicking and screaming despite your new-found friends standing in my way!"

"ENOUGH!" Kurapika barked out to everyone who was ready to pounce into the fray. Holding out his arms Kurapika knew this stand-off could end badly if he didn't say the right words to stop the arguing with both parties.

"We all came here for a common cause despite the issues we have with one another, so until we actually get into the mansion we can have a small truce with each other since the answers to our problems all lie in that place." He figured the fighting would waste their energy, to make through the security measure put into place by the Zoldyck family they would need to push their issues aside for the sake of a similar goal...

"He may be in the right brother. You know this place as much as I do, so if you don't want to end up in a torture chamber again co-operation might be necessary for this." Kalluto pouted in a childish manner wanting to guilt-trip Killua into following along with this scheme while Nobunaga scoffed at this display.
"We do need him when we got you, Kalluto. Besides he's likely just scared of having to face his family again and get a nasty whipping from his mother." Nobunaga giggled at the thought of Killua getting smacked around by his mother.

"You shut the hell up monkey man! My family business has nothing to do with you, so why don't you practice using that sword to prepare for another moment of looking like a buffoon if you haven't done so already!"

"So much for a peaceful alliance," Machi shrugged her shoulders feeling bad that Kurapika's words hadn't completely made both sides relax while the blonde in question walked up to the huge wall near their location in the forest. This brought back memories of the rescue mission he took part of in order to save Killua from suffering at the hands of his family.

"If you bastards really want to get inside, then you need to talk with Zebro first. I mean I wouldn't mind if any of you two get to meet Mike, but it seems that Kurapika doesn't want that to happen." Killua was at least grateful that he would be able to see the "janitor" of Mike once again after what's happened over the past couple of months with a lot that has changed in that frame of time. The booth of Zebro's area in the mountains was the same, and when Killua knocked at the door he was actually serving tea to a special guest that he wasn't expecting at this time in the morning.

"Another one I wasn't expecting to have so many visitors-" The elderly "key" guardian of the Zoldyck residence was shocked to see Killua here, but even more so at the party of individuals standing behind him.

"Killua? What are you doing here like this, and better yet...why is Kalluto standing next to Kurapika and those other...less than pleasant fellows."

"Yeah, that is a long story..." Which only got more confusing when he took a look at who was visiting Zebro today: Illumi Zoldyck. Three brothers of the matriarch of their family were in the same area, at the same time, and with nothing holding them back besides a few people. Kurapika was beyond livid to see the man who ruined his goal of escaping from his deal with Chrollo Lucifer, simply nursing a cup of hot tea like nothing happened. The other spiders felt the same way about this, and once more tensions were at a major high with not much being done to make cooler heads prevail in this bizarre situation.

"Killua. Good to see you've managed to get here right on time as did you Kalluto." He relaxed in his chair, sipping up more of the hot tea prepared for him by the caretaker of the Testing Gate area. While everyone was about to start a huge argument, the older Zoldyck brother simply treated the whole thing as nothing out of the ordinary.

"Illumi. You must have set this whole thing up to bring me back to Kikyo, didn't you?!!" Killua charged at the man only to see his fist connect with the wooden table, and Illumi was holding his cup of tea in his other hand while using the table to block his younger brother's attack. Kalluto joined into the rumble, his paper fans were being used to counter Killua's yo-yos as the three continued on with this strange battle showing off their speed, agility, and ingenuity in sudden combat.

"I see hanging around with a pack of killers has improved your murderous streak, Kalluto."

Killua narrowed his eyes as his fellow blood brother in the Zoldyck family.

"Why thank you, big brother! Illumi's bizarre idea of having me join up with this group might have been a little hard to swallow in the beginning, but over the past few weeks I've begun to see the rewards of living in this lifestyle of crime." His mind and scope of killing had been broadened while observing the likes of Nobunaga, Machi, Shalnark, and other members of the troupe in action during
the smaller robberies. He might be the youngest and less experienced operative among the spider, but he
planned on changing that very soon.

"Hold on just a second," Zebro tried in vain to stop the three heirs of the Zoldyck estate from
continuing on with this small battle with one another. Each of two loyal brothers tried their best in
overpowering Killua, while he was able to hold his own against them looking at Kurapika for help in
this situation. "You're all the children of Kikyo! I must insist you all cease with this pointless fight at
once!" The spiders remained simply spectators while all of this was going on wondering if they
should remain as simple witnesses of this whole thing or intervene to stop it.

"This is quite an enjoyable spectacle to watch. I've got to say if the rest of the family is like this, then
this mission might not be so bad after all!" The samurai began to cackle whole lurching over in joy at
this. Machi remained her usual apathetic self, but she looked at Kurapika to see what he will do now.

"Machi...do it." He gave the order to put an end to this, her eyes widen at first but she quickly
realized might be for the best. Sending out her nen-strings to stand in the way of the trio of Zoldycks
Zebro finally remembered the face of Gon's friend who was with him during their visit here. The
black suit plus the fact he was standing next to the people who brought his life into a chaotic state
threw him off at first.

"Kurapika Kurta?" While he was grateful the pink-haired ninja broke up this brawl he couldn't
believe what he was seeing in front of him. His whole world seemingly had been turned upside
down with these series of sudden twists on the people he once met and knew about during the
Hunter Exams.

"As much as I love sparring with you two Machi's unneeded interference was needed. There are
bigger issues at hand beside our family feud, Killua." True, if she didn't get involved he would have
stopped Killua and Kalluto anyway since there was a lot to get done today, but he wanted to gauge
the current strength of his younger siblings and if they've learned anything while remaining
independent of the rest of their family. So far he was less than impressed by their efforts to combat
him considering how much he was holding back.

"How about we start with you killing one of the only hopes I have of being free of my Judgement
Chain!" Kurapika was wondering if he now regrets not letting Ilumi's younger brothers give him a
few punches or strikes to his cheek seeing him merely smile at his frustration. Zebro reminded silent
as Chrollo's business partner chuckled at this remembering that day pretty well.

"I see," Looking at Kurapika with a smile he could tell what happened at the hunters association
"Hisoka went and told you his version of events. I'm not that surprised he went and hide information
about what happened in order to drive you crazy, so forgive me in advance for swearing Kalluto into
secrecy about the truth." Looking over at the youngest assassin he already figured that he kept secrets
when they spoke with each other before heading out to this mountain. These days finding the best
people to trust was next to impossible...

"I should have expected you to return home, Killua. Seaquant did warn me that you might show up
sooner or later."

"He told you about this? Then, is he taking part in the Election process?" Killua figured the co-
worker would take advantage of such a big change due to the death of the previous chairman, feeling
that being a former hunter he would back in his true calling with Leorio also taking part in such an
important process. Seeing Zebro nod to one of the heirs of the family he is working for Killua
wondered if he could tell his friends back home what might happen in the future with this strange
development.
"How's about we get down to the matter at hand. Kurapika, I know why you're here, and of course, Killua showed up instead of running away from his family because his friend decided to come here. The discussion on the last pair of eyes not in the control of the Phantom Troupe and their newest member." Offering up some of the remaining tea for everyone else, they all refused the offer making Illumi sigh as he continued speaking.

"Getting through the security measures put in place by my elder siblings and mother would be impossible, after all, Gon and his other friend nearly were killed just getting into the mansion. I and my brothers would have a much easier time getting into the establishment, but I'm not feeling in the mood..." Kurapika wanted nothing more than to choke the life out of Illumi's throat with the cold, steel chains he employs with nen.

"What are you talking about, Illumi? I hate this chain-brat prick for many reasons, but at the very least he's been more honest about things unlike you. Because of your pal, Hisoka that asshole who killed my friend is even more pissed off than usual. His behavior that involves running his potty-mouth at me has only gotten worse recently." Kurapika wasn't expecting the hot-blooded samurai to be honest about that.

"Sticking up for the boy who killed your friend? I guess times have changed along with the people living in this dog eat dog world. I suppose you all deserve a small amount of truth considering the fact you've all come to this place." Bringing out a document written by himself and Hisoka that was delivered to both the matriarch of the Zoldyck family and Chrollo Lucifer himself while he was in the hold of the hunters association. Now, there was a written response by none other than Pariston Hill and his current criminal-turn prisoner-turn official hunter. Illumi's black eyes gleamed with delight in revealing this little secret kept from pretty much everyone not involved in this plan until this moment.

Everyone was stunned to hear such a hypothesis about what really happened, and considering the urban myth, this group has made throughout the world all of the people in the room were very suspicious about this suggestion.

"Oh, I wasn't finishing speaking Kurta so please do mind your tongue. With the planned voyage into the Dark Continent by multiple parties including the Seven Princes, Pariston along with his Zodiac, and even your leader should he emerge the victor in his battle with Hisoka? Why this sudden desire to journey into an unknown world besides the possible threat of more Chimera Ants coming to seize our world? You're being pulled along on this journey for many reasons."

Nobunaga, the quick one to lose his temper was beginning to think Illumi had lost his marbles with this whole conspiracy he's created about what happened with the deal made between the trio of enigmatic figures.

"You don't have to take my word for it, spiders. Pariston himself has made contact with someone close to one of the men who hired Chrollo's group back in the day, which naturally explains why this informant wishes to remain anonymous." The file on the table was signed by the temporary head of the association, name, signature, and everything else to make it official.

"Why are you helping out those two bastards, Illumi? Don't you want to drag me back to mother like Kalluto has been trying to do by joining up with this pack of cut-throat monsters!" Glares followed while Kurapika waited to hear what Illumi was getting at with all of this. The elder brother in the room folded his hands together and huffed out his breath as he continued with his long-winded speech. "You spiders seek out the final pair of eyes to help fulfill the obligation Kurapika has, but Kalluto has brought Killua here to fulfill what our family wants a reunion between each of the siblings. In short, we've reached an impasse..."
While Machi and Nobunaga had little attachment to the rogue Zoldyck Kurapika certainly still cared about his friend to the point he didn't want him to end up back in that horrible place, the scars and wounds he had on his body were bad enough to see but he couldn't imagine the mental strain he had to endure. With neither side willing to budge an inch on this it seemed that Kurapika's secondary goal might not ever be completed...

"Hold on a second! Why do the Zoldyck family want my eyes so badly besides simply drawing Killua back into their fold," Kurapika walked over to Illumi looking him directly in the face? "There has to be another reason you've keeping those scarlet eyes from my clan in your family mansion."

"Yes, there is another purpose in having them. Our family wishes to discover the truth behind the Kurta Clan, and why their eyes are desired not merely for their value."

"You mean..." Kurapika was horrified at what this meant. "The fabled legends that lie in the Dark Continent. Why everyone from a cult to the people who ordered my clan to die each desired the eyes of my people..."

"Those stories are true!" Even Zebro couldn't believe that tale about the rumors and folktales about the Kurta Clan and the Dark Continent being connected to Kurapika, a survivor of a now extinct clan.

"That is why our family will prove both things exist, and our legacy will extend beyond simply being hired assassin known across the world."

"There is no way in hell you're gonna get rich off the death of my clan!" Kurapika was livid by this revelation, which forced Machi and Nobunaga into holding his arms to keep him from trying to choke Illumi out of hatred.

"Isn't that what the organization you're now working for has done already? I suppose you have no qualms about people benefiting from the deaths of your tribe like your former employer, Neon Nostrade." This made the Kurta pause for a moment, his mind realizing that he made a good point but the circumstances were different considering that she wasn't directly involved in the massacre.

"I-I took the eyes that were in her possession, the spiders helped me seek out the other pairs across the world. Time and again despite the issues we've had they have fulfilled what their leader asked; the issues between us didn't hinder my hunt and now there is only one more pair to claim..." Kurapika's eyes grew red as he admitted that he became the very thing he's hatred for many years growing up, but this didn't mean he was without any reward for selling out.

