### The Crusader of Blooming Summer

**Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at** [http://archiveofourown.org/works/16054223](http://archiveofourown.org/works/16054223).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Mature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archive Warning:</td>
<td>Graphic Depictions Of Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category:</td>
<td>Gen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fandom:</td>
<td>ジョジョの奇妙な冒険</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character:</td>
<td>Kujo Jotaro, Joseph Joestar, Kakyoin Noriaki, Jean Pierre Polnareff, Mohammed Abdul, Iggy (Jojo), Original Female Character(s), Kujo Holly, Dio Brando, Kujo Sadao, Anne (Jojo), Higashikata Josuke (JoJo: Diamond is Unbreakable), Hirose Koichi, Nijimura Okuyasu, Kishibe Rohan, Sugimoto Reimi, Yamagishi Yukako, Tonio Trussardi, Tsuji Aya, Kira Yoshikage (JoJo: Diamond is Unbreakable), Kujo Jolyne, Giorno Giovanna, Bruno Buccellati, Narancia Ghirga, Pannacotta Fugo, Leone Abbacchio, Guido Mista, Trish Una</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Tags:</td>
<td>Fix-It, Everybody Lives, JOBROS MUST LIVE, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Action/Adventure, Eventual Romance, Fluff, Angst, Drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stats:</td>
<td>Published: 2018-09-21 Updated: 2019-08-15 Chapters: 21/? Words: 118017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

The Crusader of Blooming Summer

by aoi_tamaki

Summary

[UNDER CONSTRUCTION]

"Kujo Kirika - kun!"

"Y- Yes, Sensei!"

"Your mother is waiting at the principal's office."

Thus, her life became even weirder.

Notes

I love Jojo a lot.

Ever since I got deeper into it, because of my brother and also, definitely because of the memes, I've been rather obsessed with it. It's most definitely not 100% perfect, but at the
same time, it's perfect just the way it is. It's an incredibly fun series and there's nothing like it to this day.

That said, every once in a while I despair over a salad being overtossed (WHY MUST ZEPPELIS SUFFER), a melon & cherry filled doughnut being made (DIO YOU BASTARD), Vanilla Ice being mean to a fortune teller and a dog (I almost bawled at that scene with both of their souls looking at Polnareff), a priest gay for muscular David Bowie (I mean Dio means God in Italian, so I guess it matches up) destroying everything they got karma, or how another salad was ruined by the POTUS (WHY MUST ZEPPELIS SUFFER).

Also sometimes I lament the fact that Dio is such an insufferable prick while still being so goddamn charming. I want to imagine him and Jonathan being really good as brothers, somehow.

I agree that some of the deaths are meaningful, though. But at the same time, I want all the Jobros of part 3 to survive. Avdol and Iggy, man. Kakyoin didn't deserve to die like that, either. Also, despite Steel Ball Run being amazing, Stone Ocean was devastating. So I've been thinking about creating this character and this story, as a fix it, if it's alright. I mean it's fanfiction, we're allowed to do these things.

I will try my best to keep it sensible, though! Not too sensible because this is Jojo, so I hope you can enjoy it!

See the end of the work for more notes.
Sprouts from A Wish

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

「I wish to be born.」

*It had been watching, for who knows how long.*

「I wish to exist.」

*It began wavering.*

「I wish... To save.」

*Simply watching and observing became unbearable.*

「I don't care how, but please, let me save them.」

*Deafening silence greeted it.*

*For a moment, it began to scatter rapidly in despair.*

"*Your wish comes with a high price.*"

*The answer was swift.*

「I'm willing to pay for it.」

"*You will never be able to return here and you will forget everything about this realm.*"
... Please... I just want to save them.

The entity contemplated its words for a while, and it nodded.

"So be it."

It glowed with joy, as it slowly faded.

... Thank you...

Blue eyes stared at the darkness of the room.

Their owner made no noise as she slowly sat up. Her brother was still sleeping beside her, it wouldn't do to wake him up. Her mind was still clouded with sleep, but at the same time, it was trying to figure out what she was dreaming about. But the more she dwelled in it, the memory of it kept disappearing before she could grasp any of the details.

"Kirika...?" a sleepy voice called to her, the sheet of the futon rustled.

"N- Nii-chan, go sleep!" she tried to push Jotaro down by his shoulder, to no avail.

He sat up as he rubbed his eyes awake, "That's what you should be doing too. What's wrong?"

Kirika shook her head, "It's just... A weird dream." She pressed her eyebrows together, "... I can't remember."

She felt like it was something important, and it bothered her. Why did she suddenly not remember anything from it? All she remembered now were the voices, but even her mind just seemingly started to purge her memory of them. It was as if her own mind forbid her from even thinking about it.

The older sibling quirked in confusion, before he sighed and patted her head, "Well, at least it's not a nightmare. Maybe you'll remember it in the morning. School's tomorrow, so just get back to sleep, alright?"

After a moment, she finally relented.

As soon as she snuggled into Jotaro's hold, she was fast asleep, her slumber dreamless.
She didn't even remember that she dreamed the previous night.

_How dare you forget?_

Chapter End Notes

Just a little description about OCs here;

Name: Kujo Kirika  
Age: 15  
Birthday: August 17th, 1972  
Zodiac: Leo  
Height: 165cm  
Weight: 50kg  
Blood type: AB  
Hair color: hazel (tied into a ponytail with a hydrangea hairtie, a part was braided and circled on top of her head, pinned down with a sunflower hairclip)  
Eye color: blue  
Occupation: student (10th grade)  
Favourite color: sunflower yellow  
Favourite movie: The Shining  
Favourite musician: Takeuchi Mariya  
Favourite food: unagi kabayaki  
Hobbies: writing songs, playing video games, and playing guitar  

Name: Shimizu Himari  
Age: 15  
Birthday: April 1st, 1972  
Zodiac: Aries  
Height: 156cm  
Weight: 48kg  
Blood type: A+  
Hair color: brown (braided on one side with a butterfly hairtie)  
Eye color: black  
Occupation: student (10th grade)  
Favourite color: burgundy  
Favourite actor: Sanada Hiroyuki  
Favourite food: omurice  
Hobbies: singing and photography
Chapter Summary

Young Kirika learnt more an honorable friend, his rise and fall. Along with it, came the incomprehensible regret and guilt, that would affect her for years to come.

Chapter Notes

It's hard trying not to use the word "bizzare".

Anyway this chapter is basically about Kirika slowly molding herself into the role she'd have in this rendition of Stardust Crusaders. Starting from learning about Salad man.

WHY MUST ZEPPELIS SUFFER

Also note that Jotaro is 2 years older than Kirika.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kujo Kirika was 7 when she finally met her grandparents properly, and it was not long before she saw something odd.

Her mother would tell her bits and pieces of her grandfather's outrageous adventures, as well as the strange tales of her ancestors back in England. When she was younger, she didn't think much of them, thinking they're just simply imaginative bedtime stories with her grandfather and his grandfather as the characters. But that pretty much changed today. They might not be entirely fictional, and she might have either omitted or been unaware of some details.

"Uh, Grandpa?" Kirika couldn't take her eyes off of the metal replacing her grandfather's left hand. Her English was still a little shaky, but she hoped he could understand what she's trying to say. Besides, she had been preparing for this with the help of her mother. She gulped when he turned to her upon being called. "A- Are you... A cyborg?"

She froze in place when Joseph suddenly started laughing loudly. For a moment, her hyperactive imagination supplied the thought that her grandfather would actually reveal himself as a cyborg, just like in Westworld. Suddenly, her hazel hair was ruffled, and she looked up to see his amused expression. "I almost forgot that this is the first time we really meet, huh Kirika? The first time I saw you, you're still a small baby!" He lowered his human hand, "No, don't worry, something happened and I lost my hand because of it. Then I had someone made me the replacement! Doesn't it look awesome?"

Kirika perked up from that, "When you fi- fought vampires on a volcano?"

"Cor~rect! Your mother told you about what I did, didn't she?" he tapped on his lap, inviting his granddaughter to sit on his lap.
She gladly accepted the offer, "Yeah! Mama tells me and Nii-chan bedtime stories about your adventures! Can you tell me more about them?"

Joseph gave a hearty chuckle as he shifted his position to make the young girl more comfortable, "Sure, sure! What would you like to know? Come on, ask me anything!"

"Mmm," she contemplated her answer before looking up with enthusiasm, "Grandpa, can you tell me more about Caesar? Do you go on more adventures with him? Mama said he's your best friend!" Bright blue eyes then slowly dimmed and her smile melted away, as she watched the excitement in her grandfather's face withered.

It worried her, did she ask the wrong question? Could it be that... There wasn't a happy ending to Caesar in the story? Judging how her grandfather looked so downcast, it confirmed her suspicion in a way. There was some sort of uneasiness within her now. It was as if she had known this man before, and the fact that he seemed to have suffered a great misfortune hurt, somehow. It felt wrong.

Maybe Grandpa never told Mama about it, either.

"Grandpa..." Joseph swiftly looked back at her as she tugged on his shirt, "Grandpa, I'm sorry. I- I can't ask that-"

"Kirika, it's alright." His arms encircled her small frame and gently brought her closer, green eyes softened. "It's just... It's been a while since I've talked about him. It caught me off guard, that's all. Don't worry, you didn't do anything wrong."

His eyes still looked doleful and it was a wry smile on his face, but Kirika simply nodded. What else could she say?

"Well, since you asked, it's only fair that I answer your question! I did say you can ask me anything." The grin was still somewhat forced, she wanted to retort but he already began his story. Something told her that if she stopped him now, it'd be disrespectful.

"Caesar... He was an idiot."

"Huh?" she didn't expect that at all.

"Kirika, it's alright." His arms encircled her small frame and gently brought her closer, green eyes softened. "It's just... It's been a while since I've talked about him. It caught me off guard, that's all. Don't worry, you didn't do anything wrong."

His eyes still looked doleful and it was a wry smile on his face, but Kirika simply nodded. What else could she say?

"Well, since you asked, it's only fair that I answer your question! I did say you can ask me anything." The grin was still somewhat forced, she wanted to retort but he already began his story. Something told her that if she stopped him now, it'd be disrespectful.

"Caesar... He was an idiot."

"Huh?" she didn't expect that at all.

The grin on his face became wider, "He was a womanizing show-off, and a stuck up too! When we first met, we fought and he kept looking down on me! He's such a snobbish idiot!" Joseph once again laughed, before it died down as he smiled reminiscently. "Despite that, he's also an honourable man, a loyal friend. He made his family proud. But most of all... He's the kind of person who would put down his life on the line, for the sake of others."

Kirika continued to listen to the tale of the man that was Caesar Anthonio Zeppeli. A man who fought together with his grandfather, and he perished too soon. Magnificent yet fleeting, just like a bubble. But even after death, his spirit continued to assist Joseph in his fated battle. Still, with their last interactions being full of anger, surely there was still some despair left in her grandfather, wishing he could turn back time so he could fix that one mistake. She remembered the tears that fell down her cheeks that day. Her chest felt like it tightened, in a mix of sorrow and regret. At the same time, there was a deep confusion. Her heart suddenly wished desperately that she could somehow prevent him from meeting such a tragic fate, without her really understanding why she would wish that in the first place. She could do nothing about it.

Kujo Kirika was born 33 years too late.

In the next few days of their grandparents' visit, Jotaro would soon join her in asking Joseph to
corroborate more of his stories. They asked about the various elements of his adventures. Robert E.O. Speedwagon, Rudolf von Stroheim, Smokey Brown, Granny Erina, Master Lisa Lisa, and the Pillar men, particularly the one named Wamuu. The old man gladly answered his grandchildren’s questions, and so both siblings quickly learnt, that their family is fascinatingly odd. It was almost hard to imagine how their fairly normal family came from a bloodline that was intertwined with such nonsensical circumstances. No one would believe them if they tried to recount their ancestors’ stories at school, no matter how hard they try.

But the one topic that never came up anymore throughout the week, was the name Caesar Zeppeli. Kirika had told her brother about what happened, so he refrained from asking. The young girl simply didn’t want to see her usually energetic grandfather with such a sorrowful look again.

At the end of their stay in Japan, they all stood in front of their house. Kujo Sadao wished them safe travels in his usual stoic manner, while Holy tearfully hugged her parents. Kirika giggled when Jotaro’s face turned red when Suzie kissed both of his cheeks.

Her grandfather on the other hand, knelt before her. She was surprised by what he had to say, "Thank you, for giving me a chance to talk about it, Kirika... It’s always good to share things when things get too tough on your heart. Remember that, alright?"

The strange feelings she felt that day still lingered. She still didn't understand why she would have them in the first place. But at the same time, she was glad that she could help lift some of the burden off of the old man.

"Hey, Nii - san." greeted Kirika, as her brother sat beside her on the sofa, holding a bag of homemade karinto. It was after dinner, and she had already started enjoying her daily gaming session. Jotaro simply watched as she tried to accurately shoot as many pixelated ducks as she could, chuckling slightly whenever she pouted as the dog on the screen laughed when she failed to shoot one. "Huh, this is the first time you got interested in a video game."

Jotaro shrugged as he chewed one of the snacks, offering the rest to her. "Not really, I just don't have anything to do and I'm bored." Usually he would go to his room and enjoy his favourite programs on TV. But Columbo wasn't on tonight, neither was any sumo broadcast. He had finished his homeworks too, so he was free for the time being.

"Well, glad I can entertain you, then." she chuckled. Without wasting any time, she quickly grabbed 3 pieces of karinto and stuffed one of them between her lips, the rest she put on one of her thighs. Her free hand then swiftly went back to the console, managing to shoot at the last duck before it's out of sight. The game ended and it returned to the home screen, with the top score featured being 275,800. "Aw, yes! Nii - san, try it out! Maybe you'll beat my score."

"I'm good."

"Oh, come on. What do you have against video games?"

Jotaro made a deadpanned expression as his sister cornered him on his side of the sofa, so he lifted his hand to half - heartedly push her away. "I'm just not interested, Kirika. Get off my case." This was not the first time Kirika tried persuading him to get into her hobby. There were times where he considered trying it out, but then he realized that he completely felt no interest whatsoever. Not even
entering game arcades ever crossed his mind.

"Jeez, you're no fun," she gave him the same expression in return as she moved to unplug the console. She carefully dislodged the cartridge before putting it inside its box, then slipping it into its spot in the small shelf beside the TV. Kirika then walked back to the sofa, simply sitting there comfortably with her brother, as they continued to snack on the karinto their mother made.

After a moment, she spoke up again, "Nii-san, do you remember? When I told you about Caesar?"

The boy raised his eyebrow. It's been 5 years since their grandparents' visit, and he still remembered the day his sister came to him, her eyes and nose red. As an older brother, it was only natural that he became concerned at the sight, but before he could ask anything about it, she suddenly grabbed his hands.

"Caesar. He didn't get a happy ending."

While he didn't exactly understand the situation, Jotaro could make an educated guess. Though from hearing what Joseph had to say to her before going back to New York, in the end, it didn't seem like their grandfather wasn't so upset about it. But as the days gone by, the name Caesar was never mentioned anymore in the household, until today. "What made you bring it up now?"

"... That day, I wasn't just crying because I made Grandpa sad. Honestly, I still don't understand it, either but..." She struggled with her explanation. "Since then, somehow I regret not being able to save him. That's the best way I could describe it."

Jotaro quirked one of his eyebrows. It made no sense whatsoever. "Kirika... He died in 1938. That was more than 40 years ago, you couldn't physically be there even if you want to."

"I know, I know that. That's why I don't get it. We barely knew this guy aside from Mom's stories. Even with Grandpa telling me more about him and his life, I still don't know him. But for whatever reason, I felt this... This sadness when I remember that he died, that he shouldn't have to." She lifted her legs to encircle her arms around them, her fingers clenching on her sleeves. "Every once in a while, it just crossed my mind and my heart would keep telling me... That I should've been able to save him. But the more I remind myself that I couldn't possibly do anything about it, it's the one thing that makes it hurt even more."

He was at a lost.

Kirika had always been the more talkative one between the both of them, so to hear that she had been hiding this much was pretty overwhelming. If he had to be honest, it all sounded ridiculous. Regretting about someone who had been dead for decades, it was simply pointless. But she didn't need to be told that, she was already aware of it in the first place. Then again, what else could he say to her about it? What kind of advice or wisdom could he even offer for such an absurd issue? "Have you... Talked to Mom about this?"

"You know how Mom is. If I tell her about it, she'd be worrying about me for god knows how long, I don't want to burden her like that." It has been her habit since she became aware that their father, being a jazz musician on the rise, wouldn't be home for most of the time. That left their mother with taking care of 2 young children by herself. So she decided, for her mother's sake, that she didn't need to concern her with anymore than she needed to. So often times, she came to her brother for advice or reassurance. It wasn't the best, but the siblings became closer that way.

Though sometimes, she would tell no one anything.
The room fell into silence. Jotaro gritted her teeth. The situation became frustrating to him with how he's unable to do anything that would ease Kirika's mind. He couldn't possibly just tell her not to think about it, that wouldn't help whatsoever. Still, he needed to say something, however little of a help it would be.

"Next time it hurts again, go to Mom. Stop worrying about burdening her, she's always there for you. If you still hesitate, then you can come to me like always. To be honest, I understand nothing about this, but maybe... It just shows what kind of a person you are. You're able to empathize with Gramps that far, it's not a bad trait to have. But if it was something else, then... You're the only one who could find the answer to that. Take your time, though. There's no rush at all.

He wasn't even sure if they were the right words to say. But judging from the soft smile on Kirika's face, he might not have done a bad job. Then came a smirk and her giggles, "Nii-san... You sounded really cheesy just now, you know that?"

The boy yanked his hand from the top of her head as he quickly turned his head away. Kirika could see the slight reddish tint on his face. "I'm taking it back, if you don't like it."

She giggled again in amusement. Her brother was ready to leave the room before she gently grabbed onto his hand. "You know, there's no harm in trying it. So, thank you, Nii-san."

Jotaro might have never been very expressive, but he still gave a small smile in return.

Three years have passed, and Kirika had seen some of the signs, but she still found herself dumbfounded.

When her brother entered high school, Jotaro slowly transformed into someone who kept to himself a lot, developed a callous personality, and always looked like he was seconds away from murdering people. He also started getting involved in fights, and yelling at their mother every time she was doting on him. It was unacceptable, her mother might be fine with it somehow, but Kirika had to often scold him when he did so with her around.

Long story short, he became a delinquent.

He's also some sort of a party animal, considering the tricks he pulled with those cigarettes.

She wondered if watching all those Clint Eastwood movies slowly moulded his personalities over the years. It was no secret to her that her older brother found his characters cool. But the change was still baffling nonetheless.

There were some things that stayed the same, though. Jotaro was still the same reliable older brother, willing to listen to her problems like always and offering her advice as best as he could. Even though there were fights, their relationship as siblings were still as strong. The compassionate, gentle, and caring boy was still there, albeit he was embarrassed to show them. His sister knew very well that, even with his verbal abuse towards their mother, he still loves her. As evidenced by him telling his mother not to work too hard this morning, after noticing that she had been looking lethargic these days. In which it was followed by him pushing her away for hugging him.

Stupid Jotaro.
Her thought was broken when she heard something clatter onto the arcade floor. It was a luxurious pen, and with the place not being too crowded around this time, she could make an educated guess as to who dropped it. Kirika immediately left her position in the queue to play at one of the machines to grab it and ran towards the red-haired young man, wearing a green gakuran. "Excuse me! You dropped this!"

The student was almost at the entrance when she called out to him. Whether he thought the call was for him or simply curious, the boy turned around and she was already in front of him. The boy were wearing cherry earrings, she noticed. His purple eyes gave off a serene look. Suddenly, she felt like she had seen him before, and soon there was that feeling. The same strange feeling that she had regarding Caesar Zeppeli, and it was even more confusing.

Meanwhile, the boy grew concerned the moment the girl before her just froze in place and didn't say anything anymore. "Uh, hello?"

His sudden voice snapped her out of it, "Ah! Uh, sorry about that. This is yours, isn't it?" Kirika held the pen out to him.

"Oh, right, it is. Thank you." He gladly slipped it back into his pocket, making sure he hung the clip onto the hem. "Are you sure you're alright? You just zoned out for a moment."

"Yeah, I'm just fine. Don't worry about it!" To be honest, she still felt some uneasiness. But she needed to change the subject. "I've never seen you around here before. Are you new in Izumi?"

He chuckled at that, "No, I'm from Aoba, actually. But I often come here for the arcades lately. Since it's after exams, I just felt like changing the atmosphere." The boy trailed off, for a little while, he looked like he unsure of what to say. "I'm Kakyoin Noriaki, by the way. Again, thank you for giving this back to me." His hand gestured to the pen in his pocket.

"It's no big deal. I'm Kujo Kirika!" She happily introduced herself. The petals of the sunflower & hydrangeas clip attached to the braid that framed the side of her hair bobbed with her head movement. "Ah, that reminds me. It's been a while since I went to Taito Station, I should go there again-"

"Hey, move out of my way!" The shout from behind her startled her and she instantly moved away, Kakyoin followed suit.

"Sorry about that." Looming at her was a delinquent, a typical one that depended on his muscles rather than his brain. It was admittedly her fault for standing in the way. But his attitude was still less than desirable. Kirika then simply stared at him with a deadpanned expression.

That seemed to tick him off, "What are you looking at?!!"

"Nothing, you can just go. I'm not in your way anymore." Now she was the one who started getting annoyed.

She then yelped when her collar was suddenly yanked. "You trying to talk down to me, little bitch?!"

What's with these people and their need to pick fights? "Oh, no, not at all. But you seem awfully sensitive, you know that? I wasn't even insulting you and you're this close to blowing up."

"Why you-" Her eyes widened at the sight of a raised fist and she flinched. She instantly closed her eyes, but when she felt the pressure from her pulled collar lessened, she opened them to find that Kakyoin was holding his wrist in a powerful grip. His eyes widened in surprise as he stared at her,
his mouth slightly agape. It was then that she realized that her foot had reflexively hit him between his legs.

Shaking himself out of his reverie, Kakyoin focused himself on the delinquent, "I'm sorry, but could you refrain from hitting her. I don't appreciate people being hurt simply because someone has such a fragile ego." The delinquent's attempt to protest turned into a squeal of pain as Kakyoin twisted his arm. "You really could have just gone out."

The teen released him afterwards, the thug immediately scrambled outside and limped away.

Kakyoin and Kirika stared at the entrance for a brief moment, before turning to look at each other. Both suddenly burst into laughter, the unexpected turn of events brought some amusement to them. "What the hell was that?!"

"Heh, you did very well defending yourself there." Kakyoin complimented her, chuckling slightly.

"I didn't even realize that I lifted my leg!" She let out another giggle, before looking up at him once more and beamed. "Thank you, Kakyoin - san. He probably would still be able to punch me if you didn't hold him back."

The red haired teen couldn't help but smile back, "You're very welcome. I guess I have paid you back for your kindness earlier."

"You definitely did more than that, all I did was giving you your pen back." Kirika gave a sheepish smile as she scratched her cheek. "Well, I'll be staying here for a while. You're going back?"

Kakyoin nodded, "I usually come to the arcade when it's mostly empty and leave before it gets too crowded."

"I can relate to that. Well, see you again someday, then. Have a safe trip home!" As she waved her hand, Kirika turned her back and walked towards the arcade machine she had intended to play earlier.

"Wait, Kujo," her ponytail swished as she turned at the call of her name, blue eyes blinked in curiosity, "if you visit Aoba and we meet up somehow, we could go play some games together. If that's okay with you."

She instantly grinned at that suggestion, "I'm more than okay with that. I'll treat you for lunch as a proper payback, though! I'm not accepting no to that!"

He wanted to retort at first, but then snickered. "Alright, I'll be looking forward for to it."

Within that month, Kirika did visit Aoba a few times. One thing she regretted was the fact that she forgot to even ask for his phone number, in her eagerness to start playing that day. But no matter, she could ask when she met him again, and Kirika was sure that he'd be there. She made sure to arrive when it was way before the peak hours. Jotaro accompanied her once, worried that the person she'd be meeting was a creep. She had assured him that it was fine, even her mother approved of these trips. But the older of the Kujo siblings insisted. It was a little funny to her, seeing her brother being so out of place amidst the arcade machines.

But Kakyoin Noriaki never showed up. He didn't show up at the arcade she frequented either. The people who happened to know him around the arcade claimed not to have seen him for a while now. Some heard he'd gone on a trip to Egypt with his family, but no one knew for sure. They described him as a loner, unapproachable and appeared to be disinterested in making connections with others. A rather stark difference to the Kakyoin she met that day. After her last visit, with no sign of the boy,
she came back home crestfallen. She really was looking forward to simply play games together and eat some lunch with a potential new friend.

Soon, she began to worry.

The strange feelings that hadn't been bothering her for the past few weeks, were stirred up once more.

It began to hurt again.

But this time, it whispered a command.

Save him.

From what?

He's returning.

The voice was echoing around her.

Kirika thought she was lying on her bed still, but when she tried to push herself up, she found herself not feeling even her arms nor her entire body. It was as if she was a disembodied head floating in the air. She doubted she was even a head at this very moment.

Save him.

She tried to search for the source of the voice, but everything around her was pitch black.

"Who are you?"

Save him.

"It'd help if you give me a little more detail than that."

Save him.

"I can't save Caesar! Now you're telling me to save someone whom I can't even contact with?"

There was a moment of silence. For a second, she thought it was over. The dream would end, and she could continue sleeping until morning.

Insolent little thing, you are...

There were flashes of images. All of them too bright for her to see clearly. Assaulting her vision relentlessly, blinding her. She tried to close her nonexistent eyes, but it was futile. Soon, though, surprisingly began to register the images a little better. They were blurry still, but it was as if someone turned down the exposure setting of a camera. But the only thing she could see in the end, were
glimpses.

The only things that stood out to her was a slab of stone in the shape of a cross, and a red-haired girl in despair.

She could hear her screaming and cursing to the heavens.

Her voice rang in her "ears" and gripped her "heart", the pressure felt suffocating.

When she gasped awake that night, a translucent figure was hovering above her.

She hadn't been able to sleep well since that dream.

Every time she opened her eyes, she would see the strange figure out of the corner of her eyes. Nobody could see it but her, it seemed. It wasn't completely clear at first, but slowly, it started to show more characteristics. It was silver in color, with bluish and purple accents around its bodies. Just as she started to get the hang of the creature simply existing beside her, Kirika was shocked to discover that it was able to manipulate the area she's on, within the radius of 5 meters. It would distort that particular surrounding, allowing her to bend the shape or composition of the objects around her as long as they're solid, or at least, she thought it only worked on solid objects. Controlling the other elements seemed to be possible albeit more difficult. She could do it all according to her will for at least 10 seconds.

It demonstrated its powers rather accidentally, when she tried to scare it away. The pencil she threw at the entity seemingly exploded with the graphite was launched away, before it was embedded into the wall. When she investigated it further, the graphite embedded within the wall had turn into something sturdier. Graphene, she discovered later.

She would like to scream, but her mother and brother were near.

"What is going on?" she mumbled under her breath. She hadn't told them about this. Really, how was she supposed to tell them that she's suddenly started seeing a strange spirit around her? It seemed that the weird circumstances that were passed down her family had caught up to her, and she wondered if the voice had something to do with it all along.

"Kirika, are you okay?"

The girl instantly turned at the voice, her best friend Himari, "Yeah, yeah, I'm alright."

"You were zoning out, earlier. Do you need to go to the nurse's office?" the other girl brought her voice down into a whisper.

"For what? I'm feeling just fine."

"Well, in case you need to nap for a little bit, just say you're dizzy or something."

Kirika snorted slightly and shook her head, before she jumped at another voice calling her name, "Kujo Kirika - kun!"

The girl scrambled to stand up from her desk, "Y- Yes, Sensei!"
"Your mother is waiting for you at the principal's office."

Kirika didn't waste any time following the vice principal down the hallway. What could possibly be happening that her mother is at school right now? Once she arrived at the office, she was greeted by her mother suddenly hugging her, "Mom? W- Wait, Mom! What's going on?"