"Despite the history involved around these men you are more than willing to give up your soul to get what you desire? Interesting..." Illumi started at his red gaze before looking at his younger siblings while pondering this determination. "There might be a way to solve this issue, after all, Kurapika. A way that doesn't involve using another golden needle in that pretty hair of yours."

- November 23rd - Kukuroo Mountain: Zoldyck Estate

The interior hallways of the giant mansion usually were not filled with many members of the family that own this territory, the only signs of life usually belonged to the staff that would clean up the huge estate. Countless butlers or maids were usually hard at work to ensure the building remained in top condition and the family who employed them expected nothing less than the best. Only during certain events would most of the staff and family members be in the same area, and today was one of those occasions.

"Hurry up with that brushing you lazy oafs! I want this place spotless for the return of my darling
children!" With a fan being waved in front of her the matriarch of the Zoldyck family ordered her servants to finish up with their work for today. Kikyo Zoldyck promised the last servant to finish with their duties would spend a night in the isolation room, which caused the men and women working to increase their speed. Alluka had to move out of the way, her body was constantly being sent around so the maids and butlers could finish up to avoid punishment from the maternal figure of the Zoldyck family.

"Wow! I've never seen this much activity before, while before when he came back home big brother was sent to the isolation room now he's being given the red carpet treatment!"

"It isn't just him that's showing up, Alluka. Kalluto is also coming back home after his small leave of "absence" or so Illumi says." The skeptical Zoldyck Milluki spoke in response to his young sister. The huge sibling knew there was something off about this "homecoming" of his younger brothers, his suspicion deepened when Illumi spoke over the phone about a "special guest coming with them" while he would remain at Zebro's home not wanting to take part in this occasion. As everyone was getting ready the father of Killua also had doubts about this whole "celebration" being everything that it seemed to Kikyo's eyes.

'Illumi used Kurapika for this scheme along with Kalluto, so why isn't he coming to gloat about being the person who succeeded in this "mission" by Kikyo...' He could sense this was the work of bugs or rather a bunch of spiders, but for now he would at least feel content in seeing his son again whereas he didn't know how to feel about Kalluto.

"Oh, I'm sure big brother has lots of stories he can tell me about his days outside of this mansion. I can't wait to hear about the new friends he's made since leaving here!"

"Pfft considering the kind of person Killua is he likely has more enemies than friends." The collector of figurines ignores the pouting Alluka as Kikyo was inspecting the hallways where the two youngest brothers of her family would meet them in.

"Ahh, this so perfect it is almost like I can't smell or see any kind of dirt here well done my dear servants! Now, get the hell out of here except for you four!" Pointing at Canary, Amane, Hishita, and Gotoh to remain where they were Kikyo finished up her inspection, the poor youngest maid of the family got to spend the rest of the night because one of the vases had a small dirt spot remaining where she was brushing it clean, and she quickly barked out that she receives no form of rest during her "correction" punishment. As the unfortunate girl was led away most of the family wondered how their distant siblings had been living on the road while remaining unrestricted by their family.

"I wonder how Killua's friends are doing? They likely won't be able to see him again for a while..."

"Oh, I for one am glad we won't have to deal with Gon, Leorio, and Kurapika. Those guys were nothing but trouble when they showed up here last time, Alluka." He was more upset with the idea of one of those people finding let alone touching his precious figurines, and he would easily kill people in order to protect them from harm. The butlers went over to the doors to open them up for the returning Zoldyck brothers, only to quickly rush back to speak with Kikyo about something that none of them were expecting.

"Madame Kikyo! The young masters have returned as expected, but the other guest with them is...is that Kurta child!" All of the eyes in the room darted over to Killua and Kalluto stepping into the entrance hall with their other "guest" moving behind them. The attendants of the family along with the heads of this mansion wandered over to the youngest members of their clan momentarily ignoring the elephant in the room, the one with black eyes who is staring at all of them with disgust.

"My darling children are safe and sound! Thank goodness none of you are hurt dealing with the
uncivilized people outside of these walls." Killua wanted to keep at least three feet away from this woman. Kalluto, however, was more than happy to accept the embrace with his mother after being away from her for so long.

"Ya, ya, ya we're all one big happy family again. Listen I came here for an important reason, so I will just get to the point-

Slap. A loud one was made from Kikyo's hand coming across Killua's cheek leaving a red bruise on his pale skin. Kalluto wanted to protest this, but he was also given a nasty smack to his right cheek for even looking at his mother with a confused expression.

"That is all you have to say to your mother! Haven't I raised you two with better manners than that! It seems that I will need to fix that along with your other bad habits you might have gotten from hanging out with the common stock outside!" Alluka was terrified by her mother's viciousness towards her brothers while both Silva and Milluki didn't seem all that surprised about this.

"Mother, slap him as well! That dirty look he's giving us is asking for a beating." The pudgy Zoldyck yelled at the silent, but angry Kurta standing by while all of this is happening. Silva was unsure what to think, his hand was rubbing his chin while the younger sister walked over to the Kurta in confusion.

"So, you're one of my big brother's friends right?" He only replied to her question with a nod seemingly not wanting to speak to anyone here. Killua explained that Kurapika nearly got strangled, and he isn't feeling in the mood to speak with any of the Zoldyck family except for the deal to get back the last pair of eyes that belong to him according to...Kurapika.

"Why should we agree to such terms? Kurapika hasn't been exactly an upstanding hunter these days. The news story about his breakout from the hunters association should be a good indication of how much he has become like the criminals he hunts down as a blacklist hunter." Silva looked directly into the eyes of Kurta he was judging with his gaze.

"I wouldn't be here if your family didn't take what rightfully belongs to me." His voice sounded a little deeper than usual, but the words fit the reasoning of a Kurta that was the last of his clan.

"How dare you think you can just waltz into our home to steal something that isn't yours, Kurta!" Even Kalluto and Killua knew that was a bold-faced lie from their mother, and even the other siblings wondered why she was acting this hostile despite knowing why she wanted to keep the Scarlet Eyes in her possession.

"The last time your rude friends arrived they ruined everything I worked so hard to achieve, so this time I will be making sure Kurapika gets taught the lesson in manners his mother and father never got to teach him!"

"You know nothing about my parents, and from how you treat your actual children you don't seem like a good mother for anyone." Kikyo nearly broke her fan enraged by the Kurta's words.

"Canary, and Gotoh! Take this ignorant boy downstairs until I'm ready to administer the proper form of punishment for his uncouth behavior at once!" The butlers walked over to the Kurta who held out his hand while continuing to gaze at the mother of this family.

"I'll only say this one more time. Killua and Kalluto came back for their reasons, but I only have one goal in mind that is to claim the last of my deceased clan's eyes. Kalluto will likely wish to leave along with me when I've gotten what I want. As for Killua...he wishes to stay here." He knew that Killua might despite his family members however if anyone could help bring Gon back into good
health that person would be his sister. Silva realized why Killua has returned by looking at his saddened expression, his selfless reason was to help out his friend who was still not in good shape from his battle with Neferpitou.

"Oh, I get it now," Alluka remembered what happened to Gon after the huge extermination mission in the Republic of East Gorteau. She was capable of helping, but it wouldn't be so easy to get Silva to agree thus why he has come back to negotiate with his father and his sister into helping out with Gon's rehabilitation. Kalluto, on the other hand, fulfilled his purpose in bringing back his brother even if the method used was not what Kikyo expected. With that goal accomplished she expected him to stay home when that wasn't his intention.

"Mother, you should really leave Kurapika alone. Without his help, I wouldn't have gotten this far, and umm there is something you should know..." Looking up at his mother's visor he knew that she would really not like what he was about to say, his cheeks getting smacked would be the least he would have to worry about once she heard about what he's been doing lately.

"Okay, so how am I going to break this to you. There comes a time when a boy needs to learn how to grow into a murdering assassin like his older brothers. That is why...well um..."

"Kalluto and I joined the Phantom Troupe." Pins could be dropped and they would have made the loudest sound in the room at that moment. Kikyo figured that Kurapika was merely joking about that, a sick cruel joke being played on her until the Kurta pulled out his golden coin while telling the Zoldyck to do the same with his own two-sided coin.

"You've joined up with that group of thieves?" Silva was certainly not surprised when Illumi told him that he would help mature their "weak link" in the family with the help of an outside party. Milluki and Alluka were shocked to see this kind of twist in their youngest brother's personality as this meant he was no longer going to be the sheltered one in the family. As for Kikyo's reaction to this news...

"LOCK HIM UP NOW! Send that corrupt deviant into the chambers for a proper punishment! He's destroyed my beautiful paradise with my beloved child; that demon will be given the full extent of my bloody wrath for bringing my son into committing such a sin!" The butlers quickly grabbed the Kurta, his body made no attempt to break free while he was being taken away from the hall.

"I think I will go with them, Kikyo. You don't want the Kurta to end up lost when you still have a use for him..." She nodded in agreement with Silva's request now focusing her attention on her two rebellious spawn. Alluka took hold on her brother's hand wanting to have a nice conversation with her brother had not seen him a long time.

"Mother! Mother, please let me speak with my brother in the Playroom!"

"Fine! Just don't play with him too much since we have a lot to speak about. I will personally see Kalluto's own punishment..." Digging her nails into Kalluto's arm she dragged her youngest child into her room while Alluka dancing around Killua feeling thrilled to be with her sibling once again. Most of the family was unaware of the intruder that got into their house all except for two people. Milluki decided to head back to his room to inspect his figurines and not wanting to deal with that problem.

"Clever Illumi...very clever..."

The guards that were dragging "Kurapika" into a detention area were both rendered unconscious by their hostage, which left him to prowl through the secret vault in the mansion. Knowing the combination to the safe he picked up the jar containing the last pair of Scarlet Eyes in the world, and
there was only one thing standing in his way: Silva Zoldyck.

"I should have figured out sooner what Chrollo Lucifer was up to while getting Kalluto into the fold. Using my own son as a distraction along with Kalluto's rebellious attitude to keep Kikyo busy while you could get inside of this part of the building with no one stopping you." He looked down at the "Kurta" with an intimidating look on his face.

"Don't tell me you're here to stop me right now..."

"Please, you should know that blood is thicker than water, Illumi." The face on "Kurapika" twisted into a smirk that looked very uncharacteristic compared to the Kurta's usual personality. The traitor had been revealed who made a deal with Kurapika's devil to help Kalluto perfect the art of assassinations, the other part of the deal would benefit the mastermind behind the spiders.

"I suppose that should be the case, Silva. We can't be certain who is willing to betray who these days..."

Illumi knew that Hisoka has proven trust is a rare commodity these days as he was ready to fight his fellow family member to escape from this place with the re-stolen eyes. Of course, the complication in their "marriage" was Chrollo who offered him a place in the Phantom Troupe to further along that goal, but the caveat was to help Kurapika escape from the manor with the other spiders. The second "traitor" in the Zoldyck family wondered if he would be considered a demon or angel once everything was settled between the multiple parties involved in this clusterfuck of a world they all lived in.
Finale: Rubum Oculus Aranea

Chapter Summary

The curtain draws to a close on this play of intrigue, scheming, and deception between all parties involved with Chrollo and Kurapika. With the game seemingly over each of the remaining players prepare themselves for a greater game to begin on the Dark Continent...

Finale: Rubum Oculus Aranea

Killua and Kalluto knew what Illumi was now doing in the family vault having discussed with all of the major players involved with this double-cross in the making. As Chrollo already knew he actually entered the Phantom Troupe before this mission happened with the condition being that he wouldn't tell anyone except for his brother who already was initiated by this point. The need for secrecy was important for this operation to proceed without too much trouble.

They were merely used as distractions for the disguised Kurapika to get into the building. That is why the real Kurapika remained in the residence belonging to Zebro with Machi and Nobunaga during all of this madness that was about to be unleashed in the mansion. Kurapika wondered if this was a bad thing that he wouldn't be there or a blessing in disguise, the trio of spiders wondered if they were being set-up by the Zoldyck sibling considering the most they could do is accept the offer for some hot tea.

"Can't we just go kill people in that mansion already?!"

"Nobu, are you asking to get a beating?" She knew the samurai was impatient over the years they've interacted during missions or simply being a two-man team. She usually had to reign him in before he got himself killed simply because of his insatiable hunger of bloodlust for battle, and she considered his sword as his way of illustrating his...mini-swordsmen hidden below his legs. Between his rivalry with their fully-inducted member Kurapika, the developments with their group with their current objective with the eyes, and the fact Chrollo Lucilfer hasn't been around to speak with him in person and many of these things could spell disaster.

Thankfully nothing too extreme had occurred since in a strange way each of the people who glared at each other wasn't threatening one another with an empty promise of killing the other man like before when they were getting used to being in the same room like this. That said even the Kurta was growing restless with nothing to do besides ask some questions about the state of the Zoldyck family. In turn, the caretaker of the Testing Gate demanded to understand why exactly he was working with the people who murdered his clan years ago.

"It is a very long story to tell you..."

"Oh, do not concern yourself about time we have a lot on our hands while Illumi is busy with his family." Zebro was unaware of the circumstances, but he had to know how people from two different ends of mortality ended up joining forces in this way let alone convincing both Kalluto and Killua into following their demands. The story of Chrollo finding Kurapika, getting him into reading his fortune while managing to escape from his Chain Jail to capture the last remaining Kurta in the world.
"I'm surprised that that egotistical man didn't just steal my nen or kill me back then. Little did I know he was plotting further ahead than merely taking advantage of my desire to hunt down each and every spider around." Zerbo knew that a lot has changed since then, but he didn't think Kurapika had lost that ambition while hunting down the remaining scarlet eyes...or at least he hoped that wasn't the case despite what he saw that tattoo, which in fact nearly made him puke up in disgust just like with Killua.

"Illumi told me later about this group who could help me reach the potential everyone thinks I should reach before I entered my teen years. That is why he didn't tell anyone else about this except for Silva whom he felt was the one Zoldyck he could trust with that kind of information besides me, of course."

"Despite that man killing one of us when he fought the boss?!" Nobunaga was surprised to hear that coming out of their youngest troupe member along with the fact he didn't tell any of them about this part of the deal. Machi figured that makes sense to keep confidential information away from both parties the older sibling planned on using for his own agenda. In fact, she would have assumed Chrollo would complement the intellect and cunning of Illumi that likely was only matched by a few individuals such as Hisoka, Pariston, Issac, and Zeno Zoldyck.

'I wonder who is pulling the strings with these many puppeteers on the stage.'

"Not all of the details were told to me, but I knew Killua, Kalluto, and at least the Kurta would be arriving here sometime this week in order to fulfill the promise of a reunion." The three fugitives wondered how much had been set-up in advance for them along with the rest of the Zoldyck family.

"I suppose if you all expected some kind of trick, the time for a trap to be sprung would be now on you all." Machi's nen strings were drawn, Nobunaga grips his hilt that was holding his sword, and Kurapika was prepared to break the cup he was drinking tea out of to use as a weapon against Zebro, feeling ready for the worst to come their way.

"Pfft, oh the looks on your faces are rich. Like I would risk my life just to stop a bunch of criminals like you all "for the sake of justice" no way I'm going to throw away a possible retirement. A nice beach, filled with bright rays of the sun, and the females laying themselves out on the sands for a good tan..."

"Yeah I got the picture ya old pervy bastard," Nobu wasn't exactly the kind of man who is looking at girls in less than flattering positions...that is when he isn't caught by the female spiders. "How's about you explain to us what is your reason is for telling us this stuff besides serving as Illumi's informant in this double-cross."

"Nothing more I swear on my duty as the attendant of this gate." None of them were buying it even Kurapika could smell deceit in the air, his eyes only grew more red as Zebro began to sweat under this pressure that he wasn't able to push down to maintain the facade of a calm man.

"W-Wellll...Ummm I would be lying if Illumi didn't want me to ask you all what you plan on doing once you leave this mountain. I know you two will report to your boss, the question is mainly for you, Kurapika." He wanted to know as well the intentions of this blacklist hunter, the idea of going back to Pariston Hill seemed obvious, and Gon would likely still be in the hospital despite Killua's goal of trying to heal him through making a special wish to his sister.

"You really wish to know what my future holds, Zebro?"

"Yes, who are you, Kurapika Kurta?" An eerie calm was made as Kurapika started at the man questioning his integrity for what seemed like a long period of time despite the actual time being a
couple of seconds while the senior criminals looked at their younger enemy-made-ally.

"I'm going to take my eyes back, then report to my "leader" just like Machi and Nobunaga said." He didn't stutter at this statement admitted that he was fully onboard with the agenda of the Phantom Troupe, which Zebro certainly didn't expect to hear from those lips considering his personal history with these criminals shouldn't make it possible for him to push aside that hatred to actually join their cause.

"After they helped you get back the eyes they took out of your comrades? You're serious about being one of their own instead of breaking off this unholy alliance to take down their leader. Despite the Judgement Chain around your heart, the revenge you seek for the massacre of the Kurta Clan should be atoned for..."

"I answered your question, Zebro. I see no reason why I have to satisfy your fantasy about what my life should be on your point of view..." The Kurta merely set down the cup now empty of the liquid tea, which was followed by Kurapika standing next to Machi and Nobunaga to further illustrate his point about where he now stands in the world or rather where he chooses to stand with now.

"Indeed, it seems that you are being serious about your new affiliation. Killua already has shown his feelings on this shift in your life as have I...this don't seem like you I met when were helping save your friend from his family."

Looking at his uncaring look as Zebro told him what he thought about this change in his personality and a new-found shift in his personal business. He doubted if Kurapika would even go back to being a hunter with this announcement on his behalf.

"I see then..." Each of the spiders detected a rise in nen-levels meaning that they were no longer alone. "I suppose that you all would be willing to get down to business. However, it seems that Illumi wants to test you all before he delivers the eyes." Lurking outside were 20 maids and butlers, which were under the orders of the golden needles stuck in their bodies under the command to pressure the spiders through a sudden battle. Zebro knew this ruthless nature that Kurapika's gained might actually help him out with this "final exam" provided by the older Zoldyck.

"Oi! You think Kikyo is gonna be super pissed about us killing some of her attendants?" Nobu asked the guard who explained their minds likely would be mere zombies under the influence of the needles, and the samurai took notice of the first butler who attacked him while counting over 5 needles that stuck out of his head. He wouldn't be the same even if he could get the needles stuck out of his head.

"Don't worry about pretending to show any kind of humanity, Nobunaga. These poor individuals gave up their lives and bodies to the Zoldyck family; if they had known that would mean their demise would come while serving one of the heirs they swore to protect their souls might know some amount of peace..." Zebro ran out of dodge when the windows got broken, his home was now being invaded by killer butlers and maids with knives and forks ready to stab out the eyes of their targets. Machi didn't bother using her nen-strings, her hands moved with lightning-quick speed to grab hold of one of the arms belonging to a maid, tossing her into a crowd that was now forming in the building where they were just having tea time in.

Kurapika saw the knives being tossed at his head by the lifeless drones sent in by Illumi on for seemingly just to mess with them, the newly made instincts made him quick to break the arms of the puppet-like soldiers under the control of the golden needles before taking the knife and plunging it right into the man's heart to end his misery. Nobunaga blinked when he saw the amount of blood pouring out of the mortally wounded butler, his hatred of the Kurta was still evident however when he looked at the angry look on his face memories of the slaughters Uvogin would commit were
running through his head.

'I might despise you for killing my friend, but I think you've finally started to earn your tattoo and membership.' His moment of thought was quickly changed to cutting off the head of a girl who attempted to stab him in the back with a pair of scissors watching the decapitated orb of flesh get tossed into the sink area leaving a bloody mess.

"I'd hate to say it, but this all seems too easy for us. Illumi knows that our group is capable of taking out this many without much trouble, so what exactly is his game with all of this?"

"You actually have a point with that, Nobu." Machi looked at the body she was crushing to death with a simple pull on her nen-strings. She knew there had to be more to this simply game-only a fool would believe that this wave was all someone like Illumi had in store. She moved her pink-colored hair to avoid a left hook by another mindless pawn, which was followed up by the girl's neck being tied up in the strings breaking her neck bone leaving her lifeless in the deadly sewing skills of the troupe member.

A sudden loud boom could be heard throughout the small lodge, the noise echoed through the place as some of the glasses and household items were being shaken up. Ripples could be seen on the water's surface and while the brainwashed attackers continued their march all of the three spiders knew something was very wrong about this. Looking outside Kurapika saw another wave of "troops" swarming around, but they weren't actually trying to get into the building rather they were going after something or someone...the huge giant furry dog that was no longer hiding behind the Testing Gate.

"MIKE!" Even the cold, colder Kurta knew that this was bad for all of them.

"Mike? Who the fuck is Mike?" Nobunaga forgot what Kalluto told him as he watched an older gentlemen get stabbed in his lungs from his sword while question his "comrade" about the guard dog of the Zoldyck family, which somehow was no longer in the usual spot that was meant to protect the Zoldyck mansion from intruders, and was now chowing down on the helpless butlers and maids while looking at Zebro's house for more chew toys.

Zoldyck Mansion

"Instead of helping the spiders; you've been playing on killing them by setting Mike free?" Silva knew that his brother could be treacherous, but this kind of betrayal of everyone seemed like a lot. Illumi waved his hand at his brother's thought knowing that isn't exactly his intention. While still in the disguise of the fake Kurapika the inside-man for many parties involved here fully went into detail about his assignment.

"Well, I have a lot of people who've been asking for help. Hisoka, the next opponent for Chrollo Lucifer wanted to learn the new potential within the Kurta he fought a couple of days ago. I'm certain with that girl and some moronic oaf of a samurai he will live past today to get the last pair of eyes, and going through one more game is a small price to pair with someone like Kurapika. As for what Chrollo gets out of this besides fulfilling his contract with that Kurta...he would be lying if he STILL wasn't upset about you killing one of his subordinates in the past." Silva chuckled at that memory of fighting the criminal before his rise to infamy throughout the world.

"He can't be serious if he expects you to be his personal assassin that will succeed in killing me."

"Hardly! I'm merely supposed to give you a few good hits according to his marching orders given before his stay in the custody of the Hunters Association." He considered all of this as trivial since he would be the one who comes out the biggest winner of this grand game of mental chess since he's
gotten his younger brother back into his home. Silva knew Illumi was more than obsessed with dragging Killua back here by any means at his disposal, such as convincing Kalluto into joining the Phantom Troupe and using one of his needles in Kurapika's head.

"Do you really believe that son of mine will stick around once he gets that girl to fulfill his wish? Chances are he considers Gon and Leorio to be more like his brothers than you or Kalluto..." Illumi's smile quickly sunk into a frown...a frown that was close to becoming a furious scowl. He refused to let anyone consider themselves more important in Killua's life than his own flesh and blood family.

"Aren't you going to step out of that disguise, Illumi? You will never get to be someone like him no matter if you wear his face; the blood that runs through that Kurta's veins is just too different from the Zoldycks who've known the art of killing from our birth."

"It doesn't mean that Kurapika is that different thanks to those spiders influencing him to abandon what little morals he had left, in fact, I would say that that single Kurta would be more deserving of being in our family than the current incarnation of my dear brother..." Part of himself felt envy of Chrollo's newest treasure that he claimed all to himself. The perfect image of his family would be Killua in Kurapika's place while slaughtering whoever stood in his way.

Today they would be getting their brothers back into their fold, but in truth this might be the last time their family would be together in a complete union of their bonds of blood, there are many mothers who would accept the independence that Killua desires and the will to become a great assassin like Kalluto, but Kikyo is not one of their parents. If she knew the truth about Illumi's goal right now she would be at a loss; wrapped with anxiety.