The woman's face looked distraught as she put both of her hands on her shoulders. "Kirika... It's- it's your brother. He's... He's in jail right now!"

*Oh, dear.*

"Ugh, the semester just started, Jotaro..."

Chapter End Notes

I imagine Holly would tell Jotaro and Kirika the stories that Joseph told her when she was younger, as bedtime stories. Of course not all of the details, especially the gory ones. But it's possible, then Holly made the stories more of a fantasy for her children. It sounds cute.
Peeling The Shells

Chapter Summary

Her family is now officially part of the bloodline's peculiarities, meanwhile, she learns to open up more.

Chapter Notes

I'm actually writing this while watching Stardust Crusaders all over again simultaneously. Goooooood now that I've already dived deep into Jojo, Jotaro is so clearly a teenager deep in the middle of his edgy phase.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"S- So..."

Kirika placed one of her hands on her mother's shoulder, ready to console her in case she broke down.

"How many people did Jotaro kill?!"

"Mom, he didn't-" she didn't get to say anything further as Holy covered her ears and shook around.

"Don't tell me! I don't want to hear it! No!"

One of the police officers who were handling their class spoke up in confusion, "Uh, who told you he killed anyone?"

"He got into a fight." supplied the younger officer beside him.

Ah, the usual, then. "Mom, he might look like he's seconds away from punching people to death all the time. But I doubt he'd just unnecessarily kill people on the streets. We know that much." Though, he probably wouldn't hesitate if the situation caught him in a pinch.

"O- Oh, you're right. Jotaro is still such a sweet boy. He would never do that." The woman sighed in relief, putting an arm over her chest. Her daughter didn't have the heart to tell her otherwise.

The older police then started explaining how Jotaro's opponents brought lethal weapons into the fight. But the teen somehow manage to defeat all of them, even breaking a lot of their bones, 15 between the 4 of them. Now they're all hospitalised. There was also the fact that apparently he destroyed all of their testicles. Kirika didn't know how to respond to that.

What started the fight anyway? What made the thugs so angry that they'd jump him in the first place? He might be a delinquent, but he rarely started his fights unless he was provoked.

Holy then cheerfully agreed when the officer requested that she discipline her son. The girl pursed her lips at that. Jotaro wouldn't listen to her and their mother hardly ever harsh with them. The
mention of Jotaro being an oddball made her quirk her eyebrows. What else did he do now? Well, at the very least, the police allowed him to go home today.

"Jotaro!"

Kirika perked up when her mother suddenly ran ahead. She didn't waste time catching up with her, "Mom! Excuse me- Mom, wait up!"

Her mother kept calling her brother's name. Her thoughts were filled with the memories of the sweet and soft spoken boy that was Kujo Jotaro, before he entered high school. She didn't know what drove him to suddenly behave like this. Even so, he was still her son, and she believed that deep down, he always has a heart of gold. "Jotaro!"

"Shut the hell up! You're so damn annoying, bitch!"

"Okay~!"

"Not "okay"! Mom came all the way here worrying about you! I swear you're doing this on purpose sometimes!" She glared at her brother, who simply lounged on his cell's bed with his usual scowl.

He stared at her for a while before clicking his tongue, muttering as he looked away from them. "Why do both of you have to be here?"

The girl scowled as Jotaro simply ignored her this time. Holy then rubbed her on her back, "Kirika, it's alright. We can talk about it later at home, okay? I'll cook your favourite meals later! How does that sound?"

With her eyebrows downturned, the girl sighed, "Mom..." She really was too kind for her own good.

"It's a deal, then!" The woman then faced the officers and tried to convince them that Jotaro is really not like what he seemed, that there was more than meets the eyes to him. "He's not capable of doing something so appalling."

No, Mom, he actually can. It's why he's here. Kirika turned to look back at her brother who decided to just take a nap in his cell, "Are you serious right now...?"

One of the officers startled her a little when he kicked on the prison bars, "Hey, don't fall asleep, Kujo! You're being released. Get out! What part of "go home" don't you understand?!"

When the officers talked about him being weird, were they referring to this? "Hey, Jotaro? What's wrong?"

Jotaro suddenly glared at the officers, making them gulp as he rose from the bed to a sitting position. He then turned to look at his family, "Mom, Kirika, go home. I'm not going to leave here for a while."

That statement left them puzzled. "Wait, why-" her older brother immediately spoke again, cutting her off.

"I've been possessed by an evil spirit. I don't know what he'll make me do. Even during the fight, it took all I had to stop it." He stopped to look at her mother and sister both in the eyes, before lying down again, "So don't let me out of this cell."

She didn't expect that at all. No way, Jotaro's seeing a spirit too? She had almost forgot about the
week - long sleepless nights and the incomprehensible creature that lingered around her sometimes. It
didn’t seem to be manifesting in the last 3 days, though. Did that mean she managed to control when
it appears, somehow?

"For crying out loud..." The older officer muttered under his breath. "See what I'm talking about,
Ma'am? We're trying to release him, but he refuses to leave."

To be fair, she would lock herself up too if her spirit started acting out uncontrollably. The sudden
appearance of her brother's cellmates jolted her from her thoughts, each expressing fear and
confirming the existence of the spirit. She didn't even realize they were there. Upon closer inspection
into the cell, Kirika just noticed the presence of items that a normal jail wouldn't have, including the
can of beer Jotaro suddenly had on his hand. He nonchalantly threw the can away after finishing it,
and started turning on the radio while reading a Jump volume.

It was brief, but she swore she could see a sliver of a purple - blue hand, bringing the book into
Jotaro's.

The officers had started freaking out when her brother finally stood up and approached the prison
bar. "I'll show you what a terror my evil spirit can be. Just so you'll understand how dangerous it
could be to let me out." He took off his hat, and to Kirika, that meant he was going to do something
that would put his own life in danger.

"Jotaro, don't do this." There was a shakiness to her voice as he held out his hand to reach
something.

"I have no choice, I need them to understand. I'd hurt you without knowing it as long as it's here." The
low tone in his voice was almost apologetic. Before the girl could reply back, the hand she saw
earlier, was now an arm and shot from behind her brother. She could see it clearer now, including its
simple black gauntlet, decorated with small golden orbs on the back of its hand. Blue eyes widened
when it grabbed onto one of the police's guns and detached it from its strap.

The gun landed straight onto the teen's hand, the spirit's hand dematerialized.

Holy’s face instantly paled at the sight, “J- Jotaro, what are you doing?!”

"Give that back to him!"

"Well?! Did you guys see my evil spirit just now?! If you didn't, then..."

The moment he started cocking the gun at his head, Kirika had already pressed herself onto the bars
and tried to reach the gun in a futile attempt, "I saw it! So stop, just stop!" Her scream was desperate
as she still tried to at least pull his arm away.

But even as she managed to put her hand around his elbow, it was too late. Just a second after their
mother shouted his name, a shot was fired. She pulled her hand away in reflex, her body reacted as
the loud noise startled her. The inmates squealed, the officers cried out, and Holy gasped at the scene
before her. The bullet was stopped mid - air, held between the spirit's fingers. The teen himself was
panting and sweating, no doubt from the anxiety on whether he'd survive or not.

“There’s someone behind me,” Jotaro calmly explained before slipping his arm through the bar and
pass his sister to return the gun, “it seems to have possessed me recently.”

Silence permeated between them, only the sound of the bullet hitting the floor and rolling to the side
broke it. Holy and the officers still were still frozen in place after the stunt the older teen pulled.
Kirika, on the other hand, with the ringing from the shot still in her ears, snarled before grabbing her brother’s shirt to pull him closer, "You asshole! Can you just think for a fucking minute before you do shit like that⁉️" the growl in her voice startled everyone.

Jotaro honestly didn’t mean to do that to her or his mother, but he stubbornly needed to prove a point. “Good grief… I’m still alive, aren’t I? You don’t need to worry so much.”

“That’s not the point!” She struggled to keep her voice stable as she kept glaring at him. The girl clicked her tongue in frustration as she felt her legs starting to shake and her grip on his shirt was loosening.

“Kirika,” her mother gently called out to her and she felt a hand rubbing her back, “Kirika, calm down. I have an idea, and I believe it could help your brother. But for now, let’s go home. Alright?” The woman then turned to her son, "Jotaro, are you sure you don't want to go back home?"

"I told you it'll be dangerous. Didn't you just see what happened?” It's better to have them both out of here too. He still didn't know how much control he actually had over the spirit. If it decided to attack them... It's a scenario he was unwilling to see happen.

The girl gritted her teeth as she roughly released the other without a word. The police readily led them out, obviously still spooked by the event. As she walked alongside Holy, she could feel her brother’s eyes on them.

She refused to look back.

Shimizu Himari was concerned.

For the past 3 days, Kirika had been quiet. Whenever they were in a conversation with each other, she seemed to be distracted most of the time. Her replies were also limited to short sentences, or simply a word or two. Not to mention she frowned a lot more than she smiled. She couldn't help but wonder what happened when she visited her brother in jail. Whatever it was, it made her angry. But her best friend wouldn't tell her any details.

"Hey, Kirika!" She called her name the moment she spotted the ponytailed girl at the shoe lockers. Both of them were just done with their club activities. "Let's walk home together!"

Kirika smiled slightly at that as she neatly deposited her uwabaki inside her locker, then slipped her feet inside her loafers. "Hi, how was club today?"

"Oh, it's still just a suggestion at this point, but we're thinking of starting a new segment for our daily broadcast. We'll be reading submitted horror stories! I bet you'll love that!" Himari beamed at her, hoping that the other would show her usual enthusiasm, considering that was one of her favourite topics.

"Ah, that sounds nice, then." The hazel-haired girl then simply gestured for the girl to walk alongside her.

Short answers again... "How about you, Kirika? Anything interesting at the music club?"

She shook her head, "Not much, it's the usual." The conversation between them then ended.
Dark eyes became downcast. She was even more worried now. "Was the thing with your brother really that bad? Could you really not tell me what happened?"

That made the girl turn her head to the braided girl. Blue eyes widened for a moment, before they moved down to the ground. "Himari..."

"I'm not going to force you to talk about it. But... I- I can't help but feel really worried about you. It's been 3 days and you don't seem to be feeling better about it in the least."

"... Himari, I'm sorry," Guilt filled her chest, she was too caught up with the events that took place that day, that didn't even realize that she had been worrying her best friend. "What happened that day, I can't really explain it myself. So it's hard for me to talk about it in the first place."

"It's alright! Even if I don't understand it in the slightest, that's fine. At the very least, I want you to be able to just talk about your problems, like you always do. I never minded about it, and I certainly don't mind it now. If I can help you with it, then I'll help you out! Just don't keep it to yourself."

Kirika contemplated it for a bit, before sighing and smiled wryly, "I keep forgetting that. I really need to work on it."

In return, Himari smiled widely at her, "I'll keep reminding you, then! But if you keep forgetting it, though, I'll tell the whole school about your crush!"

The girl snickered, "You know I don't have one."

"That's not true! What about that boy in Aoba you told me? He saved you and all, and you even planned out a date with him!" There was a mischievous glint in her eyes.

"He's not a crush, Himari. I barely knew him at all. You don't even know who he is." She chuckled at her friend's attempt at getting the upper hand. "Plus, not much of a date if he's a no-show in the end." Not to mention that they'd never even really set one in the first place.

"Ahh, you never let me win in this!" the brunette lightly shook the other, tugging her arm as she pretended to be upset about it.

Both girls then laughed, the atmosphere between them became lighter all of the sudden.

But how was she able to explain to her best friend, about spirits that seemed to just linger around them, and had special abilities? She better just spared her those details, risking being vague about it. "Jotaro did something really stupid, and he almost died because of it." At least if he hadn't had his spirit with him. It suddenly reminded her, her own spirit hadn't even shown up anymore to this day. Did it disappear? She somehow found it unlikely.

The other girl gasped at that statement, "Really? That serious?"

She nodded, "Mom was trying to stay calm at the end of it. But... I can tell that she was going to start crying if she stayed there any longer." It was as they walked along the hallway, leaving her brother in the cell, that she noticed the tears in the corners of her mother's eyes. "Honestly, pretty sure I would too. But I was too angry to even cry. The worst part of it is how nonchalant he was about it. I know he was just trying to keep that hard-boiled front, but it wasn't the time for that whatsoever. So he's been locked up there for the past few days."

Himari didn't think that the situation would be so complicated. "I see... No wonder you've been so upset about it. I couldn't even imagine how tough is it for you and your mom. What about your dad? Does he know about it?"
"Dad's on another tour, right now. Mom said she didn't want to be a bother, so she didn't call him." That didn't sit well for her, even though it's been like this for years. Her mother should be able to talk about these things with him. He's her husband after all. "But Grandpa will be here to settle it today. Hope he can do it."

"Ah, your Grandpa? The one you said used to go adventuring, right?" Himari was the only person whom she told about it back then. Of course, she omitted the peculiar details regarding vampires and his so-called Ripple abilities. But the girl would always come back to her for more of the stories. It was how they became good friends.

"Yeah, that's the one. Huh, it's been 7 years since I last saw him. Time sure flies."

"Well, even if it doesn't go well, you're still able to see your Grandpa again!"

Kirika couldn't agree more, though, she really hoped her grandfather succeed in getting Jotaro out.

When she finally arrived home, there was a stranger in the living room. A man with dark skin, wearing a beige tunic and a long red overcoat, was sitting on the sofa. Around his neck hung a peculiar necklace. His brown eyes turned to her the moment she took another step. Then there it was again, that feeling that would invade her mind unexpectedly. But she squashed it away, it was not the time to deal with it. She did note that it was almost similar to the one that popped up when she met Kakyoin Noriaki.

Ah, that was a name that hadn't crossed her mind for a while now.

"Ah, good evening, Sir. I'm Kujo Kirika. Are you waiting for someone in particular?"

The man stood up to properly greet her, "Oh, no. It's nice to meet you, Ms. Kujo. My name is Mohammed Avdol, I'm a friend of Mr. Joestar."

"I see, nice to meet you too, Mr. Avdol." Something clicked in her mind suddenly. "That means Grandpa's here? Hold on. Jotaro? Is my brother out of jail?! Is he alright?!"

Avdol was a little surprised by the sudden raise in tone, "Y- Yes. He's indeed released from jail and he's doing just fine. I do have to talk to you about that, if you don't mind." Her nod as a reply was enough for him to continue. "First of all, I would like to apologize. In my attempt to force him out of his cell, I almost gravely injured him. I didn't have much choice, considering how strong his Stand is, which was unexpected. I gave your mother quite of a scare too. But be assured that he didn't have the slightest scratch on him. That said, I'm sorry for attempting to do so." He then let out a chuckle, "It seemed that I had to eat my own words too, when I said I'm going to make him beg to be let go."

The girl gave a smile with eyebrows crooked. "Yeah, you can't promise yourself with that sort of thing when it comes to him, Mr. Avdol. But it's fine, he probably wouldn't even leave the station if you didn't do that." She then tilted her head, "Excuse me but, you said something about "his Stand"? What do you mean by that?"

*Is it what the spirits are? Don't tell me Grandpa and Mr.Avdol knew about all these.*

"For that, you may want to take a seat, Ms. Kujo. It's going to be a bit of a pain to understand, but as the member of this family, you need to be aware of it."
"Just Kirika is fine. I actually have some questions too." Now, how did she bring it into existence in the first place? Maybe she could try concentrating and it'd materialize somehow. But she began to worry. What if it became uncontrollable this time? When it first showed its power, it almost destroyed her desk and ruined her tatami if she didn't try to will it hard enough for it to stop. Thankfully, it her subsequent tries to control it, it was kind of easy to fix the mess it left. She could only hope it didn't destroy her house. She then closed her eyes and took a deep breath. When she opened them, she expected the so - called Stand would appear. But nothing happened. "... Huh?"

Wait a minute, was I dreaming that I could see it last week? Did I get so tired that I hallucinated about seeing a spirit?

"Hmm," Avdol smiled in amusement, "maybe this could help?" All of the sudden, she could see flames surrounding the man, but it burned nothing. Behind him, a creature manifested, its appearance clearer than she could see hers or Jotaro's. It was in a shape a bird with the body of a human, or the opposite. It looked like it was almost rising like a phoenix. Amazing, was the only word she could describe it with. Then, something began to compel her to give an image to something.

She could feel its presence again around her.

It became very clearer this time. The creature retained its silver colour, again with purple and blue lines all over its body. But now she realized that it was also wearing a cloak, a silver cloak trimmed with blue and gold, tied with 3 glass orbs, each with a different symbol engraved on them that looked like fūrin. The longer it went, the inside of the cloak's colour slowly transitioned into purple. No, not just plain purple, it was instead the colour of a galaxy full of stars. It has large cat - like eyes with no mouth, closer inspection made its face look more like a mask.

"Ah... Well," she slowly turned to Avdol, unsure of what to say, "this is what I wanted to ask you."

The man nodded in understanding as he inspected the creature, "This is exactly I wanted to talk to you about. For starters, this is what we call a Stand, Ms. Kirika. We've already had a discussion about them with your mother and brother. When did you realize that you can summon it? Did you know any sort of ability that came with it? For your information, I've had Magician’s Red since birth, and it allows me to manipulate fire."

Kirika then recounted her experience that night. She decided not to divulge the information about the dream she had, thinking it was irrelevant. But she told him everything about what her Stand was capable of and the accidental testing of her abilities. How it relied on her knowledge of a matter's nature and its chemical makeup. It allowed her to bend the things around her according to her will. It was, admittedly, scary.

The Egyptian couldn't help but smile, impressed at the amount of information he was given, "You've done your research well, Ms. Kirika. I must say I find your efforts for this admirable."

Kirika gave a sheepish laugh, "Well, considering how dangerous it could be, it was just the right thing to do to note it down."

"A smart decision, if I do say so myself." His eyes turned sharp as he continued with his questions, "You seemed to be confused when your Stand didn't appear earlier. Was that the first time it happened?"

The girl hummed before answering, "To be honest, for days, it would just be there without me even summoning it. Then it stopped appearing since the day my brother was arrested. I don't exactly know why either. It's when you showed yours that I can bring it out willingly."
Avdol nodded again, "I believe this is an uncommon case, but it's not something rare. Stands are the physical manifestations of our psyche, or rather, our will to fight. Our mental strength. It can also simply be the expression of your minds. It depends on each person. Some are capable of sentience, some don't. Now, I'm not really well-versed in your case," he put his hands on his knees, "but I believe that you had been subconsciously suppressing your stands. It was essentially a product of your mind. If you mentally reject it, it would stop appearing around you and even refused your call."

After seeing what Jotaro did with his Stand, and how stressed out Holy was by it, there were times in the past few days where she wished it would just go away. It made things more difficult, especially for her mother. Jotaro's confession about the Stand hurting people without him knowing it, amplified those feelings even more. In the end, she couldn't help but feel guilty about it. It was something of her being, conjured by her own will.

It didn't have control over its own existence.

The girl turned to her Stand, that was still hovering above her, "I'm sorry." It wouldn't reply of course. But she still felt the need to say so.

Once again, Avdol smiled, as he made a noise of approval. "I'm glad you're able to come to terms with it."

"Ah, it's thanks to you, Mr. Avdol." she smiled in return.

Soon, there were footsteps resounding from the hallway, and a familiar gruff voice, "Avdol! I need to-" Joseph stopped in his tracks as he spotted the young girl beside his friend. A young girl who didn't waste any time to leap from her seat and hug her grandfather.

"Grandpa! I missed you!"

The Joestar elder didn’t hesitate to swing her around before putting her back down, as if she was still that small 8-year-old he met years ago. "Oh, my god! I've missed you too, Kirika! You've grown into a fine young lady. Don't you agree, Holy?"

Holy giggled at that as she appeared from behind her father, “She has always been a fine young lady, Papa.”

“Mom! Are you okay?” She immediately went to her mother and held her hands on her arms. While she was still all her happy-go-lucky self, she still had to make sure. “Nothing bad happened to you with Jotaro?”

“I’m fine, dear. I really am! It was difficult, but your grandfather and Mr. Avdol managed to get him out of jail! He is in his room now.” The woman smiled cheerfully. “Now, how about you? Are you tired? Hungry? Mama will prepare your dinner soon! How does hamburg steak sound to you?"

Kirika gave a sigh, relieved that after the long 3 days, with her mother looking distraught when she thought she wasn’t looking, it was over. For now at least. “Whatever you want to cook, Mom, I’ll eat them.”

Joseph suddenly put a hand on her granddaughter’s shoulder, “Wait, Kirika...”

It took a minute, and she could already guess what he was going to mention.

“Uh, Mom, Grandpa.” For a moment, she considered it. She considered dematerializing it, and whatever attempts her family would make to discuss with her about it, she would pretend that it didn’t exist. It’s been a long day for them, she didn’t want to add more grievance with hers.
But then Avdol stood beside her, giving her a determined smile, encouraging her to speak about it. Magician’s Red was beside him, as if agreeing with its user’s stance. With that, the dark thoughts that subdued her Stand slowly vanished. It still lingered, but it no longer overwhelmed her. She turned back to her grandfather and mother, as she mentally brought her Stand closer. “I... I’ve had mine since last week. I- I didn’t want to worry you so I didn’t say anything. But… Here it is.”

Her mother immediately encircled her arms around her, and she reflexively put hers around her back. “Oh, Kirika… You and your brother are the same. Both of you always keep to yourselves a lot. But while your brother put up an emotionless front, you just keep smiling to make people worry less. You’ve gotten a little better, but still you don’t talk about your problems enough with me. It made me worry even more.”

Her eyes felt wet and she tightened her hug, "I’m really sorry."

“No, don’t apologize! I’m always happy whenever you open up, Kirika. Next time, please, just talk to me about whatever it is. Promise?”

She moved back a little to wipe her eyes, before grinning at her mother, “I promise, Mom.”

As he smiled gently at the scene, he put a hand on Holy’s shoulder and another on Kirika’s head, “I told you before, didn’t I? It’s always good to share things, especially if it gets too tough on you.”

She should start remembering that more often.

Her brother didn't join them for dinner.

During that time, her grandfather started explaining to her how her Stand and her brother's came to be, specifically the man named Dio, who apparently stole her great, great, grandfather's body. It honestly felt like info dumps that one would get in a game which didn't manage to find away in weaving it around the plot. Still, it solidified it for her. The vague stories she heard as a child about Jonathan Joestar just got 10 times weirder. But it sounded quite tragic as well. She wasn't sure whether she should feel fascinated or anxious about the truth of her lineage.

She was also made aware of her strange birthmark, which, she had already noticed many times before and thought it was odd. It was nice to know of its origin, at least.

The siblings only met again after three days as they sat on the couch together that evening. Kirika playing games as usual, Zelda this time, with Jotaro watching her, one of the few times it happened around the household. The scene itself became rarer as they grew older, considering Jotaro's habit of going out to the city at night nowadays.

"Surprised to see you here again."

"I'm just bored, there's nothing else interesting to watch."

"Don't lie to me, Colombo is on right now."

"I set it to record, so I can watch it later."

Kirika kept up her scowl, her fingers pushing furiously at the buttons on her controller as Link
traversed through the plane, defeating monsters. Truth be told, the house had gotten lonely without him around, even with her mother being there. She was too used to there being the 3 of them. But even so, she was still pretty upset by what he did back at the police station. She was hoping he would at least apologize. But with the way her brother was now, that was unlikely to happen.

"Avdol told me you have a stand too now."

"What's it to you?"

"Why didn't you tell me back there? Or even before that."

"One, I needed to sort it out myself first. Two. I wonder why, maybe if you had stopped and listened to me before grabbing that gun and tried shooting yourself with it, I could have explained it the moment I realized you had one too."

"Well, you, and at least Mom would have understood, then. But the cops still would want me to just get out."

"You grabbing the gun already freaked them out, Jotaro. Also, you could have pointed the gun anywhere and have your Stand catch the bullet instead of your head."

"I'm still alive-"

"You don't get it at all! Do you have any idea how scared Mom was?! How scared I was?! And you still act like it's nothing. How do you think I'd feel if you died back there?!

Kirika raised herself onto her knees as she glared at him, berated him. The controller and the game forgotten for that moment.

Her brother clicked his tongue in annoyance. He knew that his sister would still be furious about that day, but it was the only thing Jotaro could think of to convince the officers. It was in order to show the extend of his Stand's ability, raising the caution. That way, they'd keep him in. Away from people, especially his family, and he wouldn't be able to harm them. However, he was still aware on the effect of the action he took.

"Look, if I could go back and undo it, maybe I would. Then you wouldn't have to watch me pull that stunt. But I can't go back in time. All I cared about that time was keeping you and Mom from getting hurt, and that's all I could come up with. It was," he trailed off, "I didn't know what else to do. Though... I wished both of you didn't have to see that."

The last part was spoken in a rather quiet tone, a contrast to his usually gruff voice. It was the closest thing she could get as an apology from him. She was still a little bit mad, but in the end, the girl quite understood where her brother was coming from. If she put herself in his shoes, she would probably did something crazy too, just to convince people to stay away, lest they get harmed.

Neither of them talked for a minute or two.

"Idiot." Kirika suddenly said.

Her brother stayed silent.

"Idiot." she repeated, this time with a slow kick to his hip.

"Stop that." he chided her.

But she did it again, "Idiot."
"I get it already, what more do you-" Jotaro didn't expect his sister to suddenly give him a hug. "Hey, Kirika-"

"I missed you, idiot." she mumbled, her arms around his neck tightened.

Her brother sighed, "Gimme' a break..."

They stayed like that for a while as Kirika started sniffling.

"Kirika, why haven't you gone to school yet? I thought you already left." asked Holy upon finding her daughter pressed to the front door, after giving her son a goodbye kiss.

"I'm waiting for them to leave first," before her mother could ask, she immediately explained while pointing at her brother as he walked away, "The fangirls. They always wait for him on the road before the stairway, then they fight each other over him. It's annoying." One time they walked to school together, they started trying to chase her away since they thought she's one of their competitors. She wondered if they're all masochist, considering they swooned when her brother yelled at them, or they're too into the "bad boy" type of guys. She couldn't think of why else people would be into him with how he usually presented his personality in public.

Really, Jotaro might be good-looking, but he's no boyfriend material.

"Well, just don't get late to school, okay? Make sure you eat your lunch too!" Holy gave her daughter another kiss on the cheek before going inside the house again. "Goodbye!"

"Bye, Mom."

Well, it's probably safe to go now. Jotaro had led them far enough, Kirika hoped. She started her journey to school, relieved when she didn't see the swarm of girls gathering around her brother along the street. Then again as she walked far enough, the girl started hearing them chirping "Jojo!" around her brother. She felt kind of bad for him honestly.

All of a sudden, out of the corner of her eye, she caught something she had almost forgotten. It had been 3 months, 2 since she gave up trying to meet him.

Green gakuran and red hair, with the cherry earrings. There was no doubt about it, it was really him. The girl had intended to call out to him as she got closer, but that's when she noticed something odd.

Before him was a canvas, with a stylized artwork of Jotaro on it.

He... He never met him before. He couldn't have finished that painting just now, either.

She watched as he crossed one of Jotaro's legs with red paint, and right at that moment, a collective scream rang. Kirika instinctively hid behind one of the trees and observed as the girls called her brother's name in a panicked tone. Shit, did he just fell down?! One of the girls' exclamation confirmed it. She wanted to run to the scene, see if her brother's alright. But something told her it wasn't safe with Kakyoin Noriaki standing right there.

At the same time, as her mind kept warning her to stay away, there was that feeling again. She had been able to slowly, but surely, alleviate over the last few months. But suddenly it came back in full
force. The words kept echoing in her ears, clashing against the signal that told her to avoid the danger. 

*Save him, save him, save him!*

*What do you mean?! From what?!!*

*Save him!!*

Kirika clutched her head, trying hard to block out the noise. It was starting to hurt. As she started pressing her forehead against the tree bark before her, she opened her left eye, not realizing when she closed them. With a blurry vision, she saw Kakyoin standing at the top of the stairs, still holding the canvas. He seemed to be talking to himself, before flinging the canvas away and impaling it on one of the trees. After a moment he swung his hand which held the brush, and suddenly the canvas exploded into pieces. That helped her rise past the overwhelming feelings, as her head snapped up in shock. Even when her vision was hazy, she could still see something faint between those branches.