Silva didn't wait for more dialogue, his aura quickly extended into transmuting two large spheres that Illumi knew were capable of causing major destruction not to mention actually kill someone like himself, which left him little time to avoid the blast that destroyed a perfect, innocent, and study door used by the butlers and maids to see their master Silva.

"Y-you're not serious about killing your own family...are you?" Illumi's answer came in the form of the other sphere nearly connected with his face as it was barely avoided by the other Zoldyck. Sweat began to pour down his cheeks as he realized Silva was quite serious about protecting the final pair of scarlet eyes, but also in revealing a little secret that he's been keeping hidden from everyone until this moment.

"As you run off those spiders like a scolded dog when they ask you where the eyes are telling them you have to offer this instead..." Walking back into the vault area, the secret guest that he's been keeping under wraps is thrown right next to the disguised Illumi, the bloody body of the Gyudondond tribe's Bonolenov was revealed to the informant of the Phantom Troupe.

"Chrollo asked this spider to make a deal with me to give up the eyes without a fight, but I quickly refused the offer wanting to crush anyone one of his subordinates. Granted, the poor sap here put up a better fight than the previous spider number eight I think it was when I killed him, which is what I felt like keeping him alive until this moment to let the phantom brigade understand they can't push around this group like other victims of their heists."

Illumi wondered about his options that he could take with this sudden revelation, he could leave this loyal pawn of Chrollo's small army to die, but he could also take him back to his comrades in exchange for someone else in return. For now, the possibilities would have to wait as Silva charged at Illumi aiming to choke the life out of his family member with his bare hands, and Illumi knew that finding an exit strategy would be in his best interests at this moment.

Zebro's Residence
Meanwhile, the huge guard dog finished its "meal" while slurping up the last butler unable to feel the pain of having its body chewed into fleshy pieces that would be dissolved in the animal's stomach. The blood pool around Mike's body created a small lake in the grassy plain where his tall figure was lurking before looking at its next prey the spiders themselves so that it could fulfill the mission orders it was given by the family who employed this beast to protect their home.

"Oh, fucking hell you happen to know a way to kill that thing, Pika?"

"Pika! Answering the goddamned question!" Kurapika knew things were dire of NOBUNAGA was calling him by that name with no amount of sarcasm in his tone. Machi also looked concerned as she felt the power coming from this beast, the closest thing she could compare this beast next to would be a lower-grade Chimera Ant that didn't mean it was any less dangerous considering a number of corpses lying near its body that was partially devoured. Mike began to bash against the house trying to break open the place to get ahold of the next pieces of meat it is ready to swallow down its gut, instead of simply going back to the Testing Gate area where it was freed by Illumi Zoldyck.

"There has to be a way of killing this damned beast." Machi refused to believe that it was any different from those chimera ants everyone was afraid of before people found ways in taking them down.

"That knowledge would be kept by one person...Zebro." Kurapika quickly ran off to look for the man, and with the handkerchief Zebro used with his tea he employed his Dowsing Chain to hunt down the now hiding caretaker of this gate, the house wasn't exactly safe with the remaining butlers trying to grab hold of the "intruders" via the golden needle's orders making them impervious to pain as evidenced when one of them tried shooting Nobunaga in the head only to have his gun knocked out of his hands by Kurapika.

'I've never used a gun before...I always figured that using other sorts of weapons would make me avoid relying on such a method like this.' Guns were too quick, he didn't want to make his revenge against the spiders get resolved with a single bullet being fired out of a chamber. Deep, deep, deep down inside there was something that wanted to enjoy seeing Uvogin cough out blood and suffer an excruciating amount of punishment from his bare hands. He would have hated this kind of sadism if none of the following events occurred to him, but now he didn't feel an ounce of guilt for putting this butler of his misery; the lifeless expression in his eyes matched the cold bullet now jammed into his skull.

The shot wasn't unnoticed by Machi and Nobunaga, the duo taking further notice of how much the Kurta had changed if he was willing to fire off more rounds into the maids attempting to fire back with their own guns as well drawing the attention of Mike who tried breaking through a window with his paws, the chaotic situation was just another day for the Phantom Troupe. As the glass continued to break, displaced shards were tossed around nearly cutting up Kurapika's face while he fired off the remaining ammunition in the handgun he was using.

"Hey, when the hell did you learn to use a gun, Kurta?"

"I've always been learning ways on killing my targets such as yourselves, but I didn't want to rely on firearms in close combat scenarios..." The hands which held the now useless gun were still shaking not simply due to his first experience with a gun, but the fear of having to rely on pinpoint accuracy to hit the right spots to avoid making a fatal mistake with how quickly a stray shot could end up hurting him like before...

'Wake up, child.'

'Come now, sleepyhead!'
He was lost in his own world at this moment, which is why he didn't hear Machi and Nobunaga demanding he wakes up from his delusional state of mind rather than focus on Mike trying to crash through the building they were trying to escape through while looking for the owner.

"Get your head out of dumb fantasies already, boy!" Kurapika's eyes sunk into his skull when he looked at the huge mouth belonging to the Zoldyck's guard dog trying to squeeze through a broken window despite the glass cutting into his head. Realizing where he was instead of listening to his deceased parents Kurapika re-activated his Dowsing Chain, the ball led them into a closet that Zebro was shambling into hoping to avoid the destruction of his personal home.

"Damn; you would think working with one of the wealthiest assassin families would provide better security..." Zebro was looking at the sharp edge of a samurai sword being pointed near his face knowing that he would not be able to run from these men.

"Mind telling us how we can stop that huge big dawg outside or do you want to lose an eye?"

"W-well, the o-only people who can calm down Mike as in fact the Zoldyck family members, the beast won't listen to anyone else including me."

"How do you kill it?" Machi figured that taking this beast out would be the next best option then with Illumi still in the mansion on his mission to retrieve the eyes, which meant they had to solve this problem on their own. Zebro, the caretaker was asked to provide Mike with food, water, and to watch over for him but never to actually kill this guard dog.

"I...do believe we should be trying to hurt-"

"Do you want to be the next meal for that beast or not? Then, you should start offering up suggestions that I'm sure you have about stopping that monster!" Kurapika of all people was the one raising his voice in annoyance. Zebro's eyes began to dart back in thought, his mind was unsure if he should reveal this secret but when he saw the dead bodies of the Zoldyck attendants laying on the floor in a bloody mess he began to consider saving his own skin.

"Mike hates spicy food..."

"What in the name of Chrollo Lucilfer is that-" Nobunaga saw the beast continue to ram into the side of the building make it shake more violently before he could say more.

"Illumi experimented with Mike one time by giving him certain foods that were made in other countries. It turns out hot or spicy foods will cause Mike lots of pain making him rest for several days after eating that kind of food." Nobunaga couldn't believe this guy was suggesting that instead of killing this guy they should instead give this animal a tummy ache, during their attempt of trying to avoid being eaten themselves.

"You have anything spicy, Zebro?" Kurapika wasted no time in looking at him with a face that suggested he comply with him otherwise he will be the first to die at this moment before himself, Nobunaga, and Machi. Gulping the caretaker was lucky he wanted to have red hot chili peppers with his dinner for tonight, the choice on his part might end up saving his neck along with everyone else that is still alive here.

"To think all of this is only the third strangest moment I've been involved in this year," Machi remarked with his usual emotionless voice, but she was, in fact, making an attempt at creating humor out of this situation.

With the spiders clinging onto a bizarre hope spot Illumi was taken out of his disguise in order to
fight seriously with Silva, the father Killua pushed his family relative into a defensive position by breaking his left leg with just a couple of his punches to the limb. While he usually was highly tolerant of pain or injuries to his body Silva's continual assault made him begin to get concerned about the idea of actually being in danger, which is nothing compared to the mental warfare of Silva trying to assert his authority over Illumi. Taking a few more hits to his kidney sections Illumi considered stabbing his opponent with some of his golden needles, returning the "favor" provided by the elder Zoldyck.

"W-wait a second, father! What will our great-grandfather think about this?!!" He knew that messing with his creator like this might not be the best option since he doubted he would be able to defeat him.

"That you're certainly a disappointment." Another sphere was heading in the younger Zoldyck's way forcing him to dodge the blast as it broke up another valuable heirloom of the family. Moving his head around when Silva sent out more punches Illumi tried to stall Silva long enough for the real objective of his plan to arrive soon.

"You're still not taking me seriously..." Eyeing his son with boredom Silva knew that something about this wasn't right, but he took notice of the sharp golden spikes that were being tossed his way, his body swiftly moved out of the way to dodge them before any connected...when they weren't actually meant for Silva.

"I see that spider failed to defeat me in combat, but you're now going to use him as a battle-puppet." Sure enough, Bonolenov was now moving against his will to aid Illumi in this heist despite his body already suffering a concussion from getting punched so much. The music being filtered through his holes began to play with Bonolenov's Conjuration skill Battle Cantabile: The Prologue. The white bandages covering his body were now off his body as the holes continued playing music that signaled a change in the warrior's attire.

"Now, this is what I would consider checking dear father." Illumi's face had a grin of triumph as the warrior's real state was revealed to Silva along with a tribal-themed mask covering his face, and now a spear in his hands instead of the boxing gloves that were used earlier. Silva was braced for this next attack, but he was unable to stop the Hatsu-empowered spider from stabbing him with his spear in the chest.

"You...underestimate your opponent...Zoldyck..."

"Even while under Illumi's control you can still speak?" Silva saw there were several different needles in his back signaling how much influence his son had over the criminal thief. Silva knew the wound in his chest wasn't severe, but he could tell that he might have overlooked the true potential in this man when he saw how faster he was able to move while in this state.

His fists were able to deflect the spear strikes, the tribal man was actually "dancing" rather than moving around to match his foe in this battle while Silva was beginning to get more frustrated as he figured that Chrollo's subordinates would be weaker than their leader. Silva decided to end this by charging up his aura into a killing blow. Although Bonolenov is unable to express much emotion while under the Hypnotic Spell; the blood and pride of his people boiled over those commands given to him.

'Come on, Kalluto. You have to make here now or else...' Illumi's thoughts were interrupted by a loud, powerful shout from the Gyudondond's own tribesmen.

"Stop looking down on us for being WHAT WE WANT TO BE!" Bonolenov's fury came into the form of his strongest move named after the planet it is shaped in, the huge ball Jupiter suddenly came
down near Silva's body and even Illumi was not prepared for this kind of attack to occur that could possibly kill everyone in the room right now. Silva yelled while unleashing all of nen reserved in his body to counter this attack hoping to dispel the huge sphere before it came crashing down on him resulting in a huge boom that shook the whole place.

Silva was knocked into the wall as he opened his eyes after this level of power had been disbursed, Illumi was also on the floor with a few cuts and bruises to his face and arms but he was snickering to himself.

"What exactly is so funny about this-" Silva's eyes widen as he noticed the Scarlet Eyes along with Bonolenov were no longer in the room meaning that all of this was simply a diversion to distract him; the real goal not simply to defeat his father since he knew that wasn't possible for someone like himself.

"It seems like you've taught me too well in how to fool a target. Still, you must believe that criminal went off with the eyes, but in fact, it was the youngest Zoldyck who pulled off this caper." Silva wasn't sure how to feel about this since it meant Illumi willingly put himself in danger just to let Kalluto get away with the eyes.

"Then, the boy who is looked down on by the rest of the family doesn't wish to remain here." Silva realized Kalluto had wanted independence from his family by joining up with a traveling group of criminals, and not simply to bring back Killua to his home like Kikyo figured would be the case.

"I told her already that everyone wins today. Well, except maybe one spider will end up a loser..." Illumi knew what his brother intended to do with Bonolenov, but he wanted that moment to be a real surprise when that happens. Silva cracked his knuckles wanting to enjoy the "punishment" Illumi was in for while the man who helped kick-start all of this enjoyed the fact he got what he wanted in the end. Their messed-up family back under the same household except for one person who wished to be free of the Zoldyck's hold and through Chrollo's help makes a name for himself.