It was something green and slithering.

*He has a Stand?!!*

Her heart skipped a beat the moment the teen walked down the stairs, then it started hammering beneath her ribs.

The girl started running towards the steps. When she looked down, her brother and the other boy was in the middle of a conversation, in which the redhead gave Jotaro his handkerchief. From afar, she couldn't really do much in checking any injuries, but she could only hope it wasn't that deep. She watched as Kakyoin walked away from the group. The voices might have been unbearable, but now she couldn't help but be concerned.

He was not at all like the red headed teen who helped her fight off the delinquent back at the game centre. The aura he gave off was welcoming, amicable. But now it turned cold and dark. What happened to him? Something within those 3 months changed him, somehow.

A different set of voices in the back of her head told her of the possibilities that this might be the real Kakyoin Noriaki.

But still, she began to wonder, if this was what the voices meant when they told her to save him.

Chapter End Notes

Okay! So we got Joseph and Avdol, also Kakyoin coming back. I honestly hope I did every character justice and then some.
No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't concentrate in class.

The event that occurred a few hours earlier still unnerved her. The boy that she hadn't met for so long suddenly returned with a Stand. Kirika didn't know if he had had it since birth like Avdol or he acquired it recently like her. No, it didn't matter at this point. What mattered was that Kakyoin had certainly attacked her brother back there. There was no doubt about it.

But why would he even do that in the first place? The girl started thinking of a possibility of them actually meeting in this past few months and having an altercation, with Jotaro never saying anything about it. But that became unlikely considering her brother willingly accepted the handkerchief the other offered. So if that was the case, nothing made sense. There had to be something that drove the redhead to do this, something provoked him.

Or somebody.

That thought that made her shudder. If somebody sent him, then it would be someone who'd know about Stands, and happened to have something against her brother. It was also possible that neither the person nor Kakyoin knew that Jotaro had manifested a Stand, which meant they initially believed that they would be able to just murder an essentially powerless individual. The fact that Kakyoin was willing to do it anyway... She frowned.

Wait, no, she couldn't just jump into conclusion any conclusions yet. There were missing pieces and she didn't have all of them. Something more was happening.

Still, none of it explained why he's in Izumi instead of Aoba. It just seemed ridiculous that he would just ditch school just to do someone else's bidding. It honestly would just be easier to wait until he's alone somewhere downtown. Getting back at Jotaro couldn't have been something that urgent.

Unless, it had something to do with what her grandfather told her during dinner, god knows what he'd done to him to ensure his compliance.

"Kirika, Kirika." Himari called out to her.
She snapped out from her thoughts, "Huh? Yeah, what's up?"

"You're spacing out again."

"Ah, sorry about that. It's just..." She trailed off. Contemplating if she should tell her about this at all. The girl was immediately reminded to the conversations she had yesterday. Looking around the class, she found the teacher inspecting other students in the corner, she quickly ripped up a page from her notebook and wrote a short sentence.

<Remember the arcade guy? He attacked Jotaro this morning.>

She swiftly passed it on to Himari. Out of the corner of her eyes, she saw the other started writing a reply before passing it back to her.

<(OAO|||) REALLY?! THAT'S AWFUL!!>

Kirika couldn't help but chuckle a bit at her friend's comical response. The teacher was still inspecting the others who sat by the window, his back to the rest of the class. She wrote a response before passing it to her again.

Before she could receive another reply, the teacher suddenly called her, "Kujo - kun!"

Oh, crap. He saw it?

"Yes!"

The teacher gestured to 2 folders on his desk, "Could you help me bring these files to the administration office? Just tell them it needs to be passed on to Mr. Teruhashi."

Phew.

She gave a small wave to Himari as she walked towards the front and took the folders into her arms. They were pretty heavy, but she could handle it. The administration office was on the first floor of the school, so she needed to go down 4 sets of stairs, since her classroom was at the 3rd floor. The office would just be down by the hallway on the right.

But as she finally reached the last step, she froze. Blue eyes widened and her mouth gaped, as sense of fight or flight blared in her mind, though it all scrambled. It was even worse when the voices came back and screamed at her.

Kakyoin was right in front of her, heading left. If anything, he was the source of danger at this moment.

She flinched and took a step back when his eyes turned to her.

Those serene eyes, just like the atmosphere he exuded, had turned cold. Almost malicious.

“I knew you were watching back there.” She was unable to respond to that. Her throat refused to work. In a split second, the redhead suddenly summoned his Stand. Its green color was more like an emerald, its form slithering and stretching before solidifying into a more humanoid one. “You can see
it, can you?”

She unintentionally summoned her own as a reflex. Its cape surrounded her peripheral. But as the emotions whirled wildly inside of her, clashing in a war, it almost felt like her nervous system shut down like fried circuits and her brain stopped giving any directions. She couldn’t will her Stand to do anything. To be honest, what was she supposed to do? Just attack him here and cause damage? It began to flicker slightly.

The sudden snicker from the other made her gasp, “Seems like you won’t be any nuisance to me,” his tone sounded off when he started speaking again, it’s almost monotone, “very well. I won’t bother with you, it’d be a waste of my time.” He started to walk away before stopping. It took a while before he finally spoke again.

“But remember. If you get in my way, I won’t hesitate to kill you.”

He then left.

Kirika couldn’t hold herself up anymore and fell onto the floor. Her Stand dematerialized. For a few moments, there was only the sound of her heart pounding loudly, her heavy breaths, and the voices as usual.

She gritted her teeth and hissed, “Shut up, just shut up.” First, it wanted her to save an already dead man, now a person who literally just said that he would kill her if she got in his way? Why was he here, anyway? Why did he act like he doesn’t recognize her at all?

Maybe it really was a mask, this was the real Kakyoin Noriaki and he never meant the words he said back then.

Why that bothered her so much, she chalked it up as the fault of the voices. Voices that wouldn’t quit even after she tried shutting them down. “I said shut up!”

It didn’t work.

With a growl, she decided to try her best to ignore it as she walked to the admin office. She had files to deliver and now, questions to ask.

“Kakyoin Noriaki?”

Kirika gave the lady at the desk a nod, “Yes, is there a student with that name here?”

“Ah, let me check first. It would take a little bit while if that was okay with you.”

“No problem.” At the very least, it would give her time to cool down. So she could build up her composure before she had to go back to class.

After some moments, the lady came back with a folder, “So, Kakyoin Noriaki, correct? He just transferred here yesterday, and he’s placed in class 3 - 2.”

Wait, that’s Jotaro’s class.

Dread started filling up her chest.
But he wasn’t in class just now, so where was he going?

“Is there a problem with this particular student?” asked the woman.

“O- Oh, no, I’m just curious. That’s all.” she gave her a sheepish grin. Afterwards she excused herself and walked back to her class. Well, if he’s not in class right now, that means Jotaro’s safe for now?

Once she got back, her teacher chided her for taking so long, but he accepted the half-hearted excuse that she had to go to the toilet on the way. Her blue eyes directed themselves to the folded paper on her desk. Kirika sat down and quickly opened it. Without reading the reply Himari gave her, she wrote another line.

<He’s a transfer student, in Jotaro’s class.>

<No way, is he going to be okay? (>_<;;)>

<I have to at least warn him during recess.>

She couldn’t just show up by the door and barge into his class, everyone would think that she had gone insane.

Himari suddenly tugged on her sleeves. She whispered to her, “What is it?”

“D- Did you feel that?” Just as she said that, she felt some sort of vibration. “Something’s rumbling.”

By now, some of the other students seemed to have felt that too. Their teacher had as well, his eyebrows scrunching up. Could it be an earthquake?

All of the sudden, there was a loud boom and crash. The windows shattered, its shards flying around. Instinctively, Kirika pulled Himari down with her to the ground to avoid them both being injured by the glass. As soon as it happened, it stopped.

“Did any of you get injured?!” Their teacher yelled as he ran out. “I’ll check what’s going on, don’t leave the class!”

“Is he insane?! We’ll probably die if we stay!” cried out one of the students.

Kirika immediately checked on her friend, “Himari, are you alright?!”

“I- I’m okay, you?”

“I’m not hurt. That was not an earthquake at all.”

Someone from the outside shouted about an explosion from the infirmary.

It suddenly clicked for her. The infirmary was located on the first floor, on the opposite side of the building from the administration office. She had almost forgotten about Jotaro being injured when
Kakyoin attacked him. He must've gone to get it checked.

In an instant, she put everything on her desk into her bag. Himari, who was still a little shaken, became confused, “Kirika, what are you doing?!”

“I’m going to check on Jotaro. I forgot that he could’ve gone to the infirmary.”

Himari shook her head, “Wait, it’s dangerous! What if you get hurt?”

“I’ll be fine. If I couldn’t find him, I’ll have to run home. I need to tell Mom and Grandpa about this.”

“Then I’ll come with you!”

“No, it’s really better if you stay away from this. Once everything’s settled, I’ll call you, alright?”

God knows what would happen if Himari got into the mess that were Stands. That was not a trainwreck she was ready for.

For a second, Himari wanted to protest, but slowly nodded.

She ran out as fast as she could, some of the students had already been gathering in the hallway. It seemed like the all the teachers were out somewhere, either checking the scene or at the principal’s office. She would have to be careful if she didn’t want to get caught. The stairs were empty, but not the hallway leading to the infirmary. She hid herself in the small space under the stairs, where she could still hear people shouting.

“Ms. Koyanagi is alive!”

“Call an ambulance! She’s badly injured!”

“Thank god there isn’t any student here!”

Jotaro’s not there. That meant he’s okay, right? But where could he have gone? Certainly anyone would have told him to stay put along the way for questionings about the incident if he chose to go back to class. Then, what about Kakyoin? She decided not to waste time mulling over things and went to check from behind the wall beside the stairs for any of the teachers. She saw a few of them were about to turn to her direction.

*Think fast!*

The girl looked at the trophy cabinets and wardrobe that fell down, then summoned her Stand. Using its ability, she lifted up the dented wardrobe and had one of the door bent to cover her. She heard steps running up the stairs, none of them seemed to notice her.

10 seconds was up and the door returned to normal.

The hallway was mostly clear when she checked again, and she sprinted. In her hand was the key to her shoe locker. She immediately switched out her *uwabaki* to her loafers before dashing out towards the school gates. The girl kept going through the empty streets, her heart racing not just from her running, but anxiety and fear. Where was her brother?
She soon found him on the steps under the **torii**, with Kakyoin slung over his shoulder.

“Hey.”

“Don’t “hey” me! How bad are your injuries?”

“I think he bruised my ribs, but I’m just fine now.” He said it nonchalantly, as usual.

“That doesn’t sound fine at all.” But upon closer inspection, he really didn’t seem like he suffered from any injuries.

She then looked at the redhead. Blood drenching from his head to his face. Kirika couldn’t imagine how bad the rest of his wounds were.

Jotaro noticed where his sister was looking, “He’s the guy you were going to meet in Aoba, right? I just remembered that. He works for Dio, apparently. The bastard wants me dead.”

She was right in her assumption earlier, then. The name was already making her nervous at dinner last night. To find out that he was not only involved in the appearance of their Stands, but also sending people to assassinate her brother... “I saw him using his Stand to attack you this morning. He noticed me hiding but decided to spare me when I met him at school.”

Green eyes widened, “He was going to attack you?”

“I don’t think so, since he said I’m not worth his time. He did summon his Stand, and I wasn’t even aware that I summoned mine. It was bad, I was like a deer in the headlights. You want to know the craziest thing, though?”

“What?”

“The voices, they told me to save him.”

Jotaro’s eyebrows quirked in bewilderment, Kirika could only stare at the ground as the aforementioned voices kept resounding in her head. Well, considering the state Kakyoin was in right now, she supposed it made sense. But considering the guy threatened her and actually attempted to murder her brother, it was no surprise she would feel some apprehension about helping him.

“Anyway, let’s hurry home. We have to treat both of your injuries and tell Grandpa.”

“Just relax, I told you I’m fine. He’s also still mostly alive.”

“You’re still more or less bleeding, Jotaro. Also, your definition of “still mostly alive” is a loose one. I’m not going to be surprised if you actually crushed his balls too.”

Jotaro didn’t respond to it for a minute. “They told you, huh?”

Slowly, Kirika squinted as she looked at the unconscious boy, “Did you-”

“No.”

---

Kirika ran barefoot throughout the house after putting her school bag in her room, trying to find where her mother was. This house really was too big for its own good sometimes. It was fun when
they were younger, lots of places to hide. But now, it was often annoying when they couldn’t even locate each other or simply call their names. She finally found her in the room where she often does her laundry chores. “Hey, Mom!”

“Kirika?! You’re skipping school too?”

“I’m really sorry, it’s urgent! Can you give me the first-aid kit?”

“Ah, I was going to get it out. What happened to your brother and that boy?”

“Long story short, they got into a fight.” It wasn’t a lie, but to tell her that they fought using Stands would mean she had to tell her that someone sent Kakyoin to kill her brother. They could discuss that can of worms later.

Holy gasped and covered her mouth, “Y-Your brother… He really did that…” Kirika regretted her decision right away.

“Mom, I’ll explain everything later. For now, we’ll get their wounds treated, alright?”

Holy still looked pretty overwrought, but tried calming herself down, “O-Oh, alright. Your grandfather and Mr. Avdol are in the tea ceremony room. Just go wait there with Jotaro, and I’ll bring the box, okay?”

Kirika gave a noise of agreement, but before she went to the others, she took a step back. “Uh, Mom, I saw there are slight dark circles under your eyes. Are you alright?”

Her mother gave her the usual bright smile, “Yes, I am, sweetheart. Don’t worry about me!”

Something told her to still be concerned, “Just… If you’re tired, don’t push yourself too hard.”

“Okay~!”

She’d check on her again later.

With that, Kirika ran again towards the tea room. The scene that greeted her almost reminded her of something out of a horror movie. Kakyoin’s eyes were opened in shock as her brother’s Stand tried extracting a tiny creature embedded in the red-haired boy’s head, all the while one of the tentacles stabbed through Jotaro’s hand and tried reaching his brain. Whatever it was, it was apparently rooted deep into the unconscious teen’s brain. One wrong move on her brother’s part and he’s dead.

Avdol shouted in panic, seeing the tentacle had quickly travelled up Jotaro’s arm to his neck. She promptly stood close to him, and the girl noticed Kakyoin looked surprised to see her. Without any further ado, her Stand was summoned. “Don’t panic, I’m just going to tighten your sleeve to stop it going further.” So she started manipulating the fabric around her brother’s elbow, twisting it like a bind. The older of the sibling fortunately took heed of her warning and stayed calm as he concentrated on taking out the parasite. It seemed to work in stopping the tentacle at his cheek. But all of the sudden, another tentacle sprouted and started invading through her leg. She flinched but kept her focus and stood still. “Take it out in 10 seconds.”

“Ms. Kirika! Get away from the flesh bud! It will take control of you too!” Avdol exclaimed to her, her grandfather kept him from interfering.

She found another of the missing pieces to the mystery. “5 seconds.”

They could already see the needle on the creature getting thinner. Kirika resisted the urge to shudder
as the tentacle started getting up to her waist.

“1!”

A little bit more and Jotaro succeeded. The timer struck zero and his sleeve returned to normal in an instant. His Stand roared as it pulled out the tentacles out of the siblings’ bodies and ripped it apart. His grandfather readily destroyed into ash. “Overdrive!”

Kirika released a breath that she didn’t realize had been keeping the whole time. She went to sit on the tatami, and her eyes met Kakyoin’s. The serene purple orbs had returned, albeit disoriented. “Do you still feel like killing any of us?” It was meant as a joke, but she was sort of serious when she asked that.

“N- No, I don’t.” His voice was weak, Kirika couldn’t help but feel sorry for him despite what he did earlier. Well, to be fair, it was not on his own will, either.

She gave him a grin, which dumbfounded him a little. “Well, it’s all good then.”

Kakyoin was then silent for a while, before looking at Jotaro, seemingly contemplating his words. He finally gathered his voice and spoke up. “Wh- Why? Why did you risk your life to save me?”

Her brother stared back, before turning to look far at the courtyard. “Who knows? I’m not really sure myself.”

The edge of Kirika’s lips quirked upwards at that. Typical Jotaro. “My Mom will be here soon with a first-aid kit, so just wait for a bit, alright?”

He turned towards Kirika, and that was when she noticed the tears that threatened to fall from his eyes from the corner of his eyes.

“Kirika, I-”

“Hello, I’m here!” Holy entered the room with the first aid box. She took a seat beside Kirika and started rummaging through it. “Honey, help me clean up his wounds first while I prepare the bandage.”

“Gotcha.” She took the bag of cotton and a bottle of rubbing alcohol from the mother before moving to Kakyoin’s left. “It’s going to sting, of course,” she poured the fluid onto a rolled up cotton ball, “but please bear with it for a second.”

The boy nodded silently, giving Kirika permission to start cleaning up the blood on his face. He gave a small hiss when she started disinfecting the wound left by the flesh, “Sorry, it’s almost done.”

Purple eyes glanced upwards at her for a moment. “It’s fine.”

The whole process didn’t take long. Her mother bandaged his head nicely and offered him to stay the night to recover. The boy looked like he’s going to protest, but Holy cut him off to tell her grandfather to take out the futon for their guest.

Kirika placed a hand on his shoulder as Joseph started arguing about it with her daughter. “Kakyoin, it’s fine. My brother really put a number on you, so it’s better for you to rest here for a while. Would you like me to call your parents for you?”

“Ah, there’s no need for that. I live on my own.” Perhaps it was alright for him to stay here for a while, then. “I didn’t know you’re part of this family.”
“Well, we never met again after the first time. I actually brought Jotaro to Taito once, but you weren’t there.” She supposed it was good that never met that time, considering today’s circumstances. “So, you moved to Izumi by yourself?”

He shook his head, “I’m still living in Aoba, I didn’t mean to transfer schools in the first place.” Kakyoin looked at the remains of the flesh bud in displease.

“I see,” the girl followed his line of sight, she needed to clean that up immediately, “but anyway, it’s been a while, hasn’t it? It’s nice to meeting you again, Kakyoin. Glad to know you haven’t forgotten me, either.”

At this point, confusion and guilt just completely filled him. How could she still say that, when earlier he tried killing her brother and actually threatened her that he’d do the same to her as well? Truth be told, the flesh bud made his mind narrowed itself to simply one goal; kill Kujo Jotaro. By the time he saw Kirika at school, he most definitely didn’t recognize her. The abomination DIO planted in his mind simply boiled her down as either a threat to his mission or an insect to be ignored.

Kakyoin almost couldn’t believe it when she showed up to help Jotaro extracting the parasite bound to kill him.

“Does it hurt, Kakyoin?” The siblings’ mother suddenly asked him, snapping him out of his thoughts.

“I- I’m fine.”

“Holy!” Joseph cried out at his daughter. Kirika turned at him with one eye squinted before looking at Avdol. The fortune teller simply shrugged with a slight quirk to his lips. He seemed to be entertained by his friend’s antics regarding his love for his only daughter.

“Gimme’ a break…” Jotaro muttered under his breath before exiting the room.

Holy continued to actively ignore her father’s protest, “Alright, Kakyoin, take off your uniform.”

“Huh?” He widened his eyes, puzzled by the sudden request.

“Come on, now.”

Thus, her father cried out again, “Holy!”

“W- Wait, Mom, shouldn’t we at least give him new clothes to change into first?” They couldn’t just possibly have him strip here.

“Right! In that case, could you grab one of your father’s clothes? They should fit Kakyoin nicely. Just pick one from the stack at the far right.”

Kakyoin then raised a hand, “Uh, Mrs. Kujo, it’s better that I follow her. Kirika could hand over my uniform to you afterwards.”

The woman then put her hands together, “Oh, well, off you two go, then! Lead him the way, Kirika.”

“No problem!” The girl gestured to the older teen to follow her, “Right this way. Do you want to join us for dinner later? I think Mom’s making some menchi katsu. They’re really good, you know. You should try it!”
Kakyoin’s response was a little stilted, but he seemed to be getting a bit more comfortable, “I guess... Might as well, considering I’ll be staying.”

“Great! Also, do you want me or Jotaro fetch you to the dining room? This house is such a hassle to go around sometimes, you might get lost since it’s your first time here.”

"There's no need for that, I can try find the place. I don't want to trouble you anymore than this."

"Hey, don't say that. You're our guest today, so don't hesitate to ask anything from us."

"But still, after what I've done-" the boy stopped in his tracks as Kirika turned around to face him.

"It wasn't really you, was it? Dio, or whoever it is, manipulated you." Her gaze was almost piercing as she looked straight at him.

"If I wasn't so weak, then he wouldn't be able to do so in the first place. At least part of it was my fault," retorted Kakyoin, his own eyes averted themselves to the floor.

"None of it is your fault at all, and it's not about you being weak. You couldn't have known. In the end, he didn't get what he wanted from you, anyway. Please, don't be so hard to yourself about it.”

Kakyoin clenched his fist, "What if I really did kill Jotaro? Would you still say the same thing?"

There was silence between them and it stayed for a few moments, as the girl contemplated her answer.

"Yes."

Kakyoin snapped his head up, only to be surprised to see the other smiling.

"I mean, I'll get angry and vindictive, it's my brother we're talking about. But, I don't think I could really fault you in the long run, for acting under someone's influence. Considering what I just saw, that's impossible to just shake off. If anything, it's Dio I'll never forgive. For controlling you and for killing Jotaro." Though she shivered slightly at the thought, she continued, "It would take a while, but I'll still forgive you. So really, don't feel like it's the end of the world and that you don't deserve any second chance. The fact that you regret it right now, it reassured me enough that you're not the kind of person he wants you to be."

There was no reason for him not to believe her statements. The girl's tone was genuine and honest, he couldn't help but put faith in her words. Kakyoin might not absolve himself of this mistake right at this instance. But what Kirika said, slowly helped him to ease off a little of the baggage he received from it.

The ponytailed girl then clapped her hands once and turned around to continue their walk, "Alright! Come on, I still have to hand over your uniform to Mom."

Once they reached they reached her parents' room, Kirika went to their wardrobe and looked for a shirt for the other teen, while Kakyoin looked around the room as he waited. It didn't take long for her to find one that would suit him nicely. A simple white shirt with mint collars and a pair of navy pants. "Here you go! I'll wait outside while you change."

"Okay, thank you." He accepted the clothes with and started unbuttoning his uniform.

Before she slid the door close completely, Kirika stuck her head inside the room, "By the way, you want to join me for some games after dinner?"
Purple eyes blinked curiously, "What kind of games?"

The girl smirked, "You'll see."

After dinner, Kirika didn't waste any time showing her games collection to their new guest. They ended up playing Castlevania II, a game that Kakyoin hadn't had the chance to buy, with the girl giving him the first turn. He was doing really well at it. Kirika kept cheering him on, until she noticed Jotaro getting up from his seat on her right, saying that a sumo match was scheduled tonight. His sister instead tugged on his shirt to make him stay, so he could take turn to play the game later.

"Jotaro, come on! Just a little bit!"

"How many times do I have to tell you that I'm not interested?"

"But you haven't ever tried playing anything even once!"

"Because I don't want to."

Kirika pouted as she started pulling on her brother's pants from the sofa, trying to prevent him from walking away. "Ugh, you're stubborn as hell! It's just going to be one time and you don't have to play anymore!"

Jotaro deadpanned at her while trying to pry her hands away, "I could say the same about you, and no, I still don't want to. Also, stop pulling." When she refused to let go, he scowled with his teeth showing, "You're going to rip it, Kirika."

"Well, if you could just come over here and take the controller-"

"No."

The redhead laughed quietly at the siblings' interaction with each other. He was the only child, so not having someone so close to talk and play with wasn't something unfamiliar to him, especially with his parents not being around due to their work. Over the years, he became even more accustomed to it, due his unwillingness to create a bond with others, and vice versa. It didn’t help that his parents’ jobs would demand them to constantly move around, at least until he reached high school and insisted to stay by himself in Aoba. But being here in the Kujo household, he was surrounded by people who more or less understood and accepted him. In turn, he felt compelled to do the same to them.

He started imagining how lonely it would be for him once he had to return home.

"Fine! Shoo!" Kirika told her brother off before turning around to pay attention at the TV. "So where are we now?"

"We're almost out of the first mansion! Do you want to start for the second one?"

"Don't mind if I do. But for now, just enjoy yourself!" She then leaned further into her seat. "We really should arrange to hang out at Taito again, by the way."

Kakyoin was surprised at her statement, "You still want to?"
"Of course I do, I was looking forward to it! Now, it's just easier for us to plan for it since we're going to the same school." The look on her face became hopeful, "Are you okay with that?"

He couldn't help the smile that graced his lips, "I'm more than fine with it, Kirika."

"That settles it, then! Just come meet me at school whenever you want to talk about it." The girl smiled giddily.

As they continued their game, one thought echoed in Kakyoin's mind.

It would be terribly lonely starting tomorrow.

Kirika stood in front of the mirror beside her wardrobe, braiding a part of her hair before framing the top of her hair with it, pinning it down with a sunflower hairclip. The rest of her hair was then tied into a ponytail, using a hair band adorned with a small cluster of artificial hydrangeas. With her morning routine done, she proceeded to exit her room. It was still a little too early to go to school, but she had decided that she would wake up early to help her mother with preparing breakfast. It's been a long time since they had done that, but she was also growing concerned.

Jotaro had whispered to her last night during dinner that she had been looking pale. That coupled with the rings under her eyes, Kirika was certain that her mother must had been pretty exhausted. It was no use asking why she wouldn't tell them anything about it. The best thing to do now was try and take off some of the burden from her. Starting from doing something as simple as this.

She quickly found her in front of the door to the kitchen, "Good morning, Mom!"

"Ah, morning, honey." The girl quickly noticed how her voice lacked the usual cheery tone. She also became considerably paler. "I was about to make breakfast, let's cook some together!"

"Y- Yeah, maybe we can make some french toasts." Kirika slid the door open for her mother, "Mom, you really don't look so well."

Holy quirked her eyebrows, attempting a smile at her daughter, "Do I? I'm feeling just fine, though! Also french toast is a good idea, the others will love it." She started taking out some utensils from the cupboard before going towards the refrigerator. "Kirika, could you turn on the lights?"

The girl scrunched up her eyebrows as she went to the switch. Her mother's movements were quite sluggish for the usually energetic woman. "I can make them by myself, Mom. I really think you should rest-"

A loud crash startled her, but the sight on the floor when she turned to check what caused it was horrifying.

"MOM!" Her mother had suddenly collapsed, the box of utensils she was holding was thrown to the floor and its contents were strewn everywhere. The girl instantly went and try to prop her up. The woman was breathing harshly the entire time. When her forearm touched the back of her neck, she was alarmed at how warm she felt. "Mom, wake up!"

"Ms. Kirika!" called Avdol, who immediately helped her hold up her mother. "What happened to Ms. Holy?!"
"I- She just suddenly fell down, and she's burning!" While her brother and her had noticed the signs of her declining health, Kirika definitely didn't expect her to suddenly develop a high fever. "We have to bring her to her room, quick!"

Avdol was going to comply before he suddenly noticed translucent vines sprouting from her back, "This is... It can't be!" He let her down before turning her to her front. The young girl beside him was cut off before she could ask what was wrong, with the man asking for forgiveness and pulling down her clothes and revealing her back. They both gasped at the faint cluster of vines amassing itself on her mother. "H- How can this be?" The man tried touching the plant, only for his hand to phase through it, "It's intangible... It's a Stand! A Stand has manifested from Ms. Holy, as well!"

Kirika quirked her eyebrows in confusion, "W- Wait, if it's a Stand, shouldn't it be okay? What does that have to do with my mother being sick?"

"The Stand is causing her harm," Avdol pulled up her clothes again to cover her back, then turned her around again, "you were right, normally it would be just fine. But Stands are controlled by a person's mental strength, and move with their fighting instincts. Ms. Holy is very gentle and peaceful, so she lacks the strength to withstand Dio's curse. She has no power to control her Stand. That's why her Stand is moving against her and harming her."