"Good luck dear brother..."

Kurapika wouldn't believe he was seeing even if one of the other spiders told him later should he survive this incident-plus, they all would never forget the fact they were currently running through the kitchen to gather all sorts of hot spices and peppers in order to feed a giant killer dog.

"This had better work, old man!"

"Looks who's calling someone old in age, Nobu."

"Hey, at least I still have dark hair, Machi."

"Can't you have this argument for when you aren't in danger of being eaten alive?"

"NO!" Zebro looked at Kurapika for support only to see he was ignoring both Machi and Nobunaga, his focus was on gathering enough hot stuff to drive away Mike from their midst.

"He's going to keep coming after us, so we should toss this in when he tries ramming his head through a window again." Surprisingly both Machi and Nobunaga agreed with this idea not questioning the Kurtä's plan at all. Then, a huge crash was heard as Mike managed to create his own hole to break through the roof of the building as it began to reach around for the remaining intruders.

"Holy crap! This is certainly not what I'm paid to do you guys can die for all I care!" Zebro ran off knowing that he wouldn't be able to do much here besides get killed. Nobunaga tossed some of the peppers at the beast only to get knocked back with one swipe of the dog's huge paw. Kurapika knew
that if Mike could break down the whole ceiling they would all be in deep trouble. Yet, the wheels began to turn in his mind as he got a sudden idea...a dangerous one that would require Machi's cooperation and Nobunaga to not screw up.

"Can you create a slingshot, Machi?"

"Of course, but how are we going to get this guy to open its mouth for its dinner?" Not wasting any more time Kurapika began to actually taunt with all sorts of words, names, and less than flattering words.

"Come and get me you furry, flea-covered, harry dog! A cat would have already gotten into my flesh by now, you're just a pathetic puppy that can't even fetch properly!" Mike's enhanced hearing were sick of this, so with a loud roar the beast stuck its head through planning on devouring Kurapika while falling into the room, the light of sight needed to be just right for Machi while Nobunaga ran over to the Kurta not caring that he was going to save the man who murdered his best friend merely a couple of months ago, the goal right now was simply to survive this threat and not leave this boy who was trying to save his life to die in such a pathetic way.

"You dumbass brat!" Yelling while grabbing hold of Kurapika the samurai heard the cracks in the roof where Mike was standing on; their moment of good luck with the weakness could turn into a deadly disaster soon if Machi couldn't fire off the peppers and spices wrapped in the ball meant for digestion. Her eyes focused on the beast continued thrashing around making it difficult to get a good shot off that wouldn't enter the gaping mouth.

"What exactly were you planning on accomplishing with that attempt of suicide, you ignorant, moronic, egotistical Kurta-" A loud whoosh buzzed in the elder man's ears, the next thing he could see was Mike suddenly full of the projectile that was filled to the brim of spicy treats that made his eyes water in pain. The beast suddenly wheezed out with howls and whimpers coming from its mouth instead of the snarling drool when it was hunting prey, which resulted in a bunch of screaming as Mike suddenly crawled off the building to retreat back into the inner-walls of the Testing Gate.

"T-that actually worked...Kurapika you genius!" Nobunaga rubbed his blonde locks out of happiness of avoiding death once again only to go back to hating him a few seconds later while forgetting that Machi contributed to this moment as well.

"O-Ohh, yeah umm thank you to Machi." She shook her head while thinking about what their next move will be since they would need to meet Illumi if he still planned on holding up his end of this deal. The meeting spot was further back into the forest, but Kurapika wondered if they would be any more hidden assassin butlers or maids waiting for them as they ran through the lush trees around them.

"I knew we couldn't trust that bastard Zoldyck. When that punk comes here I'm gonna cut off some of those precious hairs from his head!"

"There is something more at play here, Nobu. Until we figure out we can't harm him just yet..." She wondered if they may need to call in back-up since they will need to get away from here as quickly as possible, the minute Illumi shows his face the other Zoldyck family members will know what just happened to the Scarlet Eyes. The trio felt a surge of nen closing in forcing them to prepare for another possible battle with a controlled person, and maybe another trick provided by the Zoldyck Family ready to kill them at a moment's notice...

"WAIT! Don't hurt me guys it's me, Kalluto." The young boy in the black kimono held up his hands to make a peaceful gesture while revealing Bonolenov following behind him with the container with
the eyes inside. Kurapika wasted no time in demanding that container to be in his possession, his clan's organs were considered such property belonged only to him when Bonolenov suddenly connected Kurapika's face with his boxing glove.

"Hey! What are you doing we're all on the same side, Bono!" Nobunaga's words didn't phase the warrior as he tried punching him in the face; the man didn't recognize these people as his friends rather target to eliminate.

"Those needles..." Machi knew the golden bolts sticking out of Bonolenov's head belonged to Illumi Zoldyck, which meant she had a lot of questions for Kalluto to start answering. Kurapika, however, was trying to avoid getting knocked out by that one hit to his cheek made it flare up.

"I only came to retrieve the eyes since Illumi wanted to stay behind to deal with my father! I guess the orders implanted in Bonolenov are being carried out against his will!" Kalluto attempted to hold down the uncontrollable spider with his Manipulation-nen confetti only to see the warrior slice through it with his spear.

"This is bad. Bonolenov's power is strong enough to be an issue, but with Illumi pulling the strings he might not be able to break free..." Nobunaga didn't want to imagine the worst-case situation of having to kill one of their own like this. Kurapika took charge past the sharp weapon trying to grab hold of one of the needles stuck in his head to remove it, the response was getting a stab right into his left arm making him cry out in pain, his wound slowly getting worse as Machi drew string around his leg to drag him back to a safer distance.

"What were you planning to accomplish by doing that on your own, Kurta?" She huffed in annoyance since he only made extra work by having to clean up that wound before they could get back. That is unless Kurapika wanted to fix his wound on his own, be assertive on things like he tried doing by stopping this out-of-control spider by himself.

"We can't just rip those needles out while he is conscious, so we need to knock him out first..." Nobunaga knew this meant fighting against one of his allies to save him from this fate, presuming that such a task would fall onto his lap through his sword.

"I'm not sure if he can be saved with a number of needles inside of his skull. That amount is usually employed for a corpse-like with the Ten Dons in Yorknew City." Kalluto's words went into Nobunaga's ears and came out as he charged at Bonolenov with a lack of killing intent in his sword strikes, the spear countering each strike of the steel sword as both men were in a dancing duel. Bonolenov charged around the samurai, his movement becoming helpful in gaining the advantage as he continued sending his spear from different directions to push Nobunaga into remaining in a defensive position.

Kurapika tried to pull out a knife from his pocket to help out the samurai only to feel the fresh blood pouring out of the wound that was seen through a hole in his black suit on his left arm causing Machi to smack him in the face for playing "hero" with that injury.

"I'll help Nobunaga, so Machi patch up that wound the jenny payment will be on me since all of this is indirectly my fault..." Holding out both of his paper fans the youngest heir of the assassin family known around the world, running over to Nobunaga who got a few cuts on his hands and arms from the spear that suddenly went down before knocking his sword out of his hands leaving him vulnerable.

"N-nobu...kill me...please I can't-"

"What are you saying you stupid bastard! There is no way I can hurt you after everything we've been
through..." Nobunaga knew that the sword was thrown too far away from his position to grab, and with the spear being put next to his neck he would die before he could make the first step.

"I know...Chrollo wanted to avoid this...he asked me to retrieve the eyes so that he wouldn't need to rely on Illumi. For whatever...rrrreason all of this was set-up for unknown reasons. They set us up THEY DID THIS!"

Nobu's eyes blinked at his friend's words and tears that were coming down out of the mask covering his face, which didn't stop the spear from moving closer to cut off Nobunaga's head until streaks of white paper began to surround the warrior as Kalluto warned the samurai to stand back.

"I'm...sorry...tell Chrollo...I have failed him...go back and leave me...he..." The moment of death was now, but Kalluto would honor his last requests as the paper confetti strung around Bonolenov's limbs despite his attempts to cut through the surge of paper that began to rip apart his limbs, the other spiders were unsure how to feel about this except for Nobunaga who couldn't stop his own tears as he heard the bloody screaming from the tortured man who simply followed his orders to stop this bloodshed from happening right now.

The painful yells were quickly made silent, the body was now on the ground with several limbs pulled apart from his body including his head with the needles still stuck in his head. Kalluto told the spiders that even if he didn't kill him in such a way Illumi's needles would be able to control his body even after he was a lifeless corpse; even in death Bonolenov would have been another puppet under his control like the butlers and maids that were likely killed before getting stuck with those needles.

"We...need to get in contact with Chrollo...after I kill you first!" Nobunaga ran over to his sword to stab the Zoldyck only to discover Kurapika standing in his way with tons of nen-strings in his left arm.

"Wait a second. He stopped Bonolenov before he could kill you with that giant ass spear on your neck. The last thing you need to do is kill him..."

"He likely set us into this trap in the first place, which explains why Illumi stayed behind in that mansion. I don't trust this guy..." Kurapika's eyes grew red as he was feeling upset that Nobunaga wanted to make things worse.

"Look! I get why you're out for blood, but he did bring the Scarlet Eyes...that wouldn't be the kind of action a Zoldyck would take if he wanted us dead, right?"

"I...he killed Bono!"

"Then, that means he is ready to earn a tattoo, Nobunaga. Isn't that one of the rules of the spider? Only those who can kill a spider would have the right to join the Phantom Troupe. Like me..." Machi knew that was something Chrollo established in the beginning to ensure only those who can truly endure this lifestyle would earn the right to enter this small, but deadly organization.

"We can mourn later or vote on killing or letting Kalluto into the spider, but right now we have to get away from this place. Machi, can you call Pakunoda for a meeting spot?"

"Yeah..." Machi was stunned to hear such a confident tone out of Kurapika, his voice seemed like he was fully in charge of this mission and by extension the spiders here in this forest. Nobunaga began to gather up the pieces of Bonolenov's dead body when Kurapika told him to leave it behind since it would slow him down.

"What do you know, chain-bastard? You were the only witness to Uvo's death not to mention
burying him when I should have been the one to put his soul at rest. I'm never getting over that shit, asshole!"

"He wouldn't want you to slow down by wasting time like this. Don't you think I want Killua to leave that mansion with those heartless killers likely ready to mess with him some more? Instead, I'm leaving you all because Killua chose to stay behind for a personal reason. That is why I'm honoring his request...as you should with his..." Kalluto even looked shocked by how Kurapika's words were like a scolding mother would be to their child. Nobunaga didn't move as the bloody head of the warrior was stuck in his lap creating many red stains on his purple outfit, the older man looked into his eyes that would soon decay along with his body.

"You deserved better than this." Letting the head join with the rest of the dismembered body Nobunaga bit his tongue to remove the tears from his eyes as he joined up with everyone else as they left the scene changed people from such an experience. Another limb was removed from the spider, and the leader of that said group was still in mortal danger with his battle with the traitor fast approaching...

Kurapika didn't care about any of that right now, his hands rubbed the glass that held the final pair of eyes that signaled the end of Chrollo's part of their deal. Now, he must fulfill his part of the arrangement with the devil in black.

- December 2nd - Yorknew City

One thing Chrollo Lucilfer has learned in his early years of adulthood, the life of crime would be filled with hardship. The one Achilles heel that Chrollo would have besides the limitations of his book Skill Hunter would be how much he cares about his subordinates. Most leaders of well-known organizations treat their men like trash since in their eyes they were mere pawns to be disposed of even if they succeed in their objectives. They would also wouldn't be appreciated for how much they sacrifice for the whole of the cause in which they fought to defend or fulfill. There are exceptions to this, of course, he would consider himself a caring leader of his men; he didn't value his life as more important than the whole of the spider's existence - but even he didn't know how much his trust and faith would affect him until the first loss came.