"No," the girl interjected his explanation, "that can't be right. It's not fair! My mother is strong! She may not fight physically but that doesn't mean that she lacks any kind of mental fortitude!"

"Ms. Kirika, I mean no disrespect at all. But with your mother's condition right now, forgive me, that's the only possible answer. There had been cases like this before. Ms. Holy was unlucky enough to have this happen to her." He gritted his teeth, "This isn't good at all. At this rate... She'll die! She'll be killed by her Stand!"

At the mention of the possibility of death, her breath hitched. Fear gripped her heart and her chest unbelievably tightened. Suddenly everything around her was dark, her vision was only filled with her mother's pained face. "She's... No, she isn't going to die. She isn't..." She was still smiling up until several minutes ago, albeit weak. They were going to make breakfast together. But now she was told that she was going to lose her mother?

The girl could feel tears started brimming at the corner of her eyes as she buried her face in the crook of her neck. "Mom... Mom, don't go..." She stayed there even as her brother and grandfather arrived at the scene. There was a hand rubbing her back, it was certainly Avdol's. Hearing Joseph cried out in agony, anger, and fear, Kirika shared his pain. There was a high chance of her mother just withering away, and that would mean her grandfather losing his only daughter.

"Tell me, what do we do?" Jotaro's voice made her lift her head. There was something they could do? Was there anything at all?

"There's only one thing," her grandfather finally said, "we need to find Dio! We need to kill Dio and lift the curse! That's all we can do!"

All of a sudden, the pain and sorrow within Kirika stirred together. Turning into a maelstrom of anger. It was all targeted at one name. The man who brainwashed Kakyoin, the man who ordered for her brother's death, and the man who caused this pain to her mother.

She lowly growled his name with suppressed fury.

"Dio..."
Writing the last part admittedly a tiny bit hard for me. I lost my mother to cancer about 4 years ago. I coped really well with her death actually, considering I saw it as her not having to suffer anymore. Her cancer was just a part of a series of illnesses she had suffered since my brother was 6, and I was honestly relieved that she didn't have to go through more of that.

But still, hearing and watching about mothers, heck parents, going to just wither away in front of their children sorta hurts, because I know what it felt like. I was there during my mother's last few days, where her health quickly deteriorated terribly. One day she was still talking to me like usual, the next few days she could barely keep herself conscious until her death. My brother didn't even have the chance to talk to her in her last moments.
Forming The Constellation

Chapter Summary

Unless they kill Dio, Kujo Holy will eventually die from his curse for the Joestar bloodline.

So, kill Dio they shall.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is a little bit short, I'll be skipping the Tower of Gray fight in the next chapter by the way. Just forewarning.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

[Kirika! Is everything alright? I was so worried I couldn't sleep last night!]

With everything that happened yesterday, she had almost forgotten to call Himari. Not to mention with her mother practically dying right now, the girl could barely think about anything else aside from her condition. But eventually, after settling a cold compress for her mother, and preparing some fruits for her to eat in case she woke up, Kirika remembered her friend. In particular, her expression when she begged her not to go out of their class yesterday, lest she got herself injured. She immediately dialled her number as soon as she saw the house phone.

"... Himari, I'm not going to school today."

[Why? What happened?]  

Kirika suppressed the urge to sob, "My mom got a really bad fever and fainted. She's not waking up yet."

She could hear Himari gasp at the news, [Oh, no... That sounds really bad. Are you guys taking her to the hospital now?]

"No, actually Grandpa brought his friend with him. He's a doctor. So he's going to take care of Mom." It was a lie, but it was better than explaining how her mother was being slowly killed by the manifestation of her own life energy. She was silent for a bit before brushing her fringe up and clenched her fingers, "Himari, I'm scared."

[Wh- Kirika...] her friend trailed off before trying to cheer her up. [It's going to be fine. Ms. Holy will get through this. I know she can. Besides, she's Jotaro - senpai's and your mother, remember? If she isn't strong, then she wouldn't have been able to handle you both.]

The hazel - haired girl gave a faint smile when Himari started giggling. She supposed the other was right, but the fear still weighted heavily on her heart. Now that they might be going on a journey to put a stop to this, more dour thoughts popped up in her head.
What if her mother dies before they could even reach Dio?

What if they fail?

*No. No, I can't just think like that, now.* That kind of mindset would mean that she was setting herself out for failure, and they can't fail. Her mother needs them.

[Kirika? You're still there?]

"Ah, Himari. If the teachers ask for me, could you tell them that I'm in the middle of an urgent family business too?" She imagined she wouldn't be attending classes for a while. "Grandpa needs me and Jotaro for something, so I think I'll be gone for weeks."

[Oh, alright... Is it something to do with Ms. Holy too?]

*Always so intuitive.* "Yeah, something like that... Sorry, this is so sudden."

[It's okay! I'll pass you all my notes when you return, so don't worry about school. Just focus on your Mom.]

She finally found the energy to chuckle, "Thank you so much! See you when I'm back home, alright?"

[Yeah! Bye bye!]

The girl ran into Jotaro when she was on her way to her mother's room, "Jotaro! Is Mom-"

"She's awake, but looks like her fever is still pretty bad." He went to walk past her, "I'm getting some water for her."

Before her brother could go any further, Kirika tugged on his sleeve, "Hey... Should we call Dad?" While it was true that their father had been mostly absent in their lives, both children knew that he still cared for his family. So he deserved to know about what was happening to his wife, at least.

Jotaro gave a sigh, "Unless you want to explain to him about Stands and Dio, I suggest he stays out of this."

"... Right." Kujo Sadao was never a Joestar. He would never be affected by Dio's curse, and he wouldn't be developing a Stand anytime soon. To involve him in this would mean putting his life in danger. They were already at the risk of losing their mother, risking their father too wasn't an option.

Letting go of the older teen, she continued her walk until she reached where her mother was. Her grandfather was helping her up to sit on the *futon*, "Mom."

"Kirika! Oh, I'm so sorry! I must've scared you when I collapsed just like that." Holy gestured to her daughter to come closer, to which she complied and sat beside her.

"No, no, it's alright. Are you feeling better?"

"Mama's just fine, dear. Please, don't worry so much about me."
The palm of her hand stroked the young girl's cheek. Her skin still felt just as hot to the touch as earlier. Faint manifestations of vines sneaked into her peripheral from Holy's back, making her glance at her grandfather. She wondered if her mother had became aware of the cause of her condition. The old man seemingly understood the look she gave him and somberly nodded his head.

Mom, it's alright, you can tell us. She felt like a hypocrite, since she was the one who wouldn't say anything when her Stand manifested.

Blue eyes closed as she went to grasp her hand in both of hers. "I already told Himari I'm not going to school today. So I can be at home taking care of you." It was partially a lie, since she would be coming to find the culprit of this.

Holy seemed surprised at that, "Sweetheart, there's no need for that! Your grandfather's here, he'll take good care of me. Besides, I'm sure this is just a simple cold. I'll be better in no time!"

She defiantly shook her head, "No, I'm staying. You always take care of us, both Jotaro and I. No matter how tired you are, no matter how many other things you could be doing. So, please, Mom. I know it's not going to be enough, and it's never going to measure up to what you've done for us. But at least, let me take care of you."

Joseph couldn't help the proud smile on his face upon hearing his granddaughter. But he stayed quiet, not wanting to ruin this moment between a mother and her daughter. Nevertheless, Holy had done well raising her children.

Green eyes widened before softening, a gentle smile graced the woman's lips as she went to embrace her daughter, "You're such a sweet child. But Kirika, watching you and your brother grow up all these times, becoming what you are today, it has always been enough for me. You both have made me the happiest mother in the world."

"... Are you really sure you're proud of Jotaro now?" She tried to joke so it could lighten up the mood, because by god the tears just started coming and she was unable to stop them.

Her mother giggled at that, at least. "Yes, I really am. I've seen through him. Despite how he is to people, he still has a heart of gold. Believe me."

"Here," Jotaro suddenly appeared in the room with the requested glass of water and Kirika let go of her mother to wipe her eyes, "drink all of it."

Holy gladly accepted the glass from her son and did as she was told. "Thank you, Jotaro. Really, I wonder what's wrong with me... I can't believe I took a fever and passed out. But I feel better now."

"You gave me quite the scare, Holy. Come now. You've got to brush your teeth now that you're up." Joseph then started treating Holy as if she was still his young daughter, and she just went along with it.

This was weird. The whole scene was weird. Kirika knew that her mother was an only child, so she assumed that her grandfather would have spoiled her. But this was still an odd sight to see. The girl turned to her brother to see his reaction, but the older teen simply looked ahead as he leaned on the shoji. Then again, her mother was his daughter that he could very possibly lose, so she supposed it made him feel even more protective of her.

"Now then," her mother suddenly made a move to stand, "what do you want to eat for dinner, Jotaro? Kirika?"

"Mom, no-" her brother's yell cut her off.
"Don't move! Just stay in bed!" It startled everyone in the room. But Kirika quickly noticed the flustered look on his face, how he seemed to regret doing so, which he hid with his hat immediately and turned around. "I- It's just that you shouldn't do anything until your fever goes down. Just shut up and get better soon." he trailed off.

You could've just said it more honestly.

"Holy, come on..." Joseph ushered her daughter to lie down, to which she complied.

"You're all so nice when I'm sick. Sometimes having a cold isn't bad." she commented.

Her daughter gave her a wry smile, "Still, get well soon, Mom." But she wouldn't be until Dio was no more, and that frustrated Kirika.

"I will, honey."

It was her last words before she was unresponsive once more.

She had seen it twice by now and she was sure as hell she would never get used to it. She heard her brother gasp behind her.

"H- Holy! Sh- She lost consciousness again..." Joseph put a hand on her forehead, his voice strained, "She's acting cheerful, yet she's burning up. The way she acted confirms it. Though she hasn't said anything, my daughter is aware of her Stand. She was actually trying to hide her Stand from us. She was trying not to let us worry."

It just seemed like her habit of keeping whatever ailing her personally and giving a smile, so that people wouldn't be concerned, simply rubbed off on her children for all these years.

"That's what kind of person my daughter is."

At this moment, both Jotaro and Kirika wished that wasn't the case.

"Mr. Joestar, I've found it! That fly is..." Everyone turned their attention to Avdol, in his hands was one of the encyclopedias they owned. "This," he pointed to an image of a fly on one of the pages, "it's the Nile Ue Ue fly, and it's only found populating the Nile River basin. But the particular one we found on Dio's photograph is of the Aswan variant, considering the stripes on its legs."

"Egypt!" exclaimed Joseph.

"And we've narrowed it down to the Aswan area. Dio is there!"

"Good," Kirika crossed her arms, "we're already several steps closer."

Another voice suddenly joined their conversation, "So it is Egypt..."

Jotaro gave the redhead a confused look, "Kakyoin..."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Joseph.

Kirika suddenly realized what the boy was trying to say, "Wait, Kakyoin. You mean the last 3 months...?"

He nodded at that and started explaining, with his voice sounding exasperated, "The flesh bud was planted in my brain 3 months ago. When my family was on vacation in Egypt visiting the Nile, I met Dio."
"You were in Egypt, too? It appears that, for some reason, Dio doesn't want to leave Egypt." Avdol quirked his eyebrows in confusion. What was so important to the vampire that he would just stay there, instead of coming personally to eradicate the Joestars? Then again, he supposed that was a relief that he didn't come for Joseph or any of his family here in Japan. The result would have been disastrous.

Kakyoin then walked further in, "When are you going? I'll go with you."

"Go with us? Why would you?" Aside from Kirika, who still only knew the boy for the total of 2 days, none of them knew Kakyoin. The same went for him too. Jotaro couldn't understand why he would suddenly join them in their quest to save his mother.

"To tell you the truth... I'm not sure why I suddenly want to join you, either." he replied, giving a response similar to what Jotaro had said with a shrug. "I've regained my senses because of you. That's all. But," purple eyes glanced at Kirika, "I guess I'd be wasting my second chance if I don't do this."

The girl gave him a grin, "Welcome aboard then, Kakyoin."

Joseph then said his goodbyes to her daughter, followed by Kirika who went to kiss her mother's cheek. "We'll be back as fast as possible, okay, Mom? When we do, I'll call Dad to come home that instant and we'll celebrate. Until then," she gripped at the futon, "hang on, alright? Don't go anywhere."

Don't die.

A hand was suddenly on her head, and she looked up to see Jotaro. He refused to show it, but his sister knew the turmoil raging within him. She could see the anger and frustration, as well as fear in his eyes. Kirika stood up beside him and placed a hand on his arm, wordlessly telling him that they're in this together. They will save their mother.

"There's no time!" Joseph exclaimed. "We're leaving immediately!"

Kirika unwrapped the bandage used to cover Kakyoin's wounds, and it looked as if he'd never gotten injured in the first place. "Well, that's fast."

"It seemed like Stand users were able to heal injuries faster than normal people." Jotaro chimed in. "It's why I felt nothing after a while, even though you clearly messed up my insides."

The redhead gave a sheepish smile, "Though having a flesh bud probably hindered that effect for me. Only after it was removed that my scars started disappearing."

"Makes sense," she discarded the dirty fabric into a nearby trash bin, "it's probably also why I don't feel any pain from the tentacle stabbing me in the leg after your Stand pulled it out. There's no scar, either."

"Since when did you have Hierophant Green, anyway?" asked Jotaro, a little curious about his former opponent's Stand.

"Ah, since birth. Before I learnt about the concept of Stands, I had thought that it was simply an
imaginary friend. Something that any child would have. But I admit I was a little shocked when it didn't go away once I got a bit older." He chuckled, "Kirika told me that you fought 4 people with yours when you summoned it. You got them hospitalized with less than desirable injuries, I heard."

The raven started glaring daggers at his sister, "Would you stop telling people about that one detail?"

"Nope, it's a good story material for fellow Stand users." the girl grinned cheekily.

He scowled at her, to which his sister stuck her tongue out in response. "I'll get you back for that, one of these days."

Kakyoin laughed at that before standing up, "We better wait outside for Mr. Joestar and Mr. Avdol, shall we?"

As they waited before the Kujo's gate and chatted among themselves, a couple of cars suddenly stopped before them. Out came some people in suits, a few others appeared in jumpsuits, the logo of a cartwheel on their cap. Before any of them could start asking, Joseph cut in, "They're doctors from the Speedwagon Foundation. We can trust them. They will take care of Holy around the clock."

"Speedwagon... That Speedwagon Foundation? By Robert E.O. Speedwagon?" It's been a long time since she heard stories about the people that lived when her grandfather was younger. She didn't expect to see the legacy left by one the prominent figures in Joseph's life today.

The old man smiled broadly, "So you still remember? But yes, they're always ready to help us whenever we need them."

Meanwhile, Avdol approached Jotaro, explaining that he shall gave his Stand a name. Naming my Stand, huh? I didn't even think about it. By the looks of it, Jotaro's Stand would be named after a tarot card. He picked the Star card.

"Then I shall name your Stand, Star Platinum!"

Kirika then approached the Egyptian man, "Mr. Avdol, I'd like to name my Stand on my own, if that's okay."

The man hummed, intrigued by her choice, "You've decided to carve your own fate. The roads will be unpredictable, but it's admirable, nonetheless. What would it be, then?"

Her reply was swift, "Galileo."

"After the man who was condemned for telling the truth about the universe." He couldn't help but be a little perplexed by her answer, "Is there a reason why you pick that name, Ms. Kirika?"

"Well... It's not unlike what I did when I discovered it, right?"

"I see," he smiled, "Galileo's legacy set a piece that advanced humanity's effort to gain more knowledge. Just like how you will use its power you once rejected, to help save your mother. It's surprisingly fitting."

"It also just sounded nice. At least, I don't have to keep calling it "my stand" from now on." she chuckled.

"Alright, we're off!" They took one last stare back at the house, before turning around to leave, "Let's go!"
"Save them."

"You couldn't have not known."

"Save them!"

This was getting irritating, "If anyone needs saving right now, it's my Mother!"

If this time we fail again, then you're better off dead.

Blue eyes widened in shock, "Wh-"

Something was suddenly constricting her throat, and it was hot. It was like being restrained with a smelted iron. No, the heat was even more unbearable than that, as if whoever was strangling her was made of the earth's core.

"Let go of me!"

We can't fail! We have to save them!

"Let go-"

But the grip tightened instead.

SAVE THEM.

"Hey, wake up! Kirika!" Jotaro shook his sister from her sleep.

They were sitting as they wait for the boarding room to open. Blue eyes snapped open, her breathing was labored. Her hand immediately went to her neck. The heat was gone, and there was no burn marks.

It's just a dream, calm down.

"Kirika, are you alright?" Kakyoin looked concerned as he put a hand on her shoulder.

Swallowing her saliva, she finally spoke, "Y- Yeah... Yeah, I'm okay."

Her brother put his hands back in his pockets, "Good grief, you looked like you're being strangled. What kind of dream were you having?"

The girl tried not to flinch at that. I was, actually. "A messed up one, but don't worry about it." She noticed her brother squinting at her with suspicion, but she didn't address it. "Where are Grandpa and Mr. Avdol?"

"Mr. Avdol went to the toilet, but your grandfather went to buy some water for you." explained Kakyoin. "He was freaking out when you suddenly started squirming in pain."
Her eyebrows were suddenly scrunched up and she covered her face, "Oh, god, did other people see that?"

There was a slight smirk on Jotaro's lips, "Some people who passed us were looking at you weirdly."

It was Kirika's turn to glare daggers at her brother, who looked away to hide his amusement, "You're enjoying that, huh?"

"Payback. I told you you'd get it."

"Oi, Kirika! Are you alright?" Joseph ran towards the teens and handed over a small water bottle to his granddaughter, "Drink some, you'll feel better afterwards."

"Ah, thanks, Grandpa." By the time Avdol joined them, she already finished half of the bottle.

A second later, it was announced that the boarding gate has opened for them. After waiting for another few minutes, they were allowed to board the plane that would bring them to Cairo. They slept soundly as the machine took off.

Unaware of the enemy that joined them, miles above the ground.

Chapter End Notes

It's also actually from the Indigo Girls' song. I know it's not anywhere from the 80s but the lyrics just fits Kirika.
Encounter at The Dragon's White Bauhinia

Chapter Summary

They have to be ready at any moment for attacks from Dio's underlings, but this one ended in an unexpected way.

Chapter Notes

Man, Stardust Crusaders is the perfect stage to talk about foods from different cultures. I'm disappointed they didn't show roasted pigeons in this particular part in Hong Kong, but man, those roasted frog made it up for me.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The start of their journey couldn't have gone more spectacularly wrong.

Someone under Dio's command had infiltrated their plane, using a Stand called Tower of Grey to attack. He operated by making his Stand rip out people's tongues, killing them instantly, particularly the pilots'. Then he hid his involvement using the resulting plane crash. Kakyoin and Jotaro almost lost their tongues during the ensuing battle. In the end, the red haired teen was the one to kill it, ripping it apart with Hierophant Green's tentacles without a second thought. The sight was gruesome, now that Kirika recalled it, especially seeing how the user's head split open. A Stand is physically connected to its user, thus whatever injuries it received, the user would suffer from it too.

So now, after Joseph managed to land in the middle of the sea, they had no choice but to remain in the city of Kowloon, Hong Kong. It's a territory that was still under the British colonial rule, at least for another decade. It was a whole new side of the world for Kirika, her eyes excitedly looked around as they walked through the city, at the signs littering the space above the narrow roads, the skyscrapers in the distance with mountains looming behind them, and the traditional-looking shophouses along the streets. If they were actually on vacation right now, she would love to take her time traversing the place and exploring its nooks and crannies. A summer holiday here with her whole family would be nice.

Mom would love it here.

"So Kakyoin, you've been here before?" asked Jotaro as his grandfather led the way for them.

"I did, actually. My parents took me here several years ago, when I was still in middle school."

Kirika gasped, "Really? How was it? Is the place still the same as it was?"

"Well, I'd say it's not so different than the Hong Kong I visited 5 years ago. I suppose you would have to live here to actually feel the change." He then raised a finger, "Ah, but I do know that the street snacks they sell here are delicious. I wonder if we'd have the chance to find some eggettes."

"Eggettes?" that piqued the girl's interest in an instant. "What are they?"
Kakyoin couldn't help the chuckle at the captivated look on her face, "It's a special waffle made from leavened batter and eggs. It was cooked with a special griddle, so it came out having small egg shapes on it, thus its name. You can either eat them plain, or have them in other flavours like chocolate."

The youngest of them found this simple concept of egg waffles shaped into tiny eggs amazing. In this new side of the world, there's such a treasure, waiting to be discovered. "If we have time, let's go find it together!"

"So you're are into culinary travels, Ms. Kirika? In that case, you'll find a lot more interesting street foods by the time we get to Egypt." Avdol commented, rather eager to tell his companions about the culture of his country.

Jotaro swore he saw his sister's eyes sparkled brighter as she turned towards the Egyptian man and smirked, "Well, you just opened yourself some hell, Avdol. She'll talk your ear off for hours, asking about food and whatnot. You too, Kakyoin."

"You say that like it's a really bad thing." protested Kirika. "Food is great, you know! So you can't blame me for wanting to know more about what they have here."

Avdol let out a small laugh, "I wouldn't mind that at all. I'm particularly proud of what my people could make for simple sustenance."

"Well, since it seemed like it'd take a while before we could get on a transport that would take us to Cairo, I guess we can go find an eggette vendor somewhere. Along the way, I can introduce you to some of the things I know, considering I've experienced Hong Kong before." offered Kakyoin.

She beamed even more at him, "Yes, please! Thank you so much!"

After a little while, Joseph told them to wait while he went to a payphone, "I need to call someone, so wait here. It won't take long!"

"Hey, big guy!" The vendor behind them called out to Jotaro. "Are you guys tourists? Want some rice porridge? If you're in Hong Kong, you gotta' try dim sum and rice porridge. We have hot cola, too!"

The mention of hot cola drew Kirika closer towards the shop, as Kakyoin explained to her brother about congee, "Hot cola? Why do you make it hot?"

"It's a common remedy when you have a cold, Miss! We boil the cola with ginger and lemon, so it helps easing sore throats and warms you up in the winter. Would you like to try it?"

The girl was already giddy once the man finished his explanation, "Yeah! One hot cola, please!"

Meanwhile, Kakyoin was ready to order himself some porridge, "I'll have it the popular way, with pork and a century egg."

"Coming right up!"

Avdol was going to order one for himself too, before Joseph interjected, "Hey! What are you guys trying to eat? We're going to my friend's shop."

"Hey, dandy guy! Want to try some Hong Kong hot cola?" offered the vendor again as she handed over Kirika's order, who gladly accepted it after giving the payment.
Joseph, on the other hand, looked offended, "Hot?! Everybody knows that cola's supposed to be cold!"

"But Grandpa," the girl had already took some gulps from her drink, "it tastes really good! It's like hot honey lemon but with soda and ginger. Just try some."

"No! I refuse, that's an abomination to the laws of nature!"

"Jeez, you're stubborn." Kirika paid him no mind as she finished it up.

Jotaro sighed as he turned to his grandfather, "Old man, who were you calling?"

The man stopped glowering at the vendor to answer his grandson, "Hm? Oh, I'll explain everything when we get to the shop. We need to work out a plan that'll get us to Egypt as safely and quickly as possible."

Kakyoin put a hand on his chin, contemplating the elder's words, "A plan, huh?"

Avdol then chimed in, "Mr. Joestar, we cannot allow anymore innocent civilians to be hurt. The quickest way would be by plane, but..." It was clearly no longer an option to them.

"There has to be an alternate route, right?" Kirika looked down at the empty glass, eyebrows furrowing, "At least, one that's fast enough to get us there in a month." She didn’t want her mother to suffer any longer than that, and then just succumb to her Stand.

"Well, we better get something to eat first. While we're at it, we can formulate our strategies."

"If we were still on that plane, we’d be in Cairo by now."

They were at the shop that Joseph’s friend owned. Sitting around a table as they contemplated their next move, all the while dreading their race against time. They only have 50 days before Holy died, and what they thought would be a smooth road to Egypt, where they can immediately just look for Dio, just turned into something akin to having a road trip on a track with a bunch of nails littering the ground. Even now, they still had to watch out for other Stand users trailing them.

"I’m aware of that," the elder Joestar spoke up, "but it’s far too early to worry." The Kujo siblings were particularly puzzled by this statement, but Joseph quickly reassured his grandchildren and the others, "A hundred years ago, Jules Verne wrote a story in which the protagonist travelled around the world in 80 days, travelling 40,000 kilometers. That was in the age of trains and steamboats. Even without a plane, we’ll be able to travel the 10,000 kilometers to Egypt."

It was one of the stories that their mother would read to them, back when they were younger. The tale of a British gentleman and his French valet setting out on an adventure around the world to win a bet, and to prove that his theory right to his fellow gentlemen’s club members. Despite the trials and hindrance he faced throughout the journey, he managed to reach his goal. Young Jotaro and Kirika had once imagined embarking on the same escapade, as any impressionable children would. They didn’t expect to be doing it now, especially not in the current circumstances, either.

"As for the route," the old man opened a map, "I say we go by sea. We'll charter a suitably sized boat, go around the Malay peninsula and cross the Indian Ocean. It'll be the Silk Road of the sea."
Avdol nodded after giving in some thoughts, “I believe that is best, as well. If we go by land, borders will be a hassle. And we’d have to cross the Himalayas and a dessert.”

“Considering the distance and accounting for possible stops for refueling and supplies… If I’m not wrong in my calculations, we’d probably be able to reach Egypt in 2 weeks, tops. That’ll give us plenty of time.” the young girl beside him added.

Kakyoin hummed in understanding, “I haven’t been to any of those places using either route, so I can’t say anything. I’ll leave it up to you two.”

Jotaro nodded in agreement, “Same.”

“Then it’s decided.” Joseph then warned them again about the dangers of the enemy Stand users, placing an importance for them to keep themselves hidden from them.

Kakyoin then noticed that they had ran out of tea, and opened the teapot. The action piqued Jotaro’s attention, to which the red headed teen began to explain, “If you do this in Hong Kong, they’ll bring you seconds.” Right as he said that, one of the waitresses approached their table with another teapot.

“Also, when they pour tea into your cup,” he tapped a finger on the table, “this means “thank you”.” The lady received the gesture with a courteous smile before leaving.

“You seem to remember a lot from your previous trip here. How long has it been, 5 years?” Jotaro commented with a rather disinterested expression, though his sister could hear the slight interest in his voice.

Kakyoin clasped his fingers with a smile, “It’s not much, but I still end up remembering some of the customs. I was hoping to come visit again, but it became difficult with my parents’ jobs.”

“Well, you’re here now. That’s still pretty impressive, though.” Kirika complimented him, while also curious of other things that she could learn.

Before the older teen could respond, a man suddenly approached them. A man with a peculiar hairstyle. Kirika couldn’t help but compare his hair to Guile from Street Fighter, only it was shaped into a neat cylinder. That, and it’s silver instead of blonde.

She tugged on Kakyoin’s sleeve and whispered, “If we survive this, once we get back, I have one particular game you need to see.” The girl assumed that with him being away from Japan for 3 months, he must have missed its release at the arcades.

“O… Kay?” That confused the teen, but Kirika simply gave him an “ok” sign in response.

“What are you, a grumpy cat? His sister thought as she drank from her cup.

“Excuse me, do you have a moment? I’m a tourist from France and I’m having a hard time with the kanji on the menu. Would you please help me out?” the man politely asked them.

He was quickly rebuffed by the delinquent, “You’re annoying, go away.”

“Come now, Jotaro. It’s fine.” Joseph then asked for the menu the man held, which he gladly handed over. “I’ve been to Hong Kong many times, so I can at least read the kanji on the menu. Why don’t you join us?”

The man grinned, “Thank you very much!”
The older man returned the smile, “So what did you want to order? Food with shrimp, duck, sharkfin, and mushrooms?” He then called for a waiter. The young man jotted down his orders before leaving to inform the chefs.

Kakyoin nudged Jotaro, "You have any idea what Mr. Joestar ordered just now?"

"Star Platinum doesn't have enhanced hearing, so no." But he eyed his grandfather suspiciously.

After waiting for a while, one by one, the dishes Joseph ordered came out. A steamed fish, a clam dish, roasted toads, and porridge with pork and century eggs. Jotaro groaned inwardly, "I knew this would happen." The meals of course, looked foreign to them. Their guest seemed to be particularly weirded out by the frog dish. Kirika on the other hand, looked especially fascinated by it.

Joseph laughed boisterously at their reaction, "Well, it doesn't matter! It's on me! It doesn't matter what you order, it's all delicious! Now, everyone, dig in!"

With that, they started taking some portion of the food. Kirika, of course, went for the frogs first. She took a bite out of its legs, "... It actually tastes like chicken, if it has softer meat." So she ate more of it.

The redhead beside her tasted the clam dish, before his eyes widened, "Wow, this is... It seems to be clam in Chinese wine sauce."

"Mmh! This is better than I expected." commented Avdol, as he tried the steamed fish.

"Well? it's pretty good, isn't it?" Joseph urged the others to take more of the food, to enjoy it to their heart's content.

The Frenchman then chimed in, "They've certainly taken a lot of time to prepare this." He picked a carrot that was meant as garnish, "Look, these carrots... They're shaped like stars." Kirika couldn't help to look up from her meal to shift her attention to it. It felt sort of weird, the way the man emphasized it, and the others seemed to realize that too. The man continued, eventually drawling menacingly, "It reminds me of something... That's right, someone I know has this exact mark on their neck..."

"Bastard!" Kakyoin bared his teeth, "You are-"

The man seemingly taunted them by putting the carrot on where the Joestars' birthmarks were located. All of the sudden, Joseph's porridge rumbled and out came a rapier. Avdol cried out, "Mr. Joestar! Look out!" The Joestar elder, thankfully, swiftly defended himself with his metallic arm, letting the rapier pierce through it, so it lost its force in trying to get to his head. The others quickly jumped out from their seats, as the Egyptian then summoned Magician's Red. The avian creature immediately attacked its opponent with its flames, only for the fire to simply swirl around the armored Stand's sword. "What?!!"

It then casually launched the fire onto one of the tables toppled in the struggle, creating a clock face. "H- His sword is so fast..." observed Kakyoin.

So this was it. This was going to keep happening until they get to Egypt.

"My Stand holds the Chariot card! Silver Chariot!" The man announced, before setting his sights at Avdol, "Mohammed Avdol, it appears you want to die first. I've made a fire clock on that table, I will kill you by the time that clock burns to twelve!"
The man introduced himself as Jean-Pierre Polnareff, and Avdol accepted his challenge to a duel. They decided to move their location to the Tiger Balm Garden, a garden decorated with artistic sculptures, adjoined to the Haw Par Mansion in Tai Hang. "I will make a prediction here." The Frenchman summoned his Stand again. "First, Avdol, you will be destroyed by your own Stand's powers."

Kirika scoffed at his words, "That's really bold of you to say something like that."

Polnareff smirked, "What can I say? I am confident in my abilities, petite mademoiselle."

"Avdol..." Jotaro seemed to be ready to summon Star Platinum anytime to assist the fortune teller.

But the man signaled for him to hold, "Jotaro, you need not interfere. With such an open space,"

Magician's Red was summoned once more, "I can control my Stand as freely as I please."

Thus, the battle between them began. Polnareff launched his first attacks, Silver Chariot taking aim at Magician's Red with its fast sword thrusts. Avdol's Stand did nothing but dodged every slice. Not even once did it counter them with its flames. It seemed that Avdol was trying to wait and predict on what his opponent would do before he decided on his actions. Waiting for the right moment to strike with assured victory.

Like a fortune teller would.

So it didn’t matter when the silver-haired man taunted him by directing Magician’s Red flames to reshape a statue nearby into the bird-like Stand's own image. "You know," he tilted his head as he chuckled, "you fit quite well in this garden, Magician's Red..."

Avdol didn't give him the privilege of a reply, but instead, prepared for an attack. He moved his hand in a particular way as Magician's Red inhaled deeply, as if it was trying to prepare for a grand assault. Joseph widened his eyes upon realizing what his friend was trying to do and quickly warned the others, "Hey, hide behind something! Avdol is going to use it!"

"It?" Jotaro quirked his eyebrows as his grandfather ran. Was Avdol going to use some ultimate technique?

Kirika pulled her brother by the elbow, "I can feel something big's coming, so let's just do as he said. Come on, Kakyoin!"

The redhead looked curious as to what Avdol would do next, but still wordlessly followed the others.

They barely managed to cover themselves behind the statues before Avdol shouted, "Crossfire Hurricane!" Magician's Red swirled around, releasing a great flurry of flames from its beak, before suddenly launching an assault with fire in the shape of an ankh. It seemed to be the attack that would burn the Frenchman. But Polnareff then used Silver Chariot's sword to deflect the flame back, resulting in Magician's Red being engulfed by its own weapon. It screeched and screamed in pain, just as its user was covered in it as well.

Joseph called out to him, fearing his fate, while not knowing what to exactly do to save him, "The flames are so strong that he's being burnt, as well!"

His granddaughter began frantically looking around. There had to be something that she could use,
break it down or change it, and use it to perhaps douse the fire. Then again, with it being somethingconjured from a Stand, there was probably nothing she could do. Only a Stand could negate aStand's power, and the girl doubted it was something Galileo could counter with regards of itsabilities. She could only gasp in horror when Avdol collapsed.

"It's just as I predicted. You will die, burned by your own flames!" Polnareff boasted, inciting the irefrom the rest of the group, as their companion was severely harmed.

But before any of them could summon their Stands to start fighting in the fortune teller's stead,Magician's Red suddenly launched itself from behind Avdol. Their enemy swiftly had his Stand sliceat it, but he was shocked to find it tangible. It was revealed to be the sculpture that Polnareff hadSilver Chariot carve, and with that, his Stand accidentally burnt itself and him.

The fortune teller rose, like a phoenix from its ashes. "I told you I can control my flames freely. Theflames you blew back toward it melted its joints and caused it to move. You're the one defeated byhis own Stand's powers!" He prepared his stance again, "And now, face this again! CrossfireHurricane!"

In an instant, Silver Chariot was blasted back by the flame ankh, and Polnareff was blown away bythe force with a yell.

Avdol then gave a hearty chuckle, "I believe it's 10 years too soon for you to fight me, a fortune teller, with predictions."

"Such a terrifying power!" Joseph poked his head out from their hiding place. "Since his Stand tookthat head on, it must have melted. It's done for!"

"Mr. Avdol," Kirika ran towards him, "you alright? You gave me a scare there, I thought you were dying!"

"I'm as good as I can be, Ms. Kirika. Don't worry about me too much." He tried to reassure her,before turning his head to look at his former opponent, "I can't say the same for him."

"That's one hell of a burn." The raven haired teen casually commented. "Yeah, he's dead. If he's lucky, he'll be in serious condition. Actually, that'd be a bad luck."

"Either way," Kakyoin began turning to descend the stairs, his tone cold, "he won't be able to standfor 3 months. His Stand is destroyed and unable to fight."

But Avdol didn't exactly think that was the case. It was true that his attack was devastating and theman might be injured, but he couldn't help but sense that this was not the end. He glanced at Kirika,who kept her stare at the fallen man. The way her eyes narrowed, as if expecting the man wouldhave a trick up his figurative sleeve at any moment, showed him that the girl felt it too. He had toquickly usher the group to move, "Now, Mr. Joestar, let us hurry on our journey to Egypt. Ms.Kirika, we're going."

Kirika watched for any signs if the man would wake up for a minute, before deciding to follow hercompanions. But she stopped in her tracks when she heard something sounded like it popped off,like a car door being removed from its car. The girl turned around to find Silver Chariot's suddenlylaunched pieces of itself into different directions, while Polnareff himself suddenly shot into the air.Shocking her and her companions at how he seemed totally unscathed. Looking closely as theFrenchman suggested, they now discovered that Silver Chariot was now armorless, as it held up itsuser in the air. Avdol was caught off - guard, but let Polnareff explained the extend of his Stand'sability first before their battle started again.
The girl supposed that it was just fair, but it just seemed like an action that would put the other in disadvantage. Tell your opponent what you can do and they’ll find your weaknesses. As the man spoke, she could already find the obvious one. Silver Chariot just lost its defense, its speed might be truly dependable in the fight, but being fast in combat wasn’t everything.

"I see. So you're saying because its armor was so heavy, it had to take my Crossfire Hurricane head-on." The fortune-teller prepared himself once more, "But that would also mean that it's naked now. Now that it doesn't have its protection, if it were to take that attack again, it wouldn't survive."

In response to the man’s words, Polnareff demonstrated another ability. Silver Chariot suddenly split into 7 of itself. Joseph and Kakyoin was bewildered at the sight, "I- Impossible. There should only be one Stand to each user."

"No, look closely," Jotaro pointed at Silver Chariot, "it being armorless now, it just allowed its speed to create the illusion that there are more than one with afterimages. Whether he can control each individual clone, is another matter altogether."

Polnareff began another barrage of attacks, and Avdol braced himself. With another ability that Magician's Red had, Red Bind, it tried to send flames after individual clones, to burn them off and reveal the real Silver Chariot. It managed to do just that, but it was unable to catch up with the actual Stand. Silver Chariot once again split into 7, Avdol burnt them off again, with Polnareff mocking him that he might be getting desperate. He launched another Crossfire Hurricane, but it only succeeded in burning just another clone. Another set began to charge towards the Egyptian, injuring him and knocking him back.

"Avdol!" called out Kakyoin in concern, but relieved to see that the fortune teller seemed to be doing fine.

"Such precision. Th- This is," Avdol gritted his teeth, "a Stand ability that has been highly trained.

"For certain reasons, I trained for nearly 10 years." He then gestured to the other to come and attack him again, "now, come at me again. I will finish you with my next move."

"Grinding a skill for years doesn't mean it's suited to counter everything coming at your way." Jotaro glanced at his sister as she spoke. She looked back at him with a smirk, "You might be aware of what you can do with it, but then you still wouldn't know about the extent of your limitations, and how much other people would improvise around your ability."

The older Kujo chuckled, "Already putting all bets on him, huh?"

"Well, we have to. But I am confident in his ability."

As Avdol launched a variation of his Stand's ability, with multiple flame ankhs shooting in all directions, his opponent had his Stand surrounded him before having it and its clones disperse to strike and blow the flames back at the other like before. But he was unaware of what Avdol had been planning from the start. A sudden explosion of flames burst from the ground and proceeded to engulf Polnareff. The fortune teller had used the earlier Crossfire Hurricane to dig the ground and send one of the flame ankhs through it.

"I told you. I can break apart my flames and make them fly in as many pieces as I wish." Seeing how his opponent seemed to be in pain, as the flame raged on and burning his body, Avdol produced a dagger and threw it at him. "Burning is a rather painful way to die. Use that dagger to kill yourself."

As the group started leaving, Kirika took one last look at the fallen man. She watched as he took the
weapon and held it, while seemingly staring ahead at Avdol. The girl was ready to summon Galileo, so she could bend the dagger the moment Polnareff decided to throw it. But she became torn when the man seemingly gave up and chose to succumb to his fate. A part of her urged her to just go and join the others, another part told her to help him. Being burnt to death seemed unnecessary for this particular man, even if he was working under Dio.

Her feet turned away from the stairs.

Right at that moment, Avdol snapped his fingers.

The flames disappeared and left smokes rising from Polnareff’s body, and the girl couldn't help but smile. Jotaro gave a small grin as Avdol walked over towards the man and claimed him chivalrous. “It would be a waste to kill you,” the fortune teller lifted the man up and part his hair, finding a flesh bud nestled among it, “here’s the culprit behind his actions. Jojo!”

“Got it.”

Joseph squirmed as his grandson worked in extracting the small mutated cell. It began to sprout even more tentacles than the last one they got out from Kakyoin. It seemed to be more agressive and resistant to the raven teen, that Kirika wondered if it's been there for a while longer. To her, it became something not unlike something that H.P. Lovecraft would conjure out of his works.

“Aw, gross! Those tentacles are disgusting! Jotaro, hurry and pull it out!”

“Put a sock in it, Gramps.” scolded Jotaro as he tried keeping his concentration so he wouldn’t slip.

His sister noticed how Kakyoin seemed to frown at the sight, clearly still remembering how that **thing** was in his head until only 3 days ago. Controlling his mind and emotion without any input from himself. Kirika instinctively tapped his shoulder, trying to take his mind off of it somehow. The redhead gave a small quirk to his lips, welcoming the gesture.

The problem was finally over with, and Joseph went to help the man to stand up, “Good! Now that the flesh bud is gone, we can be **buddies**! Ba dum tssh!”

Jotaro audibly groaned, glancing at his sister and Kakyoin, “Hey, doesn’t it piss you off when idiots make shitty puns?”

Both simply chuckled, “Come on, let Grandpa be the old man he is.”

It was 2 days after the battle.

Joseph told them that the boat he chartered from the Speedwagon Foundation would arrive in 2 hours. That meant they still have plenty of time to explore at least the Tsim Sha Tsui area, as it was the nearest to the port where they would meet with the crew later. As promised, Kakyoin took them around to the streets to find an eggette stalls. He didn't remember where he bought some years ago, of course, but it shouldn't be hard to find with how popular it was as a traditional snack.

It really didn't take them long to spot one.

Aside from Jotaro, everyone got themselves one each. Kirika was in awe at how crispy they were
and was further amazed by the smooth texture inside the "eggs". She ran to her brother and pulled a piece from it, despite the eggette still slightly steaming, "Jotaro, try some!"

"You're the one who wants it, so eat it by yourself." he turned his head away.

So she started stretching the piece towards his mouth, "Come on, just eat this one piece!"

"I'm good, so no." He then grabbed her hand to stop it trying to shove the eggette into his mouth when he was talking, "Stop that. What are you, 5?"

"Jotaro, please, just this once! Then you don't have to try again if you don't like it." Kirika pleaded with him, while her hand struggled against the hold, still trying to shove it into his mouth.

After a few moments, he decided that his sister wasn't going to give this up. "Gimme' a break, fine." With an annoyed look, Jotaro put the piece between his teeth and she let it go. The teen then hid his face with the brim of his hat.

"It's good, huh?"

"Not bad."

"Do you like it?"

"I said it's not bad."

Kirika giggled at his stubbornness, "Alright, alright."

"Okay," Joseph called out after he finished his eggette, "we better start walking to the harbor! It's still quite a distance from here."

With that, they moved again. Kirika approached Avdol, who almost finished his share, "How's it, Mr. Avdol?"

"I'd say it's quite good, it sort of reminds me of aish baladi. It's actually a flatbread, but the softness is quite similar." He smiled as he continued, "That reminds me, I imagine that you'd like kunafa, Ms. Kirika."

Avdol and Kirika were then involved in an extensive conversation about Egyptian foods. Kakyoin, who was walking behind them, took a quick look at Jotaro who walked beside him. The raven noticed his look and glanced back, "What?"

"You can't seem to win with your sister, can you?" the other teen gave a small chuckle.

He sighed heavily, "If I don't relent, she'll just keep nagging at me. It's annoying to deal with."

"You didn't when she did the same to get you to play some video games." With the eggette, Kakyoin tried to hide the smirk he was giving.

Jotaro's eyes kept their stare on the road, "... It's none of your business." Kakyoin wasn't sure if it was just his imagination, but the other seemed to be a bit bashful at that.

They fell into silence for a few moments, before the redhead spoke up again, "You know... We didn't have a good start."

"No shit." His tone was sarcastic, but at the same time, the taller teen grinned in good humor. "Well, nothing you could do about it."
Kakyoin let out a laugh in response. "Well, you mind if we start over?"

"I got no problem with that." He offered his right hand, "Kujo Jotaro, but you knew that already."

The other gladly shook it, symbolizing a start of a new friendship, "Kakyoin Noriaki, nice meeting you."

They encountered Polnareff again at the harbor. The man stated his intentions, that he wanted to repay his debts to them. For extracting the flesh bud and releasing him from Dio's influence especially. But when Avdol turned his attention to Jotaro for being the one to do so, the teenager couldn't care less about the sentiment. The Egyptian looked apologetically at their former foe, "It appears there's no one to accept your kind thanks."

"It's really okay, Mr. Polnareff. You don't need to do anything for us in return." chimed Kirika. Considering most of them didn't really do anything regarding his predicament, aside from her brother and Avdol. They were also sort of on a time constraint, so the girl didn't think that they would have the time for what the Frenchman was trying to do.

Polnareff looked disappointed at their responses, though he ultimately understood. "But there is something else." He approached the group closer, "Monsieur Joestar, I'd like to ask you a very bizarre question."

"A bizarre question?"

The man looked pointedly at his left hand, "Forgive my curiosity, but even while eating, you didn't take off your gloves. Your left arm wouldn't happen to be a right arm, would it?"

It puzzled Joseph even more, "My left arm, a right arm? That is indeed a bizarre question. What do you mean?"

Polnareff's expression suddenly became grim, "I'm looking for the man who killed my younger sister." The reaction was swift, all of them shocked at the revelation. "I don't know his face," he continued, "but he has two right arms."

"I'm sorry," the youngest of the group spoke again, "but my grandfather isn't the man you're looking for."

"Kirika, it's alright." Joseph then peeled away his left glove, "I lost it in battle 50 years ago."

He let out a sigh, as he seemed to arrive at another dead end, "I apologize for my rudeness. Please forgive me."

*No, he shouldn't have to apologize.*

It was reasonable for him to act with suspicion, Polnareff lost someone very close to him. Kirika might not have lost anyone she cared about yet in her entire life. Her father was just away, her brother had survived a lot of things, and though she was dying, her mother was still alive. But she understood. Whether it was a curse or a gift, the voice and the feelings that had been resounding within her since young helped her understand even the hardest losses. Those that weren't meant to be, but beyond anyone's control.
Caesar Zeppeli was taken too soon.

It was a name that hadn't crossed her mind for a very long time.

She shrugged it off before it overwhelmed her again.

As prompted by her grandfather, Polnareff started recounting what happened to his sister. She was walking in the rain with a friend, as they spotted a man seemingly being shielded from it. All of a sudden, her friend fell, covered in her own blood. Someone had slashed her across her chest. Then the most horrifying part of the story occurred. The man didn't just stop at injuring the girl, he had to also rape his sister. Humiliated her as she screamed and begged for her life, before he finally ended it with his own hands. No one believed the account her surviving friend had given about the man with 2 right hands. Nobody, but Polnareff.

He was undoubtedly another Stand user.

"I swore! My sister's soul would not be able to rest unless he atoned with his death! I will use my Stand for retribution."

He then also gave them the story about his meeting with Dio. How he manipulated him and planted the flesh bud into his brain. Then sending him after the group. Avdol nodded in understanding, "It's partially because of the flesh bud, but Dio's also skilled at manipulating others."

"Indeed," added Kakyoin, "but according what you just said, it would appear that Dio has found the man with 2 right arms and has joined forces with him."

Jotaro subconsciously turned to look at his own sister upon processing all of the information. There was no doubt that at one point, they'd be encountering this man. It would be inevitable. But he hoped to anything out there, that Kirika wouldn't have to meet him in any circumstances. With or without the others. It didn't matter if she could protect herself or if he could do so, he didn't want this man anywhere near her vicinity.

"I've decided to go to Egypt with all of you! If I go after Dio, I'll be able to find the one who took my sister's life!"

The group contemplated his words, with the redhead being the first to speak up. "What should we do?" he asked the others with a knowing smile. Personally, he was willing to take Polnareff along. He couldn't help but sympathize with the man, since he was pretty much in the same circumstances, being Dio's puppet for months before meeting the Joestars and Avdol. But it was not up to him to make the final decision.

Avdol crossed his arms as he nodded, giving his approval. The Frenchman would be a formidable ally in their group, "I have no objection."

Kirika and Jotaro looked at each other for a moment, before the older sibling grunted while holding his hat. The younger grinned, "Guess you're coming along with us, Mr. Polnareff."

"So much for not being pushy about it. thought Jotaro.

With the group's decision crystal clear, Joseph shrugged, "I'm sure you'd follow us, even if we said no."

"It's an honor!" he saluted Kirika back.

"Good grie-"
"Excuse me!" called some girls, tourists they assumed, as they came over to Jotaro. "Would you mind taking our picture?" They asked for him to take their pictures, and as usual, their high pitched voice annoyed him as got themselves even closer.

"You're annoying me! Ask someone else!" he yelled at them, irritation written all over his face, and they still wouldn't move away.

Even overseas, girls still swooned over Jotaro. That reminded Kirika of the 2 stewardess who did the same aboard the plane, even after her brother just shoved them away, which then turned to them swooning over Kakyoin who was considerably gentler. They really didn't know what they're getting into despite whatever it was they fantasized about dating her brother. She raised a hand to her forehead and whispered in exasperation, "Why are these masochists everywhere...?"

Kakyoin, who heard it, tried suppressing his laugh. "Not a rare occurrence, huh?"

"It's worse on my end back home with his fangirls."

But fortunately, or unfortunately, Polnareff came to the boy's "rescue". The sudden change of behavior puzzled Jotaro. "Now, now, now, now... I'll take your picture for you." He ushered the girls away as he sweet-talked them, "Come, come. You have very nice legs, let's get a full body shot."

By "full body" shot, it really was just their legs being the focus.

The siblings gave a deadpan stare at the scene. "... Did we make a mistake adding him?" asked Kirika. Her brother didn't answer.

"I don't quite understand his personality." Avdol was just as bewildered as them.

Kakyoin blinked as Polnareff continued flirting with the girls, "That was a very sudden change of mood."

"More like his head and lower half are very clearly separated." Joseph then shook his head in exasperation.

"... Good grief."

Later, they managed to get Polnareff away from the girls, which involved Kirika dragging him by his neatly stylized hair. It didn't take long for them to find the boat from Speedwagon Foundation. Once they were all aboard, it set off from the harbour. Leaving Hong Kong to first get to Singapore, a small country in the Southeast Asia, at the edge of the Malay Peninsula.

As they slowly sailed away from Kowloon Bay, Kirika tapped at her brother's arm, who simply shifted his eyes down at her. "When this is all over, let's go back here again for a family vacation. Buy Mom some eggettes."

Jotaro closed his eyes and a small smile tugged at his lips, "Yeah... We should."
THAT'S IT. THERE IT IS. THERE'S THE SACRED WORD AND I TYPED IT 3 TIMES.

It won't happen again, I'll try and make an attempt.

I assume they had the time to exchange some money they have at the port. Also I never see these guys carry around baggages, how does Joseph and Kakyoin change clothes? Araki pls explain, is this magic satchel situation?

So I've been to Hong Kong several times before since the late 90s, mainly staying around Causeway Bay or Kowloon area with my family. Well, nowadays, at least. We definitely frequent Kowloon area when we hang out, which is coincidentally the city that the Jobros got into in the anime!

It didn't seem to drastically change since that time. I mean, the Walled City was definitely gone before I was even born, and there are newer modern stores along with modern technologies, and sure, new modern buildings. But street signs are still everywhere, small shophouses are still around, and the apartments still look like what you'd see in GITS. They're still pretty well maintained, though.

We mainly go around Kowloon because they have Yau Ma Tei, in which my brother would get us to go almost every single day to buy Transformers with cheaper prices. Last time I got there, I bought 3 Nendos and a Saber Lily figma with pretty reasonable price.

Also, I know that Hong Kong didn't adopt their current flag until 1997. But, come on, how else do you describe Hong Kong's flag? I'd rather pick the one they have now than the abomination that is "seal on a bedsheets" the British gave them. Putting a seal AND a flag on your flag is not good design practice, goddamn it.
Deep Blue Sea of Deceits

Chapter Summary

The Crusaders just couldn't catch a break, but at least they'd be able to relax a bit in the small tropical resort country.

Chapter Notes

DAILY REMINDER THAT KUJO JOTARO IS A GIANT DORK WHO MAKES EVERYTHING WORSE BY ACTING LIKE AN EDGY HARDASS.

He listens to Kubota Toshinobu, heck I listen to his songs every other day. Jotaro seriously just cemented himself further as an actually a v cute tsundere boi. My friend was right, he IS best grill.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The desk beside her was once again empty.

Kirika did say she'd be gone for a while. From what little she knew, her friend was on an important journey for her mother, probably to solve her current predicament. While she was at it, he'd be in the care of her brother and her grandfather. So it'd be just fine, was what she told the teacher, and that was more or less enough for them. But Himari wished she had known more, she wished the girl would tell her more.

Where was she going, exactly?

What was she actually going to do?

When would she be back?

Would she really be alright?

None of the questions was answered. She was sort of hoping she would just pop back up one of these days and greet her by her shoe locker like always. But that wasn't happening anytime soon, was it?

She probably didn't want her to worry, but she was inevitably concerned about the whole situation.

Kirika, be safe.

Looking at the contents of her small luggage, Kirika sighed.
They might be more or less adequately prepared to fight Dio and his minions, but they were certainly not prepared for the long journey. With how quick they had to leave Japan, they didn't exactly have much time to pack. So Kirika was left with only her P.E. uniform, her short pyjamas, and a few sets of undergarments. She supposed she should just deal with wearing her seifuku for days consecutively. Only changing it once in a while when she had the time to do some laundry. She wondered how the others would deal with this issue. Actually, she wouldn't be surprised if Jotaro would just keep wearing the same thing without change, as if his clothes were contractually bound to his body.

_Might as well just wash his clothes too when there's time, get him to buy a new one for change._

With that settled for now, she zipped up her bag and started heading towards the deck again. The journey to Singapore would take them around 3 days. So at the very least they could get some rest. They deserved it, after having to deal with the constant threat of Stand users being sent on their way. No offense to Polnareff and Kakyoin. The cabins also looked comfortable enough to sleep in.

Her mind then began to wander. It was probably not wrong to assume that her mother's condition had probably worsened. Despite the best efforts from the Speedwagon doctors, nothing they do would be able to counter the effects of the Stand on her body. Part of her sort of wished she stayed home and with her. But she knew she wouldn't be able to handle watching as life slowly depleted from her. It was a terrifying thought. She feared the possibility that during the course of these 50 days, her mother would just suddenly keel over in front of her. So, it was why she didn't hesitate to join this journey. It was better to just simply do something about it rather than just staying there, praying for her mother to wake up soon.

The sound of footsteps snapped her out of her thoughts. As far as she was concerned, all of the crew members were muscular grown man. The same could be said about her group, except for her. Those footsteps were small and light, there was no way it could be any of them.

_Did someone sneak in?_

She instinctively took off her loafers and began walking quickly, but as quietly as possible. As she continued along the hallway, she heard the footsteps again. Someone was ahead of her, before turning left. She immediately followed it, running almost soundlessly. Once she made the turn, she caught a glimpse of someone making a right turn at the intersection. The foot was too small to be that of an adult.

"Wait up!"

Before she could make the same turn, she suddenly bumped into someone and it almost made her fell over. "I'm so-

Her heart skipped a beat and no voice would come out of her throat all of the sudden. Blue eyes slowly looked up to the man before her. A blonde man wearing a naval cap with a red scarf around his neck. He was surely the captain of this ship. The sensation she was feeling right now, though, with chills running down her spine, it was not unlike when she encountered Kakyoin at the end of the steps of their school. But none of the crew was said to be a Stand user. There was no sign or sight of a Stand nearby, either. So why did the air around this man felt so aggressive and violent? It was almost as if she'd be ripped apart on the spot the moment she made the slightest move.

As soon as she felt it, though, it was gone the moment he spoke, "What are you doing running around the ship?"

"H- Huh?" _What the fuck was that?_
"I said, why are you running around? You could have damaged some sensitive equipments!"

"Uh, I'm sorry!" She swiftly made a beeline towards the right hallway, "I- I'm just going to the deck, so excuse me!"