Granted, the previous 8th spider challenged Silva Zoldyck in person with Chrollo providing assistance, so the fact he was killed didn't hurt that much since he was a prideful man who wanted to overcome such a foe like the world-known assassin. Considering the head of the spider made it out with his own life was a miracle, but he would eventually learn that this wouldn't be the last casualty among the ranks of his small brigade. Sure enough, the one surviving Kurta would come back, the red orbs that he thought were long gone from his life came back to haunt him.

The second spider to be crushed would be a dear, personal, and special friend in the group that was how much Uvogin meant to all of them. Their "Requiem" of carnage would be their tribute in honor of the madness unleashed by their strongest member. The body count they left behind was hard to even remember, and that bloodshed would only grow in number with no slowing down. That didn't mean they continued going after simply treasures to claim as their own or resell on the black market, the newest thief in their ranks made sure their agendas had changed.

Kurapika Kurta.

That name had started to mean a lot to all of the spiders under Chrollo's thrall. From hatred about killing their friend Uvo, to begrudgingly accepting him despite their history, and now they all considered the blonde as one of their own. They didn't feel he was out of place in his black and red outfit for the "funeral" today in honor of the latest fallen spider. The biggest surprise came when Chrollo kept his word to Pakunoda and everyone else when he arrived at the meeting spot, the first
thing his subordinates felt was a sense of relief for him.

"Woah. Did you do something with your hair chief?" Shalnark saw the man's hair wasn't combed back rather it looked more like Kurapika's hairstyle sticking out more, which seemed ironic considering the blonde did in fact comb back his hair today giving his golden locks a more controlled look. Feitan remarked they might have swapped out more than just their hairstyles considering how friendly their leader was acting to everyone.

"Consider it a lack of being unable to keep my hair in my usual format, so I decided to try out something new with it."

"Well, it certainly doesn't look as bad as Nobu's pineapple spikes in the back of his head." Feitan always wanted to rag on the samurai's ponytail hairstyle knowing this would get several cursing remarks from the elder killer and criminal. Nobunaga obliged forcing his respected leader to step in, the last thing he wanted to deal with is more butting heads especially today. Pakunoda felt distressed about losing someone like Bonolenov, Machi reminded as expressionless as ever but even she felt down about losing a valued ally in their cause.

"The others are lurking around but we are all here, Boss." Chrollo's faithful number two replied to the man who was able to get out of the association's hold. Of course, things weren't much easier for him since he needed to fight through the many duels within Heavens Arena to reach the fabled rank of Floor Master. This gave him quite a few advantages when Hisoka would finally get to battle him in that location per his orders.

"That's good I know you all can handle yourselves when you're not with each other, but our lives are even in more danger now than ever before..." The time in Yorknew City would be nothing compared to surviving in the current shape of the world. Their next heist would also be filled with a greater chance of casualties in their crew, however, that can wait for later.

"This doesn't seem right, the newer members likely don't even know how important "Bonoe" is to the rest of us!" Feitan refused to accept Kalluto or Kurapika here despite helping out their cause willingly.

"Knock it off, Feitan. We don't need to stir up pointless drama when we all came together for mourning our brother..." Franklin knew that he wouldn't let go of that grudge against the Kurta, which was a neutral feeling shared by Kurapika and, yet the young ex-blacklist hunter was here along with the rest of the wanted fugitives. That was a sign if nothing else that Kurapika was willing to go all the way in his relationship with his superior that went from hatred and loathing...to something that could resemble co-existence.

Speaking of whom Kurapiak were off in a corner near a stain-glassed window, his eyes scanning the latest book provided through a stolen library. It was a new book, a different genre he was used to enjoying, and the premise was strange to him when he first began reading the story.

"Watson, if it should ever strike you that I am getting a little over-confident in my powers, or giving fewer pains to a case than it deserves, kindly whisper 'Norbury' in my ear, and I shall be infinitely obliged to you." He spoke out one of the lines from the "The Yellow Face" case out of series of tales from this book: Sherlock Homes. In a bizarre way, he could see where these two men were coming from in this tale. Relating the stories to his own life and "connection" with the man he despises for pretty much ruining his life, which is why the fact he was now helping out this man even if it meant saving his own skin all the more strange to him.

"Two men, two different worlds, two unique mindsets, and we were able to create some kind of screwed-up bond." Closing the pages on the book he saw the others looking at him clearly waiting
on him to join them near the bed of flowers, lights, and a special area made to honor their fallen
comrade in arms. Kurapika only knew the man from the second-hand knowledge provided by the
other spiders, but he did know that without him they wouldn't have made it out of that mountain
alive.

The least he could do was join with them in their memorial service...no matter how ironic this must
be considering how many people they've killed without shedding a single tear for the corpses left
behind.

'To follow the maestro of this orchestra of chaos further into the depths of hell...' His legs slowed
moved past the junk in the building, lined with piles of junk that fit in with this group considering
their background, and the other members of the group were now gathered around their leader
forming a circle around the deceased man or rather the only thing they could bring back with him.
During their escape Mike managed to get one more laugh on behalf of its own, the beast devouring
the corpse of the tribal warrior leaving his boxing gloves and bloody bandages since it wouldn't
satisfy its taste buds.

Completing the irony Bonolenov had a cross-shaped symbol made out of wood meaning someone
did have some belief or faith among the spiders, but what was even more unsettling to Kurapika is
when he felt a hand come down on his shoulder revealing Chrollo to him.

"Would you like to get things started for us, Kurapika?" His smile of support was met with several
gasps out of the more skeptical members of his criminal organization. His black eyes moved over at
Nobunaga and Feitan, the silence quickly followed as their mouths were shut closed before anything
foul came out. The blonde fugitive knew all the attention in the room was directed his way; the fear
of what could happen if he remained silent paled in comparison to pissing off this group if he might
dishonor this memorial.

"I will not lie to any of you...this man is not someone I've known that well. The least I gathered was
he helped murder several of my clan, but I learned from Machi he actually came from a tribe of
warriors called the Gyudondond who were taken away from their own in order to develop new
land." The pink-haired spider nodded her head while observing the Kurta keep himself rather
composed during this compared to Franklin who felt more sad about the past of this man. "They also
had several holes in their bodies that provided both sounds along with a source of strength.
Apparently, the people of this village took pride in these special features in their bodies which are
something I can relate to..."

"They...were also driven into extinction, however, I'm not certain if there are those left from the
forced travel from their homeland or not. So, today you all see this man as like a brother or friend that
was close to you all, but in my eyes, he is someone who did help save my life but I'm not going to
cry over his death by any means..." Being honest with that speech Chrollo provided a nod of
approval being impressed with the Kurta's own eulogy causing Nobunaga and Feitan to glare at the
blonde with hate-filled venom in their minds.

"Next, why don't you continue where Kurapika left off?"

"A-are you sure that is wise? I don't really know much about this man either and-"

"You shouldn't feel hindered by such a limitation. It is perfectly acceptable you need only speak
about what is on your mind." With the advice given by Kalluto, he stepped up in front of the others
and slowly moved up his dark kimono to reveal the official stamp tattoo of the spider imprinted on
the inner thigh of his left leg. He wanted it put in a spot that was hard to see, the idea being he could
possibly keep away the fact he was in this group now completely until it was necessary. Holding up
his hands the youngest person in the room considering what he could say at this moment.
"Well, he certainly was strong if Silva didn't bother killing him when they battled one another, so I guess he was useful to you all," The menacing glares directed his way let him know he should try something else. "I guess that I should apologize since it was my brother who directly caused this man's death with his nen-ability, but that speaks to how effective my family can be since they've killed two of your previous limbs."

Shalnark waved his hands up to warn Kalluto that he was not doing so well, and Nobu along with Feitan began to crack their knuckles preparing for a rumble.

"Oh, and I guess he loved to use those boxing gloves often. Perhaps he could have even been a champion if he picked that lifestyle instead of being in this group...so yeah..." Kalluto retreated behind Chrollo knowing that he should admit defeat rather than continue fighting a losing battle, even as the more hostile criminals wanted to give their youngest kid a few punches for nearly ruining this occasion with his choice in words that were met by disapproval. Shalnark took up the mantle and decided to help Kalluto save face by saying he didn't know better.

"You're not exactly new here, so your lack of knowledge about Bonoe along with Pika is understandable. As for my fondest memory of him came in Meteor City when Chrollo introduced him to us older members by that point, since we were still both a smaller cell and rather unknown by the rest of the world. He was rather cocky about himself and challenged Boss himself to a duel to prove his worth but Uvo took him on instead feeling that our leader didn't need to prove anything to him. Despite losing to the strongest physical member Chrollo was impressed by his strength and took him into our group."

He also remembered that time he wanted to ask Shalnark about finding any sign of his tribe through any news stories or research, the results of which only made it seem like he was the last one of his village left alive. That was why he considers the Phantom Troupe as his newer family of sorts, and for that, he was grateful to have met Chrollo Lucilfer. As the female provided some more flowers for this makeshift grave Chrollo decided to add some words after Pakunoda and Machi spoke about his courage, bravery, and defiant attitude that got them through some situations allowing them to continue on with their life of crime.

"This man reminds me a lot of another lost soul in Uvo whom he nearly rivaled in strength and pride. That is why it pains my heart to see him depart from our lives so soon, but that doesn't mean we should remain sad about it all the time from this point onward. He would want us to steal more things, fight on no matter what stands in our way, but above all else, he would want us to cherish the memories we all share from his life!" Nobunaga shed many of manly tears out of his eyes, Feitan remained quiet, and Franklin nodded in agreement to all of Chrollo's words.

"We have only lost a few numbers in the years since this group first formed for various reasons, some left because they died like Bonoe and Uvo, others departed because they felt like abandoning this cause, and even so we are all still here struggling to ensure we can live to see another day because we refuse to surrender!" Holding up his hands the main maestro of the phantom brigade's flow brought new-found inspiration in this passionate speech.

"I know you're all terribly frightened about my upcoming battle with our former ally in Hisoka; the fear only creates excitement in myself in realizing the future we could have once this last hurdle is out of the way!" Of course, there was the matter of freeing Kurapika and himself from the chains wrapped around their hearts, which could lead to unforeseen consequences that he wasn't prepared to face without that restraint on the last Kurta left in the world. At least with the Judgement Chain gone he wouldn't have any lingering regrets to ponder before the climactic battle...

With everyone speaking with each other Chrollo asked Kurapika to meet him outside for a private
discussion, since there was a new piece of information he wanted to share with his closest confident besides Paku in the spider. Looking at the adjusted blonde gaze at him while the morning hours passed on Chrollo knew that everything in his life was almost enough to make him feel content.

"I may have found another nen-exorcist that can help us out with this contract." He knew this news would bring a lot of relief to Kurapika, and his depression over the fact Hisoka and Illumi almost ruined everything even if it wasn't intentional. "Unfortunately he seems to have gone into hiding, the Hunters Association likely will be coming after him due to our need of his help."

"Why would they go after him just to keep us from getting his help?" Kurapika knew they likely were still considered by many to simply be an urban myth, but he's stopped letting things like that limit his imagination and understanding about how the world really works.

"It could be for several reasons, but what is important here is that this exorcist is willing to help us our..for a small price."

"Gold, money, a way out of being killed?"

"A little of all that but actually there is something, in particular, he wants from us, that special kind of treasure that is currently in the hold of the Seven Princes." Kurapika realized that getting any kind of treasure from that would be next to impossible, the security they employ according to Shalnark is state of the art ensuring that not even the infamous phantom brigade will break into their hold to steal their valuables.

"That being said, the only way we could possibly get our hands on those precious things would be during the Dark Continent voyage considering the fact most of the wealthy families, clans, and organizations will be taking part in such a historic occasion like that." Such a heist on the deck of a huge ship, the fact they couldn't get away due to being stuck in the middle of the sea and having to avoid being caught would make that the most dangerous task they could ever accept. Chrollo's little Hisoka was getting tight in thinking about the rewards of pulling off what many would consider the heist of the century.