She ended up running anyway as she reached the stairs that would take her to the top. Even after the sensation was gone, her senses were still on high alert. The man in general just unnerved her. Was it just her imagination, though?

"Let go! Let go of me! You big lug!"

The moment she reached the deck, it seemed that one of the crew had captured the stowaway. It really was just some little kid. Jotaro noticed her approaching him and Kakyoin and raised a hand, "Why are you carrying your shoes and duffel bag around?"

"Wh- Ah, jeez, it was reflex. I didn't realize I was even slipping it on." She then slipped her loafers on again. "I was trying to tail him," she pointed at the child that was still restrained by the crew member, "so I figured I should at least kept myself silent. Anyway, are you guys seriously going to keep wearing your uniforms while sunbathing?"

"We have to at least keep up our appearance as students." replied Kakyoin, looking up from his reading. "I know it doesn't really make much sense, but I do still feel we have some sort of obligation to do so."

Kirika stared at him for a while, and the redhead stared back, "... We don't have enough clothes to change into, is that what you actually want to say?"

Purple eyes widened before the older teen chuckling sheepishly, a little bit flustered. "Part of it, yes. I only brought my pyjamas with me. But I do still want to wear my uniform daily."

Guess that was one way to deal with it. "Well, at least take off your gakuran, it defeats the purpose of sunbathing in the first place. You too, Jotaro. We have to get you guys to buy at least one change of clothes when we get to Singapore. So if I have time, I could get them to the laundry."

Kakyoin immediately objected to it, "Y- You don't have to do that, Kirika. I can do it myself."

"I mean, I'm going to do mine as well, so it's alright." replied Kirika, her tone nonchalant.

"I'll just keep wearing this, I don't want to bother with buying clothes." added her brother, adjusting his hat to cover himself from the glare of the sun.

His sister sighed again, "I knew you'd say that. You're not going to die just because you don't see that big chain on your collar in just a day." A short exhale escaped the teen on the sun chair beside him, as Kakyoin covered his mouth with his book.

Jotaro just shrugged, "I can just air out my jacket and it'll be fine. If I need to I'll just wash my shirt on my own, you don't have to bother with it."

"We might not always have the time, you know."

"Then it's fine by me, I'm not changing into something else."

"Hhh, fine, suit yourself. I swear you're like a 12 - year - old who refuse to take off their superhero costume."
"Maybe it's because you really do feel like some sort of superhero with this outfit?" Kakyoin chimed in casually, his eyes still on his reading.

The other teen let out a small grunting noise, "No, it's not that."

Still maintaining an easygoing tone, the redhead continued, "Ah, really? I would have thought that's the case."

Kirika looked at Jotaro with a knowing, mischievous glint in her eyes. He pulled a face, warning her not to say anything. But she instead smirked, "Actually, you're not that far off."

A scream and a splash interrupted her, as the child managed to get away before jumping to the ocean, swimming away from the boat. Kakyoin stood up, "Is he planning to swim to shore from here?"

"What should we do?" Joseph asked for an input as he went to approach the railing.

Jotaro scoffed and grumbled, keeping himself settled onto the sun chair, "Just leave 'im. I'm sure he dove in because he's a confident swimmer."

"Confident swimmer or not, he doesn't have any way to really navigate his way to Singapore." She couldn't imagine it if he drowned from exhaustion and then being swept away by the waves. He's only around 11 or 12. "Hey, come back!" But the boy just kept swimming.

"Th- This isn't good!" The crew member suddenly exclaimed, "Sharks gather around these parts!"

The situation suddenly took a more dangerous turn at the revelation. Kakyoin gritted his teeth, "Hey! Swim back here right now!"

"None of our Stands has the range to reach him!" Avdol raised his voice in concern, "We're not joking, boy! Your life is in danger!"

Kirika gasped when she caught the sight of a large shadow underneath her. She immediately turned to the crew member, "Get me the lifebuoy, quick!"

"Hey, you brat!" Joseph's tone started getting more panicked the further the boy swam. "Come back! Get back here. It's dangerous!"

Polnareff followed suit, as the shark finally showed its fin. "There are sharks! Those waters are shark-infested!"

Once the crew handed over the lifebuoy to her, she quickly realized that the boy would still too far away to even reach it. God, out of anything, she didn't want to see child death being added to the things that would happen in this trip. "One of us has to jump in! Get him closer!"

Without being prompted, Jotaro suddenly leaped over the railings and swam as fast as he could. Star Platinum was already beside him. By the time the shark was close enough to the boy to snap its jaws at him, it was suddenly launched out of the water. A loud, resounding "ora" reached the ears of those in the boat. But the attacks did not stop there. The Stand would keep punching it in mid-air multiple times, way more than it was necessary. Breaking its bones and possibly eviscerating its insides. Until it was bloody, and definitely dead, considering how it just floated on the surface afterwards. If it ended up still being alive, that would be one hell of a miracle.

"Well, that was a bit overboard." commented Kakyoin after a moment.
Polnareff's jaw dropped after the scene played out, "A bit?! The shark's clearly dead!"

"Now, now, let's get the lifebuoy down first. And it seems we're mistaken about the child." Avdol pointed to the direction of where Jotaro and the stowaway were. It turned out, that it was a girl in disguise.

Kirika complied as she had Avdol helped her throw the safety equipment as far as they could, as Jotaro started swimming back with the young girl in tow. But out of the blue, there was a large splash behind them. It was coming from the shark's corpse. The fish's body suddenly disappeared into the water, and where it sunk, a large amount of blood started spreading in contrast to the blue color around it. Then it emerged again, only this time, the corpse was gored, split into two and its organs showing.

In the middle of it, something was swimming towards the two.

"Shit," the girl cursed, "Jotaro, swim faster! Hurry up!"

"J- Jotaro! Below you! Something's attacking from underwater! It's not a shark, it's really fast!" Joseph and Kirika kept yelling for him to move even faster, but the creature kept gaining speed at Jotaro and the girl. He would have no time in reaching the buoy before it got to them.

"If it's at that distance, leave it to me." Kakyoin summoned Hierophant Green, and the Stand swiftly grabbed Jotaro by the arm before lifting him out of the water. The little girl held in his arm. The buoy on the other hand was instantly destroyed as the swimming creature missed them. Disappearing from their sights afterwards.

"I- It disappeared." Polnareff then cried out, "It's a Stand! That thing is a Stand!"

"A seafaring Stand... I don't believe I've ever even heard of such a thing." Avdol seemed bewildered. If it was here, then the user could have been far away.

Kakyoin heaved a sigh of relief as he approached the raven, "That was close. Are you alright, Jojo?"

"I'm good, thanks." he gave the other a small grin, offering his fist, which the redhead bumped with his own.

"You sure you're okay? That thing didn't bite anything off you?" Kirika's tone was full of concern as she checked all over him.

Jotaro simply stroked her head to reassure her, "I'm fine. It didn't hurt me and I'm not dying anytime soon."

The group's attention was then directed to the girl. There was a suspicion towards her, that she could possibly the owner of that Stand. She might have tried luring Jotaro to get into the sea and get him killed by the Stand. But, Kirika doubted that somehow, considering how she was not sensing any danger or bloodlust from the young girl, unlike with the captain of the ship.

Wait... That reminds me.

Kirika tugged at Jotaro and started whispering to him. Particularly about her encounter with the captain. With the appearance of the Stand, the user must be among them and he was the only likely candidate for her. Even now she still remembered how heavy the atmosphere was around him, just in that moment. Green eyes widened slightly, before they narrowed as he whispered back at her, "Are you sure?"
She shook her head, "I have no way to be sure about it, but I can feel it. The girl's not our enemy."
The girl herself was threatening to fight her with a switchblade right now. No matter how much she tried to be menacing, it was clear that it was simply all talk. The girl simply had to lash out with how cornered she felt.

The boy contemplated the information for a moment, before nodding, "Alright, I'll do something about it."

"Just be discreet."

"This demon's blade is telling me that it wants the blood of its 340th victim already." Again, the girl tried to get them to fear her. Kirika held back a laugh at that, but still let out a small snicker. The younger girl then immediately glared at her, "Do you want to come here and be the first blood?!"

"You definitely watched too much villain monologues. Mind telling me your name?"

"What's that supposed to mean?!" She snarled, "And no! I don't have to tell you anything!"

Yeah... This girl is definitely just trying to look bigger.

This time, Kakyoin was the one who let out a small laugh, and the response was immediate, "What's so funny, you stupid grunt?!"

"Grunt?" The teen was just amused at her frustration, "You know, I really don't think it's her."

Joseph hummed, seemingly a bit confused, "But, still..."

Before Kirika could give her grandfather any confirmation, a familiar voice cut in, and with it, a familiar figure. Kirika froze in her spot as she saw him again. The sensation was back, but it was a little more subdued than earlier. He walked towards the girl and grabbed her by the shoulders, she yelped in response, "So is this our stowaway?" He then picked the girl up, holding the hand with the switchblade harsher than necessary. The girl began protesting in pain. "I'm pretty harsh when it comes to stowaways. You may be a girl, but if I go easy on you, we'll just get more and more stowaways."

The switchblade was finally dropped as the girl was put back on the floor, still struggling to get away.

"We'll hold you in one of the rooms below deck until we get to the port."

"Captain," called Joseph, "I'd like to ask you something. You've verified the identities of all then men on board, right?"

The captain turned to give him a look, as if what the elder Joestar asked was such a stupid question, "Of course. All of them are veterans who have been on this boat for over 10 years. I'm not sure why you're so worried about that."

As the man walked past her, Kirika's breath hitched and her heart started pounding. It was definitely weaker than what she felt in the hallway earlier, but it was still as dreadful. Was that thing really his stand, then?

Kakyoin who stood beside her, realized her distress. He vaguely remembered this reaction when they finally met at school for the first time. "Kirika," he tapped her on the shoulder, his voice low, "what's wrong?" She didn't answer him, but instead, her blue eyes glanced away at a certain direction. He instantly followed her line of sight, and it led him to the captain.
Their ship's captain, who seemed to have a death wish by swiping off and put out Jotaro's cigarette on the golden button on his head.

For a moment, Kirika managed to pull herself out from the overwhelming sensation and widened her eyes in shock. She knew that look in her brother's eyes. He was pissed off, and he would damn well do something to make the man pay for slighting him.

The teen tucked his hands into his pockets, "Hold it. If you're going to put it out, just put it out. Don't be a condescending prick about it, jackass."

"Hey, Jotaro! Don't be rude to the captain! You're the one at fault." chastised Joseph.

But his grandson scoffed, "I'm very aware that I'm being rude. He isn't the captain... I just figured it out. He's the Stand user!"

*What happened to being discreet, Jotaro?!!*

It shocked everyone in their group, but the accused man just blinked in confusion. The aura Kirika felt disappeared somewhat, not entirely. She could still very well feel some of it lingering around. The bloodlust still prominent from the man. But as he continued to act dumbfounded, while the rest of the group tried to dissuade her brother from making the situation worse, she couldn't help but becoming frustrated, more than she was afraid. Right now, she hoped that Jotaro knew what he was doing.

"Do you have any proof, Jojo?" Kakyoin hoped the same. Judging from the reaction Kirika gave, there was certainly something not right with the captain. But they couldn't just jump into conclusions without any evidence that would link the man to the marine Stand.

With a confident stance, like a detective solving a mystery, he began to explain, "I've found a way to differentiate Stand users from other people. That is," he raised a finger to the tip of his nose, "if a Stand user inhales even a little bit of cigarette smoke, a vein pops up on the tip of their nose."

That sounded like a lie. A really good bluff. But no one knew better, so the group started touching their nose. "You can't be serious, Jotaro!" yelled Polnareff.

"Yeah, I'm lying." He glared at the captain, who unwittingly touched his own nose. "But it looks like we've found the idiot."

"Jotaro, how did you become suspicious of him?" asked their grandfather.

"Kirika gave me a tip," the corner of his lips curved upwards as he glanced at his sister, "but she wasn't sure about it and I had to try something. I planned on trying this with every man on board, actually."

That's really not surprising coming from you. She suppressed the urge to bury her face in her palms at the fact that her brother would actually try to approach every crew member in this ship and then attempting to trick them. He was lucky he got it right the first time. But at the very least, they ratted the user out, so she supposed she couldn't really complain.

"You're cold. Goddamn, you're ice cold." The man chuckled lowly, "I'm not really the captain. The real captain is sleeping with the fishes at the bottom of the ocean in Hong Kong."

"Then, I'll make you sleep in the depths of hell." threatened Jotaro.

Before anyone could make their move, the Stand from earlier suddenly grappled onto the little girl's
The fish-like creature constricted her in its arms as it stayed in the air. No matter how much she tried to struggle to get out, the hold wouldn't give. The impostor glowered at the group, "Even for a guy like me, taking all of you on at once would be a bone-breaking task... Which is why my plan was to stay hidden and take all of you out one-by-one. But since you've figured me out, I guess I have no choice. I'll take all 6 of you!"

Kirika clicked her tongue and hissed, she could barely feel the atmosphere the man imposed now that she was infuriated by his actions. Taking a child as a bait was such an underhanded tactic. She took a step closer, baring her teeth at their enemy. Galileo appeared behind her. "Leave her out of this! We're what you want, so let her go!"

"You think I would do that when I can hold her above your heads? What are you even going to do with that Stand of yours, tear the ship apart to get to me?" He ridiculed her, continuing to jeer at them. The girl could only snarl. It was true, without damaging the boat, she wasn't exactly able to do anything. She cursed internally, if only her Stand was more versatile.

The man kept going on and on about how much advantage he had in this battle. Telling them that they would of course follow him if he were to take the girl jumping into the sea to save her. Then they would lose against him in the battle. That irritated Jotaro even further, "Don't underestimate me just because you took a hostage! I, Kujo Jotaro, refuse to be shaken by this."

"Underestimate? No, this is a prediction! I hear that your Stand, Star Platinum, is pretty damn fast. I'm not trying to brag, but my Dark Blue Moon is really fast in the in the water. It can swim more elegantly than any fish in the sea!" The man then climbed onto the railings, "Why don't we test that out? Follow me, if you're prepared to choke to death on all the seawater you're about to swallow." With his Stand, the man jumped backwards, bringing the screaming girl down with him.

But Jotaro swiftly summoned Star Platinum. The purple Stand dove in fast and proceeded to pummel Dark Blue Moon, just like it did with the shark. The fish Stand let go of the girl as it was launched into the water. Its user ended up floating and being moved around by the waves with blood running down his face. Before the child could fall into the sea again, Star Platinum was already there to catch her by her overalls.

"You're the only one who's going to choke on seawater." The raven-haired teen cheekily gave him a thumbs down, "Avdol, tell him."

"If my prediction is correct..."

Polnareff finished the sentence for him, "You're 10 years too early!"

Despite the anger she felt, Kirika couldn't help but smile slightly. It seemed the battle was over, the man wouldn't be bothering them any longer as he drifted away like a plank from a sinking ship. "Heh, so much for saying that he'll beat all of us."

The Frenchman grinned at her, "He really talked up his Stand's power, but it turns out he was just an idiot."

But then, Jotaro looked like he was being pulled down. His sister noticed him struggling to take his hand back from over the railing, as he braced himself with the other. She looked back down at Star Platinum, who was still holding the girl above the water. Was there something keeping him from pulling her up? "Jotaro, you need help?"

The others started noticing it too. "Jotaro, what's wrong? Hurry and lift her up!" When his grandson didn't response and kept to the same position, Joseph questioned him again, "What is it, Jotaro?"
The teen leaned over even further, and the group started getting closer to him to assist in case anything happen. Jotaro grunted as he could feel something started digging into the skin of his hands, "Fuck... I'm being pulled in!" Suddenly, his hands started spurting blood, as a cluster of organisms started swarming Star Platinum's arm and the side of the boat.

"Barnacles! Those are acorn barnacles!" Kakyoin quickly identified what was ravaging his friend's hands. They started trying to pull in Jotaro. But the harder they tried, the harder it was to even get him inches away from the railing.

He started panting as he fought a losing battle, "He still wants a fight. He attached these to me earlier when I hit him. They keep multiplying!"

Out of the corner her eyes, Kirika saw how Star Platinum began phasing out of existence as Jotaro began loosening his hold. "They're draining him!" She tried harder, pulling on her brother's arm.

Joseph started frantically looking around for the impostor captain as he held him back, "H- He disappeared, where'd he go?! Jotaro! Bring in your Stand!"

"I can't bring it back!" His grandson gritted his teeth as his hand became even heavier, "I wouldn't be sweating so much if I could!"

His sister tried one last ditch effort. She had Galileo bend the railing he was leaning on to try and push his body away from it, while she herself still struggled to pull him by the shoulder this time. But it was no use. The force pulling his hand was getting even stronger, and he slipped over it. Almost bringing Kirika down with him to the sea if it wasn't for Polnareff who instantly pulled her. "Jotaro!" she cried out.

"Jojo!" Hierophant Green was summoned once more, and Kakyoin sent him to grab the raven. But the teen instead had Star Platinum throw the girl he was still holding into the air, to have the redhead reflexively commanded his Stand to catch her. A big splash resounded as Jotaro fell into the sea. "Crap! This is bad!" If he could, he would jump in. But Hierophant Green was still holding the girl, so he concentrated on bringing her to safety first.

Kirika began to struggle against the Frenchman's hold, "Polnareff, let go! I have to get to him!"

The man instead kept her with him by her arms, "Are you insane?! You can't just go jump in without any strategy!"

"I can just use Galileo for support! Let me go!" The girl tried prying off Polnareff's fingers to no avail.

Avdol turned to her, his voice stern, "Ms. Kirika, you told me your Stand could only hold its power for 3 seconds. Taking in the water pressure into account, with Dark Blue Moon being that fast, you wouldn't be able to do much. It would be easy for it to avoid Galileo trying to spear it from the ocean floor or flinging rocks."

"But what else am I supposed to do?!"

"Jotaro wouldn't want you to get hurt, either! So for his sake, just stay here!" She might not be Sherry, but Polnareff still felt obligated to keep her safe. He knew how it felt to lose a younger sibling, and he wouldn't want Jotaro to possibly go through the same thing. He felt that he wouldn't be able to face the rest of the group if he failed to do so. This was the least he could do for them, as part of his redemption after saving him from Dio's clutches.

"He's right, Kirika. In fact, none of us could really do anything at the moment. We don't have the
range, and if all of us jump in, then what he said would really be true. His Stand is indeed superior in this environment." Her grandfather tried to reason with her.

She still wanted to protest. That was her brother down there, his grandson. How dare he just give up? But her rationale was slowly sinking in and she stopped struggling. Polnareff let her go at that instant. She clenched her fists and clicked her tongue in frustration. There was nothing she could really do, and that was the worst part of this.

A hand then placed itself on her shoulder. She looked up to see the redhead with a reassuring smile, "If my fight with him still holds up, then I'm sure he'll be fine. Your brother is stronger than what you think. Believe in him a bit more."

"Kakyoin-" Their boat suddenly jerked and started swaying violently, causing them to almost toppling over onto the floor. A giant whirlpool formed around the area where Jotaro fell. Kirika didn't waste any time to look over the railing with the others, blue eyes frantically searching around for her brother. Hoping that he would surface from the middle of it. But he was nowhere there. "Where is he?!"

Kakyoin might have tried to stay calm, but the sudden whirlpool meant that the fight with Dark Blue Moon became harder for his friend. Then he figured, that despite the whirlpool, Jotaro might still be trying to swim up. That would mean that the other teen would at least be in the range of their Stands at this moment. "We can probably use our Stands now to grab him, we have to save him!" But once Hierophant Green reached into the water, Kakyoin flinched as his arm was cut by multiple sharp objects.

Blue eyes immediately darted towards his bloodied arm, catching sight of small disk-shaped objects embedded in his skin, "What are those?!"

"Th- These are scales. His Stand's scales are as sharp as razor blades!"

Avdol widened his eyes at the revelation and started looking closely at the turmoil with Magician's Red's eyes, "There are countless scales swirling in that whirlpool! He was serious when he said he could defeat all 6 of us! That whirlpool is like a watery antlion pit! It is likely we would be killed if we jumped in!"

"Damn it! The bastard! If only we knew that he was an impostor from the start!" Polnareff glanced at the hazel-haired girl, regretting the fact that there was a high chance that she might lost her brother today.

"Curses!" The fortune teller hit his fists against the railing, "Acting now would be reckless!"

But then, Kakyoin gasped the moment he spotted Jotaro surfacing, "It's Jojo! I just saw Jojo in the whirlpool!" That snapped Kirika out from reaching the state of despair. Blue eyes widened as she saw her brother appearing in and out of the water. But she quickly furrowed her brows deeply when she realized that he was not moving.

Polnareff confirmed it, "This isn't good, he was limp!"

Kirika gulped, "No. No, is he-"

"Limp? He wasn't moving at all?" Joseph hummed, "That might just be a good thing."

Everyone was confused by his statement, "Grandpa, what do you mean by that?"

In response, the old man gave them a confident smile. She was still puzzled, but a moment later, the
girl came to a sudden realization and instantly looked back at the whirlpool. His brother seemed to have developed a plan, even in the state of severe disadvantage. It might just work. She began to grin. Kakyoin was right, she just had to believe in him a bit more.

Soon enough, the whirlpool stopped, and Jotaro finally surfaced, to the joy of the whole group who cheered at his return.

"That's my grandson for you!" Joseph grabbed another lifebuoy and prepared to throw it down, "Well done, Jotaro! Hurry and come u-"

The boat suddenly rumbled from within. After a moment, all of the crew members ran out onto the deck as explosions started destroying the ship, so they started heading towards the emergency boats. It was clear that this was a precaution set up by the Stand user they just defeated.

He wouldn't let them escape that easily, Dio demanded their lives be taken.

It took them another 2 days to finally reach Singapore.

They ended up taking the girl along with them, after all, they had the same destination. Her name was Anne, and her father was waiting in Singapore. But the journey while drifting at sea weren't smooth. They were tricked by a Stand user, strangely enough, an orangutan. It used its Stand to disguise what was supposed to be a tiny boat into a freighter, and it murdered the crew of the Speedwagon chartered boat. Jotaro fortunately was able to defeat it before it crushed them to smithereens. Jotaro and Anne wouldn't tell them anything about the encounter, though. The teen claimed it would be a waste of time talking about it.

At the very least, Singapore looked like a country where they could relax for a bit before they had to move again. It was a country that became a colony of the British Empire, becoming one of their important ports and the site of their overseas naval base, regarded as one of their strongest to the point it was nicknamed "Gibraltar of The East". But in 1942, Japan managed to capture and occupy it for the next 3 years like they did with most of the Southeast Asian region, until their surrender at the end of World War 2. It then resumed its status as British overseas territory until 1963, when it merged with Malaysia which became independent 6 years earlier, only to become its own country after a dispute between the leaders regarding a riot in August 9th, 1965. Since then, with its rapid planning and development, it became a prominent tourist destination, especially with the opening of the Sentosa island. Once they landed and finished reporting to the immigration, they settled around the Marina Bay area to look for a place to stay.

Polnareff groaned, "About time, we're finally here."

"We'll stay at a hotel tonight and figure out the best route to Egypt." Joseph then pointed to one of the buildings with the name Pan Pacific on it, "Alright, let's stay at that one."

Kirika as usual, was in an awe with the new things she saw. She had read some stuff about the country before in the encyclopedia they had back home. But this was better than her imagination. Though, she realized something, "Grandpa, we're at seafront. Are you sure we can afford... 6 rooms at this hotel?"

Her grandfather laughed boisterously, "You don't have to worry about any of it! Everything's on me!"
There was a moment of hilarity when they were walking to reach the hotel and a policeman came over to fine Polnareff, since he thought his knapsack was a bag of trash. They managed to get the policeman to go away after the Frenchman passive - aggressively threatened him, as well as not getting fined with 40,000 yen. Unexpectedly, Anne was apparently still following them around. They thought she was long gone after they arrived in Singapore.

"Hey," called Joseph, "weren't you going to see your father?"

"Why don't you stop following us and get going?" scolded Polnareff.

Anne scoffed, "He'll be here in 5 days, I can go wherever I want! I don't have to take orders from you guys."

"You can go wherever you want, but it's really not a good idea for you to follow us, you know?" Kirika put her hands on her hips as she approached the other, puzzled as to what the younger girl actually wanted. The dark haired girl ignored her as she kept pouting, but then the teen noticed the look on her face as she looked away. Something was troubling her, that was for sure.

Jotaro tapped on her back, gesturing her to just move and join the others first to decide what to do. Avdol spoke up first, "She will be at risk if she stays with us."

"Maybe she doesn't have any money?" Kakyoin brought up a good point. Considering she snuck into the boat with them, she probably had no means or preparations to travel in the first place. She wouldn't last in here on her own.

"Alright, I guess we can pay for her hotel room." Joseph then turned to the Frenchman, "Polnareff, we don't want to hurt her pride, so use some tact."

"Gotcha." said Polnareff, who proceeded to be as tactless as possible. The rest of the group groaned along with Anne, with Kirika covering her face from the secondhand embarrassment. But it proved amusing to Kakyoin, who gave a chuckle afterwards.

Avdol sighed in exasperation, "Let's just check in..."

Chapter End Notes

UP NEXT

Me writing a bunch of stuff in the author's note about Singapore, and me writing stuff about Singapore in the story. I mean, I'm Indonesian, but I've been staying in Singapore for my studies for 5 years now. Before that, I've been going back and forth between the 2 countries a lot with my family. Suffice to say I'm familiar with the country a lot, considering it's smaller than Jakarta and good public transportation makes things easier.
The Tiny Red Dot

Chapter Summary

Finally, they can get a little bit of a reprieve, before they march into a new territory.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is mostly them just talking, because man, they need a break and Singapore is really a good place for it.

Also here it is, this is me sharing stuff about Singapore.

I found out that their hotel is the Pan Pacific. At first I was just going by the fact that they're in the Marina Bay area (high-end area considering the tourist attraction and it being by the sea), it's behind the Merlion statue, so that left us with 2 hotels back in 1987. The building in the manga and the anime didn't look like any of them so I kinda got into a dead end. But then the lobby was almost the exact same to Pan Pacific's so there it is! Even the reception counter is the same!

The anime and manga also talked about a Sumatran Prince (specifically from the Indonesian kingdom Sriwijaya) finding a white lion and so he named the city Singapore (Singapura, singa = lion, pura = city). First of all, it's just a normal lion. Second, it's not even a lion because lions don't exist in Southeast Asia, so it's probably just a tiger. I don't know what the Prince was smoking. This legend didn't make sense.

Police officers here aren't as aggressive as depicted. I mean they'd only yell if they're chasing over legit criminals. No police is that buff either lol While Singapore IS known as a city that is super strict with rules that fines even the slightest bad behavior (I mean it's almost a nanny state), you wouldn't really get scolded and fined for just littering. Well, if you just threw a big bag of trash in the middle of the street, of course there'd be trouble. But a used tissue or an empty plastic bag? Nah. That said, don't do it, just be considerate.

Also Joseph is super loaded, those 4 rooms in total is around S$2,000 dollars/US$1,446. If they were to stay at the same hotel nowadays, it'd be around at most S$3,600/US$2,603.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It happened to be a peak season at the time, so they received 4 rooms that weren't next to each other. Kirika ended up sharing a room with Anne, and made an appointment with her brother and Kakyoin to visit their room so they could hang out. They needed some time off and just act like normal teenagers for a while, despite the dire situation they faced on this trip. Again, they deserved a rest. Jotaro almost died again, the second time this month. That had to be a record.

After arriving in their room, Anne immediately jumped onto the bed and rolled around, "Ah, finally I
can sleep on a real bed!"

Smiling, Kirika put down her duffel bag on the designated luggage platform beside the wardrobe. She praised whatever divine intervention out there that made her carry it out from below the deck, so it wasn't just incinerated from the explosion. Absentmindedly, she stroked the embroidery spelling out the initials of her name, made by her mother. She hoped this bag survived until the end of their journey. "Well, I'm going! Anne, if you need me, I'll be in my brother's room."

Before she opened up the door, the younger girl spoke up, "Kirika, right?" The ponytailed teen turned around. "How did you get your parents to let you go on this trip?"

Blue eyes blinked for a moment, before their owner rubbed the back of her neck, "I mean, if you're talking as if this was a normal trip, my Mom would still be worried about me and Jotaro. But she'd ultimately let us just travel around. Honestly, though, considering how this trip has been going, none of my parents would actually let us go." How was her father doing right now? Did he ever call home in the past few days? Who would answer the phone and what would they say? She hoped he never found out about what they were doing right now. "But... I have to go, no matter what they say. This is for my Mom, after all."

Anne gave no response to that, and Kirika could clearly see that she was both confused and... Was that envy?

"Something wrong?"

"N-No! Just go to Jojo and Mr. Kakyoin already!"

"Alright, alright."

"No way, you like Kubota Toshinobu?!"

Kirika snickered at Kakyoin's disbelief, while her brother scowled slightly, "Why is it so surprising for you to hear?"

"I don't think I need to answer that." the girl added while covering her mouth, hiding her wide grin as her brother squinted at her.

"I thought you'd have said something like Pink Floyd, or Iron Maiden." Kakyoin figured that he probably annoyed Jotaro by reacting like this, but he couldn't help it. He would be lying if he said it didn't amuse him, at least a little bit. "But Kubota, huh? What's your favourite of his?"

"Ryuusei no Saddle." He answered without hesitation. "What about you, then? Mozart?"

Kakyoin chuckled, "Sting, actually. I like The Police but, his solo outing is interesting. I'm looking forward to his first album."

"Uh, it's already out, actually." Kirika chimed in.

There was a moment of silence before the redhead spoke again, "R- Really?"

"October 13th. It's getting sold out almost everywhere, got to the top of Oricon. It'll probably take them until next month before they could restock." Jotaro glanced at Kakyoin, who was now looking
downcast. He was confused for a moment, but he supposed he understood why the other would suddenly become dejected. "We have one back home."

Kakyoin didn't really catch on to what Jotaro was really trying to say. He averted his eyes. "Ah... Good for you, then." There was a smile on his face, but it didn't reach his eyes. The information really just reminded him of how much he had missed and how much he lost himself after that trip to Egypt. He cursed Dio, damning him to hell if it existed. But he couldn't help to blame himself as well, for allowing himself to be trapped and controlled like that. His resolution to see the monster destroyed became stronger.

Taps to his shoulder snapped him out of it, Kirika's voice followed. "Hey, when we get back to Japan, let's go buy it together! I'll show you where we usually buy them."

"Eh, no, there's no need for that. I don't want to trouble you." He politely declined, but it seemed that the girl wouldn't take no for answers.

"No, it won't! It'll be fun anyway, maybe I'll get something for my collection too. Maybe I should ask Himari to come along too. How about you, Jotaro?" It was strange. They shouldn't feel this relaxed. Her mother was still dying and someone could appear at any moment to attack them. But here they were, sitting around, chatting about music, and planning a meetup as if it was just another day back home. She didn't mind this at all. For just a moment, they could forget the ticking clock.

Jotaro noticed the comfortable state his sister was in, and he couldn't help the slight smile that came to his face. "Sure. It's a good idea." Suddenly the phone rang. Jotaro got up to pick it up, and after a moment, his expression turned grim. "Got it," he said after a while, "we'll all meet up in room 1212, Gramps."

"What's going on, Jojo?" asked Kakyoin after the other hung up.

Without wasting any time, the taller teen headed to the door, "Let's go. Seems we're in danger."

Kirika quirked her eyebrows up as she followed suit, "Is it another Stand user? Jeez, how do they keep finding us exactly where we are?"

"I supposed Dio just sent them all over the world and had them wait in their posts." Kakyoin frowned. "What if they actually expected us to make these stops in case they failed to stop us in the previous ones?"

Jotaro started deducting the available information. "I doubt that, we passed Vietnam and Thailand. We could have washed up in either both there instead of going straight here. Even if they did know exactly where we'd stop, they couldn't just immediately find us. Like you and Polnareff did, or the jackass and the ape."

Kirika crossed her arms as she went deep in thought, "Grandpa and Avdol are friends, they both happened to be Stand users. Then there's us. Granted we met first before I even develop a Stand, Kakyoin. But I'm basing this on the fact that my Stand was probably in the middle of developing itself, so did Jotaro's. So maybe we're essentially magnets?"

"Mr. Avdol did say that Stand users are rather rare. He isn't wrong, you guys are the first ones I encountered in years. The fact that all 6 of us managed to become a group and go on this journey together, is still a little surprising to me." added Kakyoin.

"So you're saying that Stand users are bound to find each other when they're in close proximity. That's how they're able to keep finding us no matter where we are?" The raven furrowed his
"It sounds like a stretch, but it's the only thing that makes sense. To be fair, none of this situations we're involved in are actually normal." replied Kakyoin.

As they continued their walk, Kirika suddenly remembered something, "Wait, we should warn Anne not to leave the room."

Her brother nodded, "Yeah, the runt better not be involved in this. The last 2 times were enough."

Kakyoin made a noise of agreement, "Right, your room is at the same floor, isn't it? Let's just make a stop there first."

Polnareff came in the middle of their discussion, covered in bruises and deep cuts. As Kirika began dressing up his wounds, the police suddenly came to arrest him. They found the body of the bell boy who brought first-aid to his room, his face sliced off so cleanly from his head. They also had no choice but to link another body they found - of Devo the Cursed - to it. No one had any clue that would prove Polnareff as the culprit, all of them could only be considered as circumstantial, but it was still damning him nonetheless.

"We're just going to let them take him?!" Kirika shouted in disbelief.

"We have no choice. But I've called the Speedwagon Foundation to help us. They already sent one of their attorney straight to Singapore to bail him out. I'm sure it'll work out." reassured Joseph. "They wouldn't believe anything we said otherwise. The camera caught him leaving the room and to us, with no one beside him. If we insist on defending him, they might get suspicious of all of us too."

Kakyoin hummed in agreement, "Yeah, we can't risk the police trailing after us. The Stand users Dio sent are already hard enough to deal with, we can't be dragged down by something like this too." Treating Polnareff as some sort of necessary sacrifice in this case felt wrong to him. But there wasn't much else they could do at this point.

She couldn't argue with that. They would waste so much time if the police decided to investigate all of them. It still didn't mean she liked this decision. "Damn it."

"They wouldn't be able to prove that he's the murderer, anyway." Jotaro chimed in, putting a hand on top of her head. "Polnareff might be a dumbass, but he's not so stupid to cave under pressure and admit to what he didn't do."

Avdol nodded beside him, "I agree with Jotaro. Besides, with the assistance from the Speedwagon Foundation, he will get out of jail before we had to leave for India. He is in good hands, Ms. Kirika."

The confidence in Avdol's voice somehow raised her optimism about the situation. The corner of her lips curled slightly upwards, one of her eyebrows quirking, "How are you so sure, Mr. Avdol?"

He gave a little huff in response, his own lips smiling smugly, "You did not forget me as a fortune teller, did you?"

They were then interrupted by knocking, followed by a familiar demanding noise, "Hey, is anyone in?"
Jotaro sighed in exasperation, "Good grief."

"Anne?!" Kirika gasped before rushing to open the door. "What are you doing here? I thought we told you to stay in your room!"

"Well, I got bored. I tried looking for you in Jojo's room, but no one answered and I stood there like an idiot for 10 minutes! Besides, I'm not gonna' get cooped up inside just because you told me to." The younger girl crossed her arms in defiance. Her lower lip jutted out to the side as she turned sideways.

"Well, we just wanted to keep you safe. I said that this isn't a normal trip, remember?" Not to mention she doesn't have any Stand. The girl had yet to meet her father, she didn't even want to begin imagining how the man would felt finding his daughter harmed without him being there.

"But it's my first time even being in Singapore! You can't expect me not wanting to enjoy it a bit, right?" The girl continued to complain.

I don't think I was this stubborn when I was her age.

"Listen," Kakyoin suddenly stood behind Kirika, though he was focused on Anne instead, as if trying to back the older girl up, "Polnareff was just attacked by someone. I thought the fact that we almost collectively died twice before this would put it through your head that this isn't some nice holiday we're having. We're in the middle of something important here, and we can't always protect you all the time." The stern look in his eyes clashed with the rebellious glare Anne gave him. He continued, the tone of his voice was getting harsher, "If we didn't care about your well-being, we wouldn't even tell you to-"

"Kakyoin." Joseph interrupted him. The message was clear, it was quite enough. The old man approached the young girl, who was now refusing to meet anyone's eyes, choosing instead to look at her feet, and knelt before her. "Young miss, they're right. You being with us is already dangerous enough as it is. But I promise that if you could go back to your room after lunch, I'll have Jotaro accompany you the whole day tomorrow, so you can explore the place all you want."

Jotaro's eyes immediately widened at that. "What the-" He didn't get to finish his protest as Joseph, and Kirika, shushed him. So he was left fuming silently.

Slowly but surely, Anne began looking up at the elder Joestar, though her eyes still showed wariness. "Really? You're not lying to me, aren't you?"

"Of course not! You still have to promise me, though." He offered her his little finger.

Anne stared at it for a moment, before hesitantly hooked her own pinky around his, "Fine, but no takebacks. I won't forgive you!"

Kirika unconsciously smiled at the scene, sighing happily. She turned her head to look Kakyoin, whispering a "thank you" for backing her up, though she did feel that the other sounded too caught up in the moment. At least that's settled, "So, we're having lunch now?"

"If I remember correctly, the famous Maxwell Food Centre is nearby the local Chinatown." Kakyoin supplied, having read some information that the concierge offered them.

"Well, it's a good place to start! Let's go, I'm starving!" Joseph held the door for everyone to exit before him. Jotaro was the last to do so, but the boy stopped in his tracks just at the door frame, glaring at his grandfather. The old man groaned, "Come on, you just have to let her tag along. What's so hard about it?"
Jotaro's glare didn't relent. But he turned to look ahead after a while as he continued outside. "You owe me, Gramps," he grunted. Just loud enough for Joseph to hear.

"Sheesh," the elder murmured, "must've gotten it from that man."

"Mr. Joestar," called Avdol, "are you coming?"

"Yes, just a sec!"

It was the next day. Tomorrow they leave for India via Malaysia, so that left them with some time to wind down. While Avdol and Joseph busied themselves with trying to find more clues on Dio's location, and Jotaro left with Anne on their little excursion, Kakyoin decided it's a good opportunity to sunbathe by the swimming pool. Kirika was already there in t-shirt and shorts, inviting him to join her.

"By the way," why are you still wearing your uniform?"

"I told you why, Kirika." he smiled at her cheekily.

She deadpanned at him, "Could you please at least take off your gakuran, Kakyoin?"

The boy let out a chuckle before sighing, "Well, since you asked nicely, I suppose I should." It was getting really hot, anyway. More unbearable than even the hottest days of Japanese summers.

"Roll up your sleeves too, you're sunbathing."

The redhead quirked his eyebrows, the corner of his lips curving upwards, "Has anyone ever told you that you act like a mom sometimes?"

Kirika grinned as she finally lied down onto the sun chair, "Jotaro does, whenever I tell him to stop doing stuff."

"Hmm, like what?" he asked while rolling up his sleeves up to his elbows.

She started recounting his brother's "crimes", "Yelling at Mom, skipping school, getting into fights," that finally got him thrown to jail a week ago, worsened by the fact that Star Platinum awakened and destroyed his victims, "smoking, and not paying his restaurant bills when he thinks the food's not worth it. Mom's too nice to even tell him off, so I have to do it."

Kakyoin laughed quietly, "Ms. Holy is very gentle person, after all. She's the kind of person who could calm people's hearts and ease their minds. I suppose she simply want you and your brother to live a life without worry, though it's not always the right thing."

The girl didn't respond to that for a bit while, and it concerned Kakyoin a little. When she finally spoke, purple eyes widened, "I'm starting to wish she isn't that kind of person, because apparently that's why her Stand is killing her." Kujo Holy was a kind - hearted and gentle woman, the best mother they could ever ask for. The fact that the best aspect of her became one of the main cause of her suffering, had to be some sort of sick twist of fate. She gave the teen beside her a wry smile, the curve on the edge of her lips didn't reach her eyes at all, "Sorry, I shouldn't have said that."
For some reason, her smile didn't feel right. He might only have really known her for a few days, but Kakyoin had decided that he didn't like this expression from her. It didn't suit the girl who readily accepted him and forgave him with a grin, then treated him as if his attacks on her brother didn't affect her so much. As if she wasn't scared out of her mind when he showed up and threatened to kill her. He felt compelled to fix it. "... It's alright. It's understandable that you'd have anxiety about it, it's your mom after all. Have you talked about this to Mr. Joestar or Jotaro?"

Kirika gave a long exhale as she began to curl up, "I know I should have. But it's... It's easier to say than doing it. Grandpa was hysterical when he found out about her Stand. He might act all easygoing now, but that's because we're around him and he has to act strong. Jotaro might not show it, he refuses to, that's just how he is. But he's obviously scared for Mom and worried sick about her. For me to dump my feelings on them, it'll be selfish of me."

"You could always come and talk to me."

The girl's head snapped up at the offer, but she didn't get the chance to refuse.

"I'm not going to feel weighted down by it. We're allies, Kirika, and we're in this together. What you said to me back then, reassuring me, was also part of the reason I decided to join this trip. So it's only fair that I get to give you a pep talk when you need it too." He turned to smile at her, "I know It doesn't seem like there's the right time for it, but I'll always be there to listen to whatever problems you have."

Blue eyes stared at him for a moment. This was the boy who went missing for almost 2 months after their first meeting, before coming back as someone who Dio controlled to be his assassin for the Joestars. She remembered how she dreaded that the Kakyoin she finally met again was how he actually was as a person. How relieved she was that it wasn't true. This just cemented it even further, that she wasn't wrong about his character.

She eventually cracked a smile and it widened into a grin, "Thank you so much, Kakyoin. I'll try my best."

Things just felt right once more the moment he saw it, "Anytime."

They went back to lying silently, enjoying the bright ray of sunshine. The warm weather was a nice change from the chilly air of autumn back in Japan. But the longer they lied under the sun, the more they felt that they're melting instead of simply tanning. "God, the humidity is terrible."

Kakyoin sighed as he rubbed off the sweat from the back of his neck with a towel, "I figured it'd be the case since we're nearby the sea but, that was way more than I thought."

"Air con's seriously a blessing." As they walked towards the elevator, "Hey, let's check in with Grandpa and Mr. Avdol. Maybe they find out something by now."

"A doppelganger Stand user? It eats flesh and near-invincible because of it too?!" Of all things that could be attacking them right now, it just had to be something alien-like.

"He disguised himself pretty convincingly too, from how Anne described it." Kakyoin clicked his tongue in annoyance.
Avdol nodded at his statement, "I vaguely heard of its user before, he is a hit man of sorts. His Stand is called Yellow Temperance, and as the result of tWe can only assume he'd been lingering around the hotel, observing us. Not just our appearance but also our behaviors. Rumour has it that he is able to mimic other people's Stand too."

"Oh, good. No wonder Jotaro's passive perception of 30 didn't catch anything wrong until then." Kirika then turned to Joseph. "What do we do now, Grandpa?"

It didn't take long for Joseph to decide, "Kirika, Kakyoin, I'd like you to go and fetch Anne. Bring her back to the hotel as soon as you can. Avoid contact with the enemy if possible, but if you ended up having to fight him, you two have the better chance to counter him." He might have said it confidently, but considering their past fights, things still could change despite careful planning beforehand.

"Right!" the two replied in unison. They wasted no time heading over to the lobby and got themselves a cab. The cable car station was on the other side of the bay, they would never make it in time if they just ran.

By the time they arrived there, several police cars and ambulance had gathered around the area. The cable car operations seemed to have stopped, with the emergency personnel assisting in evacuating the staff and passengers alike. With so many people littering the street trying to figure out what happened, it was hard for the two teenagers to see Anne among the crowd. The presence of the police also posed another set of problems for them.

"This is bad," Kirika gritted her teeth, "they have CCTVs installed on each end of the line, right? If they check it out and find Jotaro, they'll arrest him for sure!"

"There would have been witnesses who saw him jumping around too. Let's hope none of them caught his face clearly," Kakyoin put a hand on her shoulder. "We can worry about it later. For now, let's look for Anne first."

"Kirika! Mr. Kakyoin!" It seemed that they didn't need to worry about the little girl anymore. "I'm here! I'm here!"

Kirika knelt down as the younger girl ran towards them, "Anne! Are you hurt anywhere?"

"N- No, only Jojo was attacked." She kept her eyes on Kirika, unable to bring herself to look at the other teen, despite knowing that this Kakyoin is the real one. That image of the imposter's face splitting apart would give her nightmares for a while. "He's still fighting the bad guy! They fell into the river together!"

Kakyoin furrowed his brows at that information. It was almost hard to believe that with a Stand like Star Platinum, someone with such a malicious Stand could give him a hard time. "Kirika, take her back to the hotel. I'll go look for Jotaro."

Before he could even begin running, he was tugged back in place. "No. He disguised himself as you, so one the cameras might have caught it." She handed Anne over to him, much to the little girl's surprise and dismay. Then she bolted, "Tell Grandpa and Mr. Avdol we'll be back soon!"

"Kiri-!" He couldn't even argue against that. But even if he tried to, the girl had moved too far away from them. "Wait, Kirika!"

"It's too dangerous!" Anne cried after him.

"We'll be back, I'll promise!" With that, she disappeared into the distance.
"... Stay safe."

Chapter End Notes

Now here's me talking about some of the blatant errors.

They showed the Merlion really close to the hotels, like just right behind it. The Merlion is now no longer in its original site, it's moved away to across the Fullerton Hotel, but even in 1987 the statue is still quite a distance away from Pan Pacific. So I guess it's just artistic liberties.

I also don't know why Jotaro even said they need to take a cable car to the stations. I assume he's talking about the KTM station and back then, it was in Tanjong Pagar. Considering they already have MRT back then, they could easily just go to the Marina Bay station, quite a long walk from the hotel they're staying, to go to Tanjong Pagar station, then walk there some more or take a bus. There wasn't even any cable cars there, not even today. Again, artistic liberties, I guess. It does make a cool scene of Jotaro leaping from a cable car. I'm surprised no one arrested him.

There sure are lots of mountains and buildings in the midst of forests too. Trust me there are only like 2 mountains here, Mount Faber and Bukit Timah, which is Malay/Indonesian for Tin Peak.

How can Kakyoin and Jotaro deal with Singapore heat with their gakuran, honestly? Like, okay, I can deal with heat. 38 degree celcius? I can spend my day just fine with that. Jakarta is that hot, anyway. But with Singapore's humidity reaching 86% most of the times, nope. No matter how tough they are, nope. They're suffocating themselves.
Premonition of Blood

Chapter Summary

The voices grew louder, spelling out more of threats than wishes, and showed her a terrible future.

It will be her fault.

Chapter Notes

I've never been to India before. That said, from the things I read and the pictures I saw from around that time, the depiction in the anime is and the manga is kind of accurate.

The roads were all already paved with asphalt, I mean this is the capital of West Bengal. If India is anything like Indonesia, then it would have uneven development, and capitals tend to get the priority for infrastructure developments. Considering the British gotta make trams on them means they needed to pave the roads too. Again, artistic liberties, guess J.Geil wouldn't be able to move around and stab Avdol if the road is asphalt that doesn't have a lot of large potholes. It's an alternative to having a duel in the wild west.

As for the people swarming them, again, I've never been to India. But I do live in a third world country and I wouldn't be surprised that it's a commonplace in India too, considering there were times when I went somewhere and came back to Jakarta, some people who're not porter staff would offer to carry our luggages, follow us around too. It's not really happening to me anymore nowadays considering the terminal I have to go to get to the plane to Singapore is so far removed from the main airport.

The pig toilets are actually true, though the toilet is strangely Western and even in India, as the manga said, it's still a weird toilet to have.

Seeing the bajaj made me kind of nostalgic, there used to be a lot of them in Jakarta, they even become the topic of sitcoms where the protags are bajaj drivers, but they're slowly going away.

Also, I found out that during that time until 2011, Calcutta was basically ruled by a majority communist coalition government? I didn't expect that.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Anne was no longer following them once they checked out of the hotel that morning. Afterwards, they took the KTM train to Malaysia. Stopping at Penang before they proceeded to board a boat to pass Myanmar so they could finally reach India.

Kirika was admittedly quite paranoid when they had to travel using a boat again. They had been attacked twice at sea by now, first by a fake captain and his black lagoon monster, then a living boat manned by a single orangutan. Who knew what they were going to get next from Dio. Luckily, no
one seemed to come for them. No one came for them in their previous stops, either. She was starting to think that the man they were after operated a little inconsistently. But Avdol did warn her, that dangers would still be lurking after them.

Once they arrived in Calcutta, they were instantly swarmed by people at the harbour. Men, women, and children who were looking for some money, however small it was. Some were experienced marketers for their goods and services, others tried to swindle. It was just like any other bustling tourism spots. Joseph kept her granddaughter behind him as he tried to ward them off. Some kids kept asking Jotaro for tips and Kakyoin unfortunately had his wallet stolen. Polnareff was really beffudled by their surroundings. Avdol, on the other hand, never looked happier.

They at least were able to get away from the crowd and get some lunch.

"Mm! It's sort of like Singaporean *teh tarik* we drank, but it has spices added to it." said Kirika before continuing to sip her *chai*. She remembered being fascinated at how they made the drink back in the other country. Wonder if they did the same thing here. Her grandfather seemed to enjoy it too, since he gulped the whole thing in one go.

"Give it time," Avdol told them, "you will see just how wonderful it is here once you are acclimated."

"I like it here. I could get used to this." Jotaro calmly responded

That surprised his grandfather, "Really, Jotaro? You really mean it?"

His sister propped her chin on her palm with a mock amusement, "I didn't expect you to say anything like that."

"You both act like I'm not allowed to like something new." he grumbled lowly at his family.

The girl giggled, "I'm just joking! It's just that you look grumpy all the time, people would think you just hate everything."

He scoffed, "I don't, if people have trouble reading my face, then that's their problem."

_Jotaro, aside from me, only psychics can understand what you're thinking._

Polnareff finished his *chai* with a sigh before getting up, "Talk about culture shock. I'll like it once I get acclimated, huh? Well, they do say people adapt to their surroundings." He then asked the waiter serving them for the toilet.

Joseph called after him, "Polnareff, what about your order?"

The Frenchman smiled, "Order for me. Better make it something good. As a Frenchman, I require only the finest of delicacies." That request was so incredulous to Joseph his jaw dropped, as the man simply walked away to do his business.

Kirika suppressed a laugh, "Says the guy who finished everything we bought from the hawker centre without asking what they are."

"Well," Kakyoin finally spoke up after looking at the menu thoroughly, "I guess we can pick whatever. What's something he would like...? Excuse me!" he called after the waiter. "Bengali dishes are mainly consisting of fish and meat, so that's what we're mostly going to be eating."

The fortune teller nodded, "While that is true, I also recommend *alur torkari* with *luchi* on the side,
as well as macher jhol."

The girl sitting beside him perked up, "What are those?"

"Hmm," the man hummed, before leaning back with a smile, "I think I would let you all see and try them first. It's better to experience them firsthand blindly, but they are undoubtedly good food."

"Alright, then! We'll have what he said." Joseph gestured to the waiter to write it down. "What else? Jotaro?"

"I'll just eat whatever you guys ordered, I just care if it's good or not." the teen leaned back.

Kakyoin then pointed out a few items at the menu for the young man, "We'll also have some naan and the mutton curry. I suppose that's enough for us. Ah, rasgullas too for dessert."

As the waiter left, Kirika turned her head to the hallway at the back. She thought she heard something, "Did you guys hear that?"

"Yeah... Polnareff just shouted. What's he got himself into now?" Jotaro straightened a little on his seat, as if he was ready to bring out Star Platinum.

"It's probably nothing. Maybe Polnareff is just freaking out about the toilet or something!" her grandfather joked.

"He sure is taking a while to get back, though." commented Kakyoin.

Kirika hummed in agreement, "Oh, anyway, Mr. Avdol. You seem to be really familiar with India, you've been here many times before?"

"Why, yes! Back when I was younger, my father and I used to visit for his work. I've always felt that the place is similar to Cairo, but at the same time it still held its own wonders. It's been a while since I came back here actually, so I'd be lying if I say I didn't miss it."

"It's a good thing that we ended up in here, then. If things go smoothly, it wouldn't hurt to relax here either." chimed the elder Joestar.

Soon, their orders started coming out onto their table. The naan and the mutton curry were the first to arrive, and they looked absolutely appetizing. The group didn't waste time getting their share of the food. Kirika particularly eager to dip the flatbread into the sauce before eating it along with the meat. But before any of them could even take the first bite out of their meal, Polnareff came barging in and started yelling about a Stand user.

Green eyes widened the moment the man mentioned two right hands. J. Geil and his Stand were here for them.

J. Geil and his Stand were here for them.

As they all stood up to follow Polnareff outside, the raven teen instinctively kept close to his sister. The man might have stopped at using his Stand only on the Frenchman, seemingly targeting just him. But it didn't matter. Jotaro still didn't want Kirika to even see him or his Stand. He wanted her to see none of this despicable existence that Polnareff described to them back in Hong Kong.

The silver haired man was still frantically looking for the Stand user. But with the crowd, and the fact that he didn't exactly know how the man looked like, the murderer easily slipped away by hiding in plain sight, "Jotaro, the Stand user you heard about that uses mirrors is here!"
The confirmation made Jotaro subconsciously clenched his fists inside his pockets.

"The motherfucker that killed my sister! That bastard stamped out my sister's life, soul, and pride! Finally, I found him!" He then turned to Joseph, "Mr. Joestar, I'll be travelling on my here on out."

His decision surprised the group. "You can't be serious," Kirika spoke up, "that's too careless! You're chasing him by yourself without a plan or even understanding how he works!"

"What else can I do? I won't wait until he comes after me." The man only became even more determined, "I'll be at a disadvantage if he gets to me first, and that's not my style. I'll find and kill him first!"

"Even though you have no idea what he looks like and what his Stand is?" Kakyoin asked, both nervous and disappointed at the man's decision.

"Knowing he has two right hands is enough, and he knows I'm after him as well! He should be worried that I'll come for his head in his sleep."

The redhead tried one more time to convince the other from going, "Listen, you and I both know that he would have already known about how our Stands work. He's under Dio's command, and he would no doubt be able to at least aware of how you use Silver Chariot."

"And even if he doesn't, that's still no reason to underestimate him. Just think about it, Polnareff." The youngest of the group pleaded, "Please, we'll help you if you need it, but you don't want to be making rash decisions like this."

The man was silent for a moment, before giving a steely gaze. "No, no one else needs to be involved in this. This is between me and him. Later."

"You will go for wool and return home shorn."

Polnareff instantly narrowed his eyes at Avdol, "The hell does that mean?"

The fortune teller didn't back down, "It is as you head it."

"Are you implying I'll lose?"

"Indeed! Are you so foolish that you cannot see the enemy struck so you could follow it? I refuse to let you travel alone, Polnareff!"

The hotheaded man slapped his hand away, "Listen, let me break it down for you! I don't give a fuck about Dio! I told you guys in Hong Kong I was only tagging along to get my revenge! Mr. Joestar, Jotaro, and Kirika already know this!"

It was true. Kirika recalled Polnareff approaching her and her family before they depart for Singapore, talking about how his goal was never in the same pathway as theirs. He was never here to defeat Dio and save her mother. Now that he finally found the culprit behind his sister's murder, he had no reason to follow them around anymore. His goal was near and he just needed to run for it. But he couldn't just go alone like this. Avenging someone or not, no one should just throw their live and possibly in vain. The Frenchman probably didn't plan on doing so, but she could see it happening, and he probably wouldn't mind because revenge had consumed his mind.

Both men's interaction escalated into a shouting match. Polnareff kept insisting that he'd fight alone, as he always had. The other tried drilling it into his mind that Dio was the reason he got involved in this situation in the first place. It came to a head when the hotheaded man ridiculed Avdol, mocking
how he ran like a coward the first time he encountered the vampire. That someone like him wouldn't understand how he felt.