"So, no matter we do chances are someone is going to be pissed off with us..." Kurapika sighed as he leaned back on the old church's wall looking at his former worst enemy turn leader. The chains around his heart likely wouldn't ever be removed which is what he figured Chrollo might want to keep him on a tight leash.

"You shouldn't resign yourself to defeat even if the world has turned against you. Even while on the run there are still people you can rely on..."

"Like you the person, I've sworn to kill with my chains or hands."

"Why not trust me if you still wish to still take my life."

That logic actually didn't sound that bad to the Kurt; who else to trust with confession his true feelings to than someone he would want to kill later on if he still wanted to enact revenge.

"What about the others? Will they still operate even without the head or just wander away from each
other..." Kurapika knew things hadn't changed just with himself but with the other limbs of the spider as well. He would have simply killed them as well if he encountered them back in this city those months ago, but now...he began to see them as more than just murderers.

'Why don't I feel sickened about that? Machi enjoyed creating several different patterns out of his nen-strings, Shalnark liked taking pictures with his phone with myself doing all sorts of silly poses, Shizuku invited me to a game of Go Fish and she told me I was a great player since I didn't "rage quit" like Nobunaga, and Pakunoda enjoys feeding and playing with the stray cats roaming around the place even allowing me to watch her do this.' They killed people without any sign of remorse however...they also behave like normal people. They had no agenda for dominating the world, trying to achieve some form of world peace through violence, but rather simply steal whatever they wanted or needed and continued living out their lives in a dysfunctional manner.

"I have decided to accept Hisoka's challenge to face him in Heavens Arena, so if you don't mind keeping quiet on this part I have decided not to steal the abilities of the other spiders." Chrollo Lucilfer was considering harvesting certain skills in order to gain the decisive edge against his opponent, but he had gotten second thoughts lately fearing what the consequences of that might bring.

"ARE YOU JUST THAT FUCKING INSANE?!" Chrollo had to rub his ears with how loud the Kurta just yelled. He certainly didn't anticipate such a reaction out of his companion and follower when he told him about his thoughts and battle strategy.

"You are thinking about fighting that perverted bastard in a weaker state, the Skill Hunter book is tailor-made to absorb many different skills." He figured by using the different Nen-abilities from his subordinates would let him easily get the victory over that perverted clown. Looking at the older man Kurapika blinked when he realized that he was rather serious about not taking advantage of his followers which didn't make sense.

"True, but that also would leave them defenseless like Neon Nostrade. While I had planned on giving back their abilities once the fight is done with that opportunity would be perfect for someone like Hisoka to strike in retribution for losing - should he survive our battle that is..." That was a big if considering he knew the intention was to remove this man as a future threat that could oppose their schemes to remove the chain binding them together, the wait had started get to both of them considering how restricted they were beginning to feel.

"Then, you would end up being more vulnerable...that could be disastrous for the both of us." Kurapika was coming to the aid of someone he had a desire to still kill, and Chrollo had on some level expected this kind of response despite expressing surprise when he heard that defiant yell earlier.

"Again that is a valid point, but I do care about the lives of my men if nothing else in this world. I...guess that would include you and Kalluto onto that list." Granted, the head of the spiders treated Kurapika as someone worth keeping around, to begin with considering how many hoops he went through to keep him around for this long.

"Quite a conundrum that I've gotten myself into, Kurapika. Say, for instance, I decided to go through with robbing my men of their skills defeating Hisoka would be 100% possible."

"100%? Aren't you underestimating that man's potential?" Kurapika knew that Chrollo's ego could be as inflated as the air they use to inflate a hot-air balloon considering the fact he was still merely a burglar who's infamous because of the number of people he's killed along with the stuff he's stolen from people not for trying to become a king of a country like the deceased Chimera Ant King.
"Possibly, however, showing confidence in your own skills isn't exactly selling your opponent short, which is why I am considering going all out with my Skill Hunter to defeat him thoroughly." Both men knew that was a sound gameplan, but they also knew there were likely consequences to such a scheme that Chrollo mapped out during their conversation. They might be one of the last conversations they could possibly have with each other.

"If I do go through with stealing some powers from my men...will you run with me to the Dark Continent? The spiders will follow my lead, but I want you to come along with me."

"I don't see any reason why I should travel with you, Chrollo Lucifer. Whatever you decide to do know that I will be there right behind you..." Making it easier to stab him not in the back rather in the heart if he finally had the chance - at least that is what he planned to accomplish, but like his new "leader" there was doubt creeping into his mind about that goal along with the future he has in mind currently. Seeing the other members of the Phantom Troupe laughing, arguing, and treating each other like they were indeed one big messed up family Kurapika wondered if he was truly feeling at home now.

"My, my. To think all those days ago you would have thought this would be your descent into hell while I turn into some horrible demon that devours your soul."

"This isn't purgatory, and you're certainly not a fallen angel from heaven. We are merely two shitty-minded men, sharing a common interest and objective, the both of us also share a tainted mind and soul that realize how they belong in this dull, gray world."

"The world can be painted in many different colors, the choices naturally depend on the artist in question..." Chrollo knew he was somewhat in control of his destiny, but that didn't mean he wanted a picture painted of only himself and Kurapika with the rest of the world around him a black void of death and loneliness. That is why he counted on his other spiders laughing, arguing, and treating each other like one big messed-up family that for now included Kurapika and Kalluto. Two boys from two clans that now wished to thrive in this world of sin and seduction. Now, while he enjoyed the peace of this moment of rest Chrollo knew the fated time was about to arrive...

"We'll be rooting for ya, Boss! Kick that traitor's ass something fierce!"

"I have faith in your success, Chrollo."

"Put on one hell of a show, sir!"

"Oh, I wish you would be here with us Pika!"

Heading the support from his subordinates Chrollo and Kurapika finally put their little plan into action to stop Hisoka from hunting them at least for now. The Kurta never imagined this kind of send-off from the people he would have killed without hesitation if the following sequence of events hadn't occurred to him.

"Kurapika, if you can find a way to save Boss. I'll give you a new pair of glasses to keep you from going blind."

"I'll...try my best, Shizuku." Kurapika didn't know how glasses would help his vision, but it was the thought that counted from her. After curling up in a cat-piss smelling room Kurapika knew that scent could be nothing compared to a graveyard's odor.

- January 28th - Heavens Arena

Many fans of the battles that took place in this arena would be in for one hell of a show today, the
billing on the sign alone drew a sold-out crowd all waiting in anticipation for the main event. In one corner was a popular hunter and fighter despite scaring the hell out of several people with his disturbing traits, and violent methods used in killing many opponents. Hisoka Morow had waited for a day like this, his desire of battling someone on both the physical and mental intellect like Chrollo Lucilfer turned him on.

"Oh, the fans might not know it but I'm already so hard about this duel." Twirling around some of his sharp playing cards the magician hunter wondered how many skills his former leader would deploy in this fight has been aware of those many gifts he's stolen from many victims over the years. Hearing the loud cheers from the attendants awaiting him outside Hisoka knew this stage, setting, and sensation building inside him was perfection. As he walked forward there was a man awaiting him near the entrance, but it wasn't someone from the association, a referee, or his only true friend Illumi Zoldyck. No, the person standing next to a wall had been Kurapika Kurta managing to sneak into this building without being detected by many people.

"Hmm...this is certainly a surprise, to say the least," He had a frown on his face unsure of what the Kurta's intentions were at this moment, since the last time they met he told him that his only hope of being freed from his chains was gone for now. He didn't express any kind of anger, but the possibility of tranquil fury did cross Hisoka's mind. "I would suppose you are out for retribution for nearly ruining everything. Well, I say nearly since you clearly have abandoned those friends of yours back at the association."

"You must not have a clue, the whole reason I'm here everything I did for Gon, Leorio, and Killua." All of this happened because his friends were in grave danger. They weren't out of the woods with the upcoming Dark Continent voyage, and Killua's attempt to heal Gon's body with the help of his sister might not end well. At least they wouldn't be considered a problem for the Phantom Troupe with their amnesty through Kurapika's submission into their fold.

"That won't mean they will approve of your arrangement with them, so why don't you show me how far you've fallen into their world, Kurapika." Hisoka ran over to grab hold of the Kurta trying to remove the black suit on his short body to see the skin underneath that Hisoka wanted to carve up by using one of the sharp playing cards out of his deck. In response, the Kurta brought out a knife to cut up some of the cards in order to protect himself from harm.

"Do you really want to continue where we left off, and you know that you are craving to fight Chrollo Lucilfer instead of someone lower on your short list such as myself." Seeing his small bulge in those white pants was already freaking Kurapika out.

"Nothing about me is short, Kurta," Kurapika mentally groaned at that comment. "Don't worry we still have unfinished business with each other. Of course, I can also go find Gon as well not to mention Killua and Leorio." Smirking at Kurapika's red-eyed glare Hisoka dancing around the blonde wondering what his next move will be in their little game.

"That is why I wanted to speak with you, Hisoka," Taking off his suit without being attacked Kurapika decided to show the clown what he already figured was on his back, the symbol and representation of his current affiliation to the spiders his previous sworn enemies. The black ink tattoo was finally complete and dry, the number 11 seemed surprising to Hisoka considering that was Uvogin's number when he was alive.

"You've inherited that number despite killing that man. I guess Chrollo does enjoy such a glorious irony, so how are you enjoying betraying everything you stood against dear Kurta?"

"That coming from the clown who turned his back on the deal he made with Chrollo unless you're still giving off the impression that was an accident." He was aware now there was a greater scheme
being played out behind the scenes. That would have to wait until later but Kurapika would solve the mystery behind why his clan's eyes had to be taken with the rotten bastards who bought the spiders.

"I see, the truth would be discovered eventually even if Chrollo or Illumi hadn't ruined the surprise for you. Your clan was put down for much more than simply to get the spiders a nice payday. On that continent lies more than the origin of those wretched beasts, the unknown people that may live there, but the sacred treasure hidden in that vast land unveiled only through the scarlet vision of those precious eyes of yours."

"The promised land as that cult mentioned, and to think many consider it as a myth like the so-called "enlightened ones" who are said to have paid off the Phantom Troupe for killing your clansmen. Rumors like that don't really interest me. That being said I need you to do something for me. No matter what happens in your fight with Chrollo Lucilfer...do not kill him."

"...I didn't quite hear that part. Could you repeat that, and not saying his name rather admit to your submission, Kurta." Hands tightened up, the young adult looked at the man's grinning expression adding more menace to his makeup that he wore before he fights, and he knew what this man wanted to hear next.

"I'm asking you not to kill...my...my Boss...the only one who is keeping me alive." The words were filled with a genuine plea for mercy on the man Kurapika now works with and for in his life.

"Ahh! There it is the final descent into your damnation in a manner of speaking. Now, can you explain to me why I shouldn't go all out in this battle when I have no doubts Chrollo will want to fight me to the death, well besides dying yourself if those commands around your heart are still intact..."

"There is only one person who has the right to kill him, and that would be the last remaining Kurta in this world! Quite a satisfying climax to this game!" Hisoka giggled at the suggestion popping in his of Kurapika wrapping up Chrollo in his Chain Jail, taking advantage of him while he was defenseless, removing most if not all of his stylish clothing, but then before it got too steamy Kurapika interrupted his train of thought.

"I will not stop you from proceeding with your battle; despite what you may believe I'm not here to get in your way. Should you continue however be aware what happens to yourself could have been avoided..." Stepping aside Kurapika put back on his white shirt and black suit covering the tattoo on his skin back up. Hisoka merely shrugged his shoulders while walking past the Kurta like everything he just told him came in through one ear and out of the other one.

"Tell me are you going to be watching from the crowd or in this back area? Either way, I hope you stick around considering everything you've working for will be on the line."

"Trust me I have no need to be here at all..."

"What exactly is that supposed to-" Hisoka blinked and realized Kurapika had walked back into the outer section of this tall building. The message left made the traitor of the spiders think for a moment about what it truly meant as he knew that something was off about that conversation.

Soon enough the battlefield had taken a brutal turn as what had merely been considered a fight between two "hunters" turned into a deadly game, if the audience hadn't expected the action to get right into their face, the realization hit them as Chrollo Lucilfer planned on taking advantage of them. With the skills, he's gained and with the new bookmark in his Skill Hunter Chrollo spent weeks perfecting this scheme, and he decided to take in both Shalnark and Kortopi's abilities for this process despite his fear of what might happen. That is why he requested that they stick with the others until
he returned their Nen-abilities back to them.

Chrollo would turn most if not all of the observers into living bombs or tricks to mess with Hisoka's head. Still, he didn't want to even be touched by his Bungee Gum so he would blend into the crowd to avoid being detected until he could take advantage of the situation through Double Face, which meant he would continue to use his Gallery Fake copies mixed in with the Order Stamp, using the Black Voice command on certain dolls, and then using his newly discovered Sun and Moon to make explosives.

It was a sound tactic on his part, but Chrollo felt like improving the odds a little by utilizing a third party in this complex equation. For now, he sent out his drones to Hisoka knowing he was fully erect having this kind of battlefield to fight in, his heart had been content in slaughtering so many people without having to suffer any reproduction except for possibly being blown up in the process. Watching this carnage in the crowd still trapped in the building Chrollo Lucilfer knew he didn't want to face this man in hand-to-hand combat.

'He will come after me should he live past today, the lust to see my dead corpse will drive this man into following me forever in an endless game of cat and mouse.' Either he would die today or by some miracle, Hisoka would live to fight another day. No matter what Chrollo promised Kurapika that he would not ruin their lives again if he could end his life in this battle. Watching Hisoka rip apart his puppets Chrollo knew he needed to create more out of the crowd that was pleading for escape from this tower before they were killed next.

'Humans...Truly are...so very fascinating...'

'Why are you so fond of human beings, Chrollo?'

For the longest time since he was a thief stealing food merely to survive such a question has been asked by many people around him despite being human themselves. The obsession with figuring out the human psyche through interactions with other people in different places and faces around him along with their motivations. His own reasons for doing what he likes to do in life remained a mystery to himself for so many years growing into his early adulthood, the journey he's taken has brought him much closer to the answer to that question.

'Will Kurapika be the key to unlocking this truth I wish to understand or rather will I become even more curious about mankind...' Chrollo gave out orders to his new set of drones following basic orders. The explosions rocked the tower, and none of the innocent people involved would be able to escape until the authorities could arrive. Such is the risk of observing a violent sport like this...

'Just as I expected Hisoka is proving to be most troublesome to deal with...' His fake copy of himself was discovered by the clown and was being smashed apart by one of the puppet heads belonging to his small army of mindless exploding dummies. While his opponent believed that he'd won the fight, the truth was, in fact, it had barely even begun...

'Now, with his mind beginning to realize what all of my skills mean it is time to introduce the final piece of my victory...'

As Hisoka was observing the broken doll that was smashed by the removed head via his bungee gum a figure moved in behind him, and Hisoka knew who's nen this belonged to, but he didn't expect to see him here again.

"Kurapika Kurta!" The female announcer was able to see him on her monitor that wasn't broken yet, but she was just as shocked to see him in the middle of this chaos along with Hisoka. The blonde remained motionless despite the madness that was being unleashed in the middle of this war zone.
"Are you going through with this death battle? You can defeat him and retain your pride without resorting to taking his life..."

"How insulting. You wish to claim the glory in killing this man, the honor will be mine alone so you might as well die beforehand!" Hisoka reached out to grasp the air out of his lungs, but the spider was too fast to catch in his grip. As there were more corpses heading into his direction Chrollo Lucilfer was suddenly in his line of sight looking down at him from the upper section. He couldn't focus on him just yet since he needed to deal with the puppets around him that he took out by using them against one another by swinging them around with his nen-ability.

"Finally, you decided to reveal yourself! How disappointing considering how interesting this game has become!" Hisoka used his Bungee Gum to propel himself upward to rip Chrollo's head off his shoulders, and only to discover more puppets that threw themselves at the clown blowing up right near him forcing him back down into the arena's floor where more puppets were awaiting him.

"Honestly, now. All of this isn't exactly fair, Boss. I'm suspecting that you're not taking me seriously!" Ready to launch another removed head right at Chrollo's body the sudden burst of light drew his attention to his hand suddenly being gone from his left arm. While it seemed like a random move this had been what the leader of the brigade wanted, taking away Hisoka's ability to move across the room, and also removing the threat of his gum from that hand. While this talented nen-user would use his other body parts now it was a step closer to his victory, so now he moved to make the final adjustments to the board with his pawns still in motion.

Before he could claim Hisoka in check the mental strategist moved his pieces into place, sending a huge surge of puppets onto Hisoka's position on a wall. While the puppets wouldn't touch him at least with the numbers they would have enough manpower to make their explosions harm their target. Hisoka quickly moved out of the way before they blew themselves up, but then he noticed Kurapika was looking at him again observing him in the middle of the panic-filled crowd.

"What do you want now, Kurta?!" His cordial nature was replaced with the carnal instinct of survival, the man suddenly noticed Chrollo Lucilfer was also looking at him which made him confused.

'What...what is going on here? Why are they just starting to me like this?!'

"Are you still planning on killing us?!

'Why the hell are they still pestering me about that? Chrollo was the one who requested we take this all the way, so what exactly is with this change of heart?' Hisoka was starting reach an epiphany that there was something going on here that he wouldn't like once he figured it out. Extending out his leg Hisoka used his special gum to move around the place to avoid the mindless mob increasing in its number and threat, but the crowd actually began to climb onto of each other creating a human-shaped hill that was moving near him.

Another loud boom was heard as the dolls moved in while Hisoka was extending around the room...and removed one of his legs taking out his method of moving around the arena. Before Hisoka could switch over to another leg "Chrollo Lucilfer " tossed a puppet at the man preventing him from moving around further before tossing another man in his way. As he was now stuck on the ground Hisoka knew his death likely was certain, but the puppets suddenly stood around doing nothing, which made him even more confused than ever...

"This is checkmate for us, Hisoka. Was this everything you hoped it would be?" Spoke, "Chrollo Lucilfer " who was looking at "Kurapika" while the mob was standing still right behind them. The red-haired man couldn't stop laughing even while two of his limbs had been disintegrated from his
"I see...all of this time you both were working together, the Covert Hands not only helped disguise yourself in the crowd but allowed you to swap positions with each other resulting in this confusion. The abilities stolen from your subordinates were used in a method designed to remove my Bungee Gum and Texture Surprise from play, and with Sun and Moon, you had the advantage of staying out of range for my attacks. Well done, Boss!"

"I'm afraid that you shouldn't be congratulating me, Hisoka." All of the puppets started to climb upwards moving to the higher sections of the arena; someone as confident as Hisoka was beginning to realize that this entire fight wasn't planned out just to finally get him out of Chrollo's way and his smirk had been replaced with an unhappy frown.

"You likely took in the orders from the robot along with Illumi to ensure that the nen-exorcist was killed one way or the other. Not only that, but you tortured Kurapika some more and if he had decided to stay in the Association, then you would have likely captured or killed him in order to deliver his eyes to your current employer. Is this not correct?"

"Well, you left out the part where myself and Illumi had long since abandoned that goal to pursue our own personal desires once more. Even I never expected he would not only get his brother into the spiders but to also try applying for membership as well by eliminating Bonolenov. Still, I guess you orchestrated all of this simply to please your new subordinate. Now, why don't we finish our battle with no tricks or surprises making it just between the both of us dear Chrollo..."

"Unfortunately you lost that opportunity when you stabbed me in the back. This is an endgame for the both of us...a disappointing one." Several loud bangs were heard as the suicidal puppets began to blow up near the roof of the arena causing enough tears and fissures in the structure to begin causing a collapse in the building's roof. Chrollo and Kurapika both coordinated this out long before they arrived in Heavens Arena, the duo knew what their exit strategy would be as Hisoka would be left to fend for himself with the remaining puppets and the cave-in about to happen with this place.

Instead of winning the game Chrollo opted for a different outcome where he would instead break the entire game in half. Once more giving off the impression of his demise along with Kurapika when for neither man that was the case at all. The final image people would have of Kurapika would be him leaving behind his past life, his "former" friends, and heritage of the Kurta clan. All thrown away the second he becomes a red-eyed spider turning his back on everything he once stood against. The deceased claim in the newspaper along with the media coverage would speak of a young man who threw his life away for nothing, but Kurapika knew that he had earned much more than he could have ever expected to start on a fateful night in Yorknew City.

"Do you regret not leaving me to die in that place with Hisoka. It would have been the perfect ending if you think about it."

"No. I have my own future to fulfill, and until that time comes your life is certain to remain intact...partner."

"Before we regroup with the others so that I can return Shalnark and Kortopi's abilities I've been wanting to say this for quite some time. I-like-you, Kurapika."

"Like? As is you like me as a person, a member of your group-"

"No, I like you for who YOU are. Someone who's become more valuable than every treasure I've taken in my entire life. Even the eyes of your clan don't compare you, so when I met my death by your hands I wish to look at those beautiful eyes one last time..."
"I don't even need Neon's ability to see that happening..." A laugh broke up between them both as onlookers didn't understand the gravity of their conversation. In their eyes a sharply-dressed man spoke with his "friend" in a dark outfit complete with a red and black shirt with blue and red earrings that were the only signs of their true identity as the sun was setting on another day in their lives, but also marking the beginning of a new journey for both criminals who once more fooled most of the world about their sudden demise.

"Mind if I ask how did you get that cross tattoo on your forehead? It must have been a pain in the ass to get that stitched in like this damn spider on my back..." Chrollo smirked at Kurapika's question as he remembered what made him feel like getting the "goth Jesus" look as Uvogin put it all those years ago.

"Thankfully Paku was there with me to oversee that painful ordeal that made me almost cry. After all, she was the one I trusted with vital information until you came into my life."

Kurapika knew he had earned Chrollo's trust, which would make the eventual stab in his heart all the more painful to both individuals.

The start of a brand-new heist for the ages as they sealed their eternal vows with a passionate kiss of deception, lies, and hatred for one another who had been wanted by everyone in the world. Just a pair of criminals in the eyes of the public, but to all of those closer to Chrollo and Kurapika were aware this "relationship" would only end in death for either man or perhaps both of the duo.

"Adam was but human — this explains it all. He did not want the apple for the apple's sake, he wanted it only because it was forbidden. The mistake was in not forbidding the serpent; then he would have eaten the serpent."

Kurapika quoted a particular line from the recent book he's been reading while sitting with Chrollo during their small journey together away from the Association, spiders, and pretty much society. His blonde partner in crime's line made the raven-haired fugitive smile warmly and following up with a quote as well as his arms snaked around his most trusted ally considering his life would end by the Kurta's hands in the long-distant future.

"After all these years, I see that I was mistaken about Eve in the beginning; it is better to live outside the Garden with her than inside it without her."

The blonde smiled as he somewhat enjoyed feeling Chrollo's tongue in his mouth trying to push down the horrible taste it would be once he told Gon, Killua, and Leorio about it. The chance they would reunite with their comrade someday with Chrollo possibly being there, even if he would get his ass kicked by his other friends. The idea made the former hunter turn criminal happy like the day he met the people who changed his life for a second time with Chrollo being his first...

"Thank you Kurapika. My red-eyed spider for saving my life..."

"It is your life that I will take, but for now you're welcome my black-winged angel." They slowly embrace for yet another kiss with the clouds moving past them in the background.

"Don't Machi and Paku do this?"

"All the time when no one is looking, Pika." Laughing they hugged each other to complete the facade of a normal, happy couple in the people observing them.