The longer the other continued insulting him, the usually stoic man gradually lost his composure.

But before any punches could be thrown, Joseph stepped in, "That's enough let him go," his tone was slightly somber, as if knew this situation very well and he couldn't prevent it before, "no one can stop it when he's like this."

Avdol complied, and he let a sigh, "No, my intent was not to stop him. I never took him for this kind of man. Indeed it was cowardice that made me flee that day. But that is why I now think we can win," he looked up to Polnareff, "and can say with certainty that you will lose."

"Huh?!") Irritated, Polnareff got closer to the other again and flicked his necklace, "Then I'll say this with certainty, too. Your little prediction is wrong."

He started walking away.

Kirika gulped, the sensation that was building up within her was similar to when the voice started crowding in her mind. But she heard none. The sensation remained and it urged her to get him to come back, "Polnareff!"

The man kept walking, closing his eyes and refused to listen. He was not stopping for anyone.

"There's no changing his mind." Jotaro stood behind her, "Unless something goes really wrong, he won't realize his mistake."

Blue eyes watched as the silver haired man eventually disappeared into the crowd.

One of her hands clutched her chest.

It was starting to hurt again.

_____________________________________________________________________

Worthless.

"That's new."

You couldn't even stop such a simpleton.

"Well, who are you?"

There's no need for you to know.

"So after all these years, you only decide to hold a normal conversation now."

If you keep refusing to listen to me, you will pay the price.

"What the hell am I supposed to do?!!" Kirika couldn't see whoever the source of this voice in the void, and that frustrated her even more. "The guy you told me to save when I was a kid? He's dead! More than 30 years before I was even born, so I couldn't even do anything about it! Caesar Anthonio Zeppeli is de-"
Something clutched around her neck again, this time it was stronger. Kirika began to wonder if she could die in her dream. At this point, she could only imagine that she would have her windpipe crushed, her neck deformed beyond repair, or her skin melted then her organs burned to ash from the unbelievable heat. What was this entity? What had been whispering to her all these times?

_You insolent shell! Your ignorance would doom them!_

The grip became even stronger.

_EVERYONE WILL DIE BECAUSE OF YOUR INACTIONS!_

"Wh- You-!"

Suddenly, flashes of images started appearing. What she saw still horrified her. Blood, death, and destruction. Each piece, while not entirely clear, still showed fragments of who could be affected by these. Things she could identify them with. But the more they went on, the harder it was for her to recognize who. In the end, they spiralled together, like ingredients in a blender. Somehow, they felt like memories, she felt that these events had happened before. But at this point, she was unsure if it was her or the entity who supplied these in her mind.

"N- No-"

_I WILL MAKE YOU WISH YOU WERE NEVER BORN IN THE FIRST PLACE IF YOU FAIL ME AGAIN!_

Heat and pain surrounded her, engulfed her. She felt as if she would perish soon. Her existence gone and forgotten.

Only one name, the one whom she ever shared this with, rang as she suffered even further.

"JOTARO!"

"Kirika!"

His sister kept screaming his name, but she wouldn't open her eyes.

"Kirika, wake up!"

After shaking her a few more times, blue eyes finally shot open. Tears started gathering in her eyes and started running down her face uncontrollably. She resisted it at first, but a sob then a wail started bursting out from her throat like an unclogged pipe. No other words would form, the only noise that she could vomit out was the sound of her crying, with her unable to stop it. Jotaro was at a lost, but he still pulled his sister into his arms and let her stay there until she calmed down. Just like when they were children, when Kirika woke up weeping from a nightmare and their parents weren't around.

It took a while for her tears stopped leaking, "... Sorry..."

"Don't be. I just heard you from the next room."

She didn't know what else to say afterwards.
"This happened back at the airport too."

The girl just slowly nodded, but still said nothing.

"Kirika."

"What?"

"Talk to me."

She heaved a sigh, "I don't even know where to start."

"Just say anything." He had plenty of time.

Kirika said nothing for a few minutes. She contemplated not to say anything. The situation just suddenly became even more complicated. How was she supposed to tell her brother that a presence that had been existing in her mind now started threatening her? Telling him that voices told her to save a long-dead man when they were younger was already confusing him.

"... Everyone will die, and it will be my fault. That's what it said."

Jotaro tensed at that, "The voices?"

"Who else?"

"It doesn't make any sense." The frustration he felt years ago came back. He didn't know how to resolve it, and what ailed his sister had now became worse. "What else did it tell you?"

"That's basically it." There were images, she knew they terrified her. But once she woke up, like a dream, they started getting muddled. Details faded away, so she couldn't even recount them. "It's... It's alright, you know I've been dealing with this for years, so no need to worry."

He gritted his teeth, "The hell I don't."

"Trust me, Jotaro. You can't fix this one."

"I can still try something, at least."

"What? Are we going to treat this like something I need treatment for and suppress it? That's not something that's going to work with this." Even if it was, it's something that she'd rather deal on her own instead of burdening her family.

"That's still not a reason for me not to care." His tone was quiet, pleading almost. "I'm still your brother, you can't expect me not to worry about you."

"Jotaro-"

"If you think this is a burden for me, then fine, I'll take it. I can't do anything about it still, but I did tell you that I'll listen. I'll listen to whatever you have to say about it. I promised you that."

Her expression looked unsure. Kakyoin was right about how the situation became even harder for her to even consider saying anything. There was her fear and anxiety about her mother, now there was the voice that started becoming a menace in her mind. Nothing could solve the latter either, so she thought that it wasn't worth sharing in the end, so only her brother knew anything about it.

That said, she supposed she had no other choice, it was only fair for Jotaro.
"I guess he really isn't coming back." Joseph said after a while.

They all looked at the empty seat they reserved for Polnareff, in case he happened to change his mind and come back to them. But at this point, it seemed to be unlikely. The man was too hellbent on getting revenge. He wouldn't accept anyone's help, yet he was ultimately hopeless in the fight he would be involved in, and he wasn't even aware of that. He underestimated them too much. Kirika couldn't help but feel regret. If only she could somehow stop him from leaving in the first place.

Kakyoin frowned as he stared at the chair across him, a little frustrated that the man couldn't see reason at all, "He should know better. But he just ignored that he's at a severe disadvantage here. He's going to get himself killed."

"Revenge does that to you. When you let it take over, you're just blind to everything else." While Jotaro himself haven't gone through the same thing, he could imagine how it'd be for the Frenchman. A part of him could understand it, he'd act the same if anyone in his family was harmed.

No one said anything for a moment, as they continued to savour their light meals in silence. A half an hour passed, then Avdol suddenly stood up and walked away. "Avdol, where are you going?" his elderly friend asked.

The man stood still for a while, as if he was unsure of what'd he actually do. Eyebrows furrowed, brown eyes starred down at the tiles on the floor. He then finally sighed and turned to give the group a wry smile, "I suppose I can't just let him run off, after all." Then he ran outside into the rain, "I will be back!"

"Mr. Avdol!" Kirika stood up to run after him, "We have to follow him!"

"Hey, Kirika, wait!" with that her grandfather followed suit, so did her brother and Kakyoin. Jotaro gritted his teeth as he tried to catch up to Kirika first, but Joseph eventually got to her before him. The old man seemingly shared his concerns in the event the girl ended up running into J. Geil and his Stand in this city, "Listen, I want you to stick with me. Alright?"

"But wouldn't it be better for all of us to split up to cover more grounds?"

"Avdol couldn't have gone too far. Remember, we're still being targeted too, not just Polnareff. Jotaro, Kakyoin, group up."

So they split into two - man cells. Avdol might have only tried searching for Polnareff around a block or two, but Calcutta was still a city with a lot of corners, nooks and crannies. Not to mention the dense population of the place. They were lucky that the rain had slowly receded at least. Joseph and Kirika ended up running through what seemed to be a spice market, and they still saw no sign of the fortune teller. At some point, Jotaro and Kakyoin ended up splitting up anyway, when they faced an intersection. Despite asking a few people for his whereabouts, they still couldn't find him.

Not long after that, they started hearing people shouting.
Someone claimed that there was a strange fight 2 blocks away.

Then later, someone claimed that a man died to a bullet to his head.

"... Grandpa." Her heart started beating really fast, she thought it would just burst out of her chest.

Joseph gritted his teeth, the sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach gradually became worse, "Stay close."

Soon, many people claimed that a boy with red hair stole a pickup truck and grabbed a man with a silver hair into it. They escaped from the scene towards the city outskirts. It was only a momentary relief for them to find out that Polnareff survived, and Kakyoin managed to get him out of any further dangers. But the overwhelming dread came back as they approached the scene.

Jotaro was already there.

On the street, lied Mohammed Avdol, on the pool of his own blood.

Kirika resisted the urge to throw up, the pressure from the pit of her stomach was unbearable. Strangely enough, the voice stayed silent. It didn't berate her. She wondered if it was giving her the silent treatment. Then she would hear it later in her sleep, as it would gloat and tell her "I told you so". Honestly it was better if it just did it right now. She joined her grandfather kneeling beside the fortune teller, tears started pooling in her eyes.

Jotaro picked up the headband that was ripped off from the man. There were stains of blood covering a portion of it. He hissed behind his teeth, almost snarling. He might not have known Avdol for so long or been close to him. But the man had been there even before they started this journey. An annoying man who would lecture him from time to time, yet he still slowly considered him as a companion who couldn't be replaced.

"Forgive me, old friend." Joseph sombrely spoke, placing a hand on the fallen man's unmoving shoulder. "I wasn't fast enough to get to you." He wondered about the what-ifs. But he decided there was no point, what's done was done. He couldn't help but be taken back to the event almost half a century ago. When he was young and lost a dear friend, where he wasn't fast enough to reach him. "You two, help me lift him up."

Dead people felt heavy, as they said.

But, dead people didn't need to breathe.

Kirika widened her eyes as she saw that the man's chest started rising and falling. "Grandpa, Jotaro, he-! He's still alive!"

"She's right," Jotaro checked his pulse, "it's weak, but he'll pull through. We just need to get the bleeding to stop right now."

"Oh, my god! Let's hurry, then!" Joseph almost cried from joy. "Avdol, you're going to be just fine, my friend!"

In the end, it was decided that Avdol would stay in India for the time being for recuperation. The
wound on his head was just the bullet grazing his skin, which made him pass out, but the wound on his back was particularly deep. "He wasn't working alone," explained the fortune teller, "a man named Hol Horse, another of Dio's men, was working together with him. He acted as a distraction with his Stand the Emperor, while J. Geil used the Hanged Man to stab me through my reflection on the puddle."

Jotaro clicked his tongue, "Shit, Kakyoin and Polnareff are fighting that bastard right now."

"As long as they avoid facing any reflective surface, it should be fine, right?" asked Kirika as she bandaged up the fortune teller's head.

The siblings' grandfather sighed, "At this point, we can only hope they succeed and come back safely. Right now," he put a hand on his friend's shoulder, "we should focus on helping you hide while you recover."

"I suppose we can't let them know that you survive, either." The raven teen didn't like it, but aside from them, no one could know that Avdol's alive. They would risk the enemies finding him and caught him off guard while he's vulnerable. "We can at least tell Kakyoin, he can keep a secret."

"We can't tell Polnareff at all?" Based on what the Egyptian man told them, Avdol basically seemed like he sacrificed himself to save their silver-haired companion. He would inevitably carry the guilt of causing his "death". Kirika furrowed her eyebrows, it's not fair. "Is there really no other way?"

Avdol then smiled wryly as he spoke, "It's not fair at all to leave him in the dark, and whatever good intentions it may have, it still feels cruel. But still, I do hope with this incident, he could learn from it. That he'd stop throwing his life away in vain, like he meant to."

Like the fortune teller said, it was still wrong. But for his sake, they had no choice. Her lips curled upwards slightly, "Well... I'm definitely going to miss you, Mr. Avdol."

He chuckled slightly, "So am I, Ms. Kirika. Do take care of your brother and grandfather in my place."

"Consider it done." she grinned.

Her brother let out a short exhale as a small laugh, "Heh, you take care of yourself, old man."

"I'm at least a quarter of Mr. Joestar's age, Jotaro. I can't be an old man."

"Oi, Avdol! Are you implying that I'm not a healthy young lad anymore?!

"My apologies, but you're not exactly young anymore, Mr. Joestar."

The group laughed. For a moment it felt like there was nothing else they needed to worry about. It was just a moment where they pretended to be just acquaintances enjoying their time in some normal circumstances.

Deep down, they still dreaded the status of their remaining companions.

__________________________________________

They found both of them alive. Wounded, but alive.
Polnareff was being held back by a young woman from chasing after Hol Horse, and there was no time for Kakyoin to chase after him once he got on a horse. It appeared that the woman was taken advantage of and tricked by the cowboy. It irked Kirika that someone like her, an innocent person, ended up being involved in this because of such malicious trickery. But there really wasn't anything they could do about it. Joseph suggested later that they take the woman with them to Varanasi, which coincidentally was where the young woman was from.

"Ow, Kirika, watch it!" Polnareff flinched as the young girl used ethanol-soaked cotton balls to clean up his wounds.

She sighed as she continued, "I told you it would sting."

"Could you at least do it a little bit gentler?" The man squinted at her.

"Any gentler, I might as well just bandage you up without cleaning them and we don't want that!"

"Ugh, fine! Fine. Do whatever you like." The Frenchman crossed his arms as he let the girl treated his wounds in peace.

She swore she could see him pout, causing her to giggle, "Man, you're way fussier than Jotaro." The other didn't respond to that, and they fell into silence. Once she was done, she excused herself and brought along the first aid kit to return it to the reception.

"Kirika," Polnareff suddenly called her before she walked further, "you tried to warn me. So I wouldn't go through with it alone, that I should at least have a cool head and have a strategy first. But I didn't listen to any of you. I was just so ready to die for the sake of avenging Sherry, that I wouldn't listen for any reason... Well, look where it got me. Avdol ended up sacrificing himself for me."

A part of her wanted to tell him, that Avdol survived. That he shouldn't carry this much burden over the fortune teller's life being taken because he's still alive. The fact that she couldn't start to grate her. In the end, she forced herself to remember. This was for Avdol's sake. He needed to heal in peace. If any of them happened to let it slip and their enemies overheard them, the man would be attacked when he's vulnerable. Then they might lose Avdol for good if that happened.

"I'm sorry... I really am."

But she did have something else to say.

"I can forgive you however many times you want, but that doesn't mean much at all." Kirika turned around to face him, "Right now, all you have to do is just be thankful. You got a second chance in life, so next time you know not to just treat your own life as nothing important. That way," she paused momentarily, "what Mr. Avdol did for you wouldn't go to waste. Just keep remembering the lessons you learnt today."

After a moment, Polnareff's lips curled into a smile and he closed his eyes, "Yeah... Yeah, I guess you're right. There's no use for me to keep moping about it either. For his sake, I'll just have to keep on living." Then he looked up at Kirika, "Thanks, and thanks for patching me up."

"Anytime." the girl raised a fist for the other to bump.

The Frenchman was confused for a second, before chuckling as he returned the gesture.
"So he's still alive."

Jotaro nodded.

"And we're keeping Polnareff in the dark about this." Kakyoin frowned at his friend, "This isn't right, and you know it."

"It doesn't matter what any of us think, Avdol needs to recover in secret and that's that." the raven teen then lit up a cigarette.

"Then why tell me and not Polnareff? He's the one feeling the worst about it, screwing with his mind like this would just make it even worse." protested the redhead. He couldn't even begin to imagine the outburst they'd have to face later when they finally could tell the truth. Was there really no other way for them to go about this?

"It's exactly why we better not let him know." He took a drag of his cigarette before letting out a puff of smoke, "We might only have been travelling with him for a few days, but he's the kind of person who's honest to a fault. If he accidentally spills it, then Avdol's in danger. On the other hand, I trust you to keep a secret."

Purple eyes narrowed, "Am I supposed to take that as a compliment?"

The other teen sighed, "Take that however you want, doesn't change the fact that we can't let Dio's goons know."

Conflict brewed in the shorter teen's mind. This wasn't fair, none of this was fair. But he still tried to keep a cool head about it. He still found it foul. It wasn't exactly them scheming behind Polnareff's back, but it might as well be that. Then again, he knew Jotaro was right. The Frenchman wore his heart on his sleeve and couldn't lie. They were admirable traits, but in this case, that would risk the safety of their friend.

Kakyoin let out an exasperated sigh, "I suppose I can let it slide, then."

"It annoys me too, but what choice do we have?" he shrugged. "How's your wound, by the way?"

The other rolled up his sleeve to check on it, "It's healing up fast, my injuries aren't as bad as Polnareff, but Kirika still insisted on bandaging it."

A groan let itself out from Jotaro's throat, "You can just tell her no, she'll do that every time we got scratched up."

"I don't see you ever doing it. You rarely listen to your own advice, huh?" the redhead smirked.

"Touché." Once his cigarette burnt out, the taller teen put it inside an empty cigarette box, "Let's just rest for now. We got a long way ahead to Varanasi tomorrow."

The other followed suit.

He still didn't like it, but for now, it was for the best.

Chapter End Notes
Another chapter full of just them talking. But I hope it gives more insight to the characters!

I've just always wondered when Joseph stopped Avdol from stopping Polnareff, if it took him back to when he tried stopping Caesar from going after Wamuu.
Interlude; City of Shiva

Chapter Summary

Snapshots of their journey leaving Kolkata, and their short stay in Varanasi.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the very late update, guys. This chapter honestly felt more like a compilation of drabbles. I mean, the Empress episode is Joseph centric, with the side of Polnareff being traumatized afterwards. Then we start with Duel, Jojo version.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kakyoin managed to wake up pretty early, despite staying up quite late. He went to Jotaro's room last night to hang out like usual, minus Kirika, who decided to retire to her room early. They were just going to watch some TV, trying to see if there was anything interesting, and if not they'd just be chatting about anything. But then Polnareff came into the room and roped them into drink some beer he bought from the hotel's bar. Jotaro, like the delinquent he was, gladly accepted the offer.

This was illegal, they were still under 20!

He half-hoped that the elder Joestar would put a stop to it when he came to the room. But the man just joined them in the impromptu drinking session. Kakyoin wanted no part of it, but in the end he caved in from curiosity and took a few gulps. The buzz he got from it wasn't unpleasant, it didn't taste bad, either. Only after a few gulps later that he started getting a bit tipsy. He supposed that was the start of his limit.

A few cans later, Joseph grew tipsy and sang some old songs loudly, which annoyed his grandson immensely. Polnareff himself started crying and lying on the floor, rambling about mistakes. The rest of them felt a little bad for him. It was clear he meant to drown his sorrows with this. In the end, Jotaro had to kick his grandfather out of his room, who complied and stumbled to his own room. The teens then carried a thoroughly shit-faced Polnareff back to his room, dropping him onto his bed, before parting ways to sleep.

The redhead then suddenly remembered.

Kirika's room was right next to Jotaro's.

Could the girl even sleep through the ruckus from the next room?

He finished dressing himself up and combed his hair, before heading towards her room. The least he could do was apologize. He could have tried and kept the noise down, but he didn't. Once he was in front of her room, Kakyoin knocked on the door, "Kirika, it's me, Kakyoin."

No answer.
"Is she not awake yet?"

"Kirika?" he knocked again.

Still no answer, but he did hear a thud. Soon after, the door slowly opened. Revealing a still half-asleep Kirika, still in her pyjamas with her hair all tangled up. Her eyes were barely open as she looked up to Kakyoin. Blue eyes peeking from under her lashes. She was still just standing there as she held the door open, just enough for the older teen to peek into her room. Seeing how her blanket was strewn all over the floor, she assumed that was what the thud was from. The girl probably fell while struggling to get to the door. He couldn't help but chuckle when he noticed that the girl was still not exactly conscious, her body swaying slightly. It was kind of adorable. "Good morning."

"Hmm, good morning..." she slurred her words. "... D'you need help, Kakyoin?"

"Ah, I just would like to apologize. We got pretty noisy last night in the next room. So if you had trouble sleeping through the noise, I'm sorry." Judging from her current state, it was clear that was the cause. "Anyway, you might want to get ready soon. Then we can have some breakfast."

She raised a hand to rub her eyes, "Mm, what time is it...?"

The boy checked on his wristwatch, "It's almost 8 AM."

Blue eyes instantly shot open. Kakyoin could now see faint red veins on the white parts of her eyes. She really didn't sleep well. "Crap, I'm late! I didn't hear my alarm!"

"Don't worry, we still have plenty of time before we have to catch the bus to Varanasi. So you're fine." he tried calming her down.

"I was planning to wake up earlier..." the girl gave a sigh. "Alright, thanks for the wake up call! I'll get ready now!"

With that, she shut her door.

Kakyoin ended up giving a small laugh after a while.

Well, that was a sudden change of mood.

---

"I'm sorry about last night, Kirika." Joseph scratched the back of his neck, smiling apologetically at his granddaughter as they sat at the dining table. "Once we hit the road, I hope you can catch some sleep while we're on the way to Varanasi."

She shook her head, "No, it's alright! I don't think I'll be able to just doze off for a while. What happened last night, anyway?"

Her brother pointed at Polnareff, who planted his face on the table and groaned in pain. "The idiot brought some drinks and ended up getting hammered hard. Also Gramps sang some songs in his shitty voice."

"Wait, hold on a minute, Jotaro! My voice isn't that bad!" protested the elder Joestar.

"My ass it isn't." He ignored further protests from his grandfather.
Kirika narrowed her eyes at her brother, "Let me guess, you drank too, didn't you?"

The raven gave her an annoyed look, "It's not like I'm the only one who did it. Kakyoin had some too last night."

"Hey, at least I only drank one instead of four like you did. Also that's only my first time drinking." the other teen squinted his eyes at him.

"Four- Ugh, Jotaro, I swear your liver's going to shrivel up like a dried bean before you're 20."

The raven gave a sigh, "Gimme' a break, it's not like I do it every single day."

"You're not even supposed to drink in the first place." she scowled before sighing. "Anyway, where's the girl from yesterday?"

Joseph frowned as he answered, "She's still in her room, she said she didn't want to eat. All she did throughout yesterday was begging us to leave Hol Horse alone."

"She couldn't be any older than us. Just how long had Hol Horse manipulated her like this?" It honestly disgusted Kakyoin that the man were more than willing to have an innocent person to essentially become a willing meat shield for him.

"Hol Horse is a coward. A man like that, I'm not surprised if there were other people he'd used for his own gain in the past." added the elder Joestar.

"And the bastard's gone." Polnareff finally spoke. "If only I killed him on the spot right then and there-"

"It won't be of any use." Jotaro cut him off, eyeing the man with a stern look. "You think a guy, who immediately ran away, the moment he knew he has to fight you on his own, is even worth your time?"

The silver haired man appeared to contemplate the teen's words, "Perhaps not. It just boils my blood when I think about how he could just get away and not suffer the same fate as Avdol."

"I understand that, but it would ultimately be pointless. Mr. Avdol wouldn't want you to be stuck in a cycle of revenge, either." He was still not comfortable having to lie about Avdol's survival, but the redhead did need to say that to the hotheaded man.

"Well, the only thing we can do now is to take her home, back to her family. Make sure she's safe and sound, away from Hol Horse's influence. It's the least we could do," said Kirika, feeling optimistic about the situation.

At least, that's what she wanted to feel.

Right now, sitting next to the other girl was somehow making her nervous. She couldn't help but compare it again to when she met Kakyoin for the second time, as well as the fake captain. It was heavily suppressed, but she could still feel it. Considering her hunch was right for those two times, this girl they thought was innocent could just very well be another Stand user working under Dio. But at the same time, looking at how depressed she looked, it almost seemed like all she cared about
was Hol Horse and, unfortunately, how much she loved the man. The younger girl couldn't help but shudder at the thought.

She hadn't made a move on any of them either, then again that was probably to lure them into a false sense of security.

*This is one hell of a dilemma, it's easier with Kakyoin and that guy who were straight up menacing when confronting us.* The bus wouldn't be here for another 15 minutes, so she should probably use it to figure out the other's real intentions, then. "H- Hey, you can just call me Kirika. What's your name?"

The girl didn't answer her. She just continued looking down at her feet.

She tried again, "Um, I- I heard that in India, my friend told me that the stone on your forehead means that you're a bride. Is that true?"

For a while, she thought that she wouldn't get answered again. But then, the other spoke, "If I was a bride, I don't want to be married to anyone else, but Master Hol Horse."

Kirika didn't know how to respond. Hell, she didn't even know what to say afterwards. She never really held any sort of romantic feelings for anyone, but if she ever did, she knew very well that she wouldn't want it to be something like the other's feelings. Continuing to love someone who was clearly ready to just throw you away was definitely not something any sane individual would do.

After wracking her brain for 5 minutes, she finally asked her again, "What do you want to do now? I mean, when you get back to Varanasi?"

"... I'll wait. I don't care if it takes forever, I'll wait until Master Hol Horse comes back to me. He promised me that."

Was she allowed to consider this as the definite answer?

"Hey, Kirika, the bus is here." Jotaro called to her.

"Ah, okay! Time to go, Miss." The girl watched as the other stood up. She was still uneasy about her, but she really had no way to prove her being a Stand user. Jotaro didn't seem to notice anything weird either.

*Guess we'll just see.*

---

The journey to Varanasi took 20 hours, and they had to stop at Bihar Sharif first before they could resume their bus ride. The scenery between the two cities were mostly paddy fields and some forests. While it was beautiful at first, after a while the repetition became dull after a while. There really wasn't much to do to occupy their time. The 2 hour transit gave some change of pace, as well as the various stops they needed to do so the bus could refuel, but it wasn't exactly enough. So everyone, especially the teenagers, were starting to get bored of just sleeping and talking.

"Why are you braiding Kakyoin's hair?" Jotaro quirked his eyebrows at his sister.

"I needed something to do with my hands." the girl continued to absentmindedly braid the red
strands of hair.

The redhead himself had a blank expression as he read the book in his hands for the third time in this journey, he really needed to buy a new one at some point. "It's fine, Jojo. We're really running out of things to do here."

The eldest of the Kujo siblings then turned to his grandfather, "Gramps, how long until we reach the city?"

"It'll take about 3 more hours. So we're more or less almost there." He then stretched, "Man, my shoulder's getting really stiff."

Polnareff suddenly shot up and put a hand around Kakyoin and Kirika, pulling them in, "Now, while we still have time, 'fess up! What's your type?"

"Oh, my god..." Joseph groaned slightly the question.

"Type- What, you mean, what kind of person we'd like to date?" the girl internally sighed somewhat knew that he would be asking this kind of question.

Kakuyoin raised an eyebrow at the Frenchman, "Really, Polnareff?"

"Come on, it's just a harmless question! Jotaro, what's yours?"

"I don't have to answer that kind of stupid question." the raven squinted his eyes at the man.

"You're no fun at all! Let me guess, your type must be those girls who goes around wearing leather jackets and riding motorcycles."

Jotaro almost wanted to laugh at that, "Heh, wrong. I like traditional women more."

For a while the bus went silent, followed with a loud shout of "WHAT" in unison.

Except from Kirika.

"Sometimes I couldn't tell if what's out of your mouth is a joke or not, Jojo." said Kakyoin.

"It's not a joke." the other deadpanned at him.

"That's what your face always looks like, I have to make sure."


"Well, what about you, Kakyoin? You must have one." Polnareff looked expectantly at him.

The redhead hummed for a bit, "Ah, well, I'd love someone who's able to calm and ease the hearts of the people around her. In return, I want to be able to protect her, because that's what she'd make me want to do."

"Well, I expected you to be that cheesy." teased Jotaro.

"What can I say, I'm a bit of a romantic at heart." the teen gave a chuckle.

Polnareff grinned, "Not bad, not bad. Then it's just you left, Kirika! Are you crushing on anyone?"

In the corner of her eyes, the girl noticed that her brother and grandfather tensed a bit. "No, actually."
"Well, then, what kind of guy you want to date?"

Kirika was silent for a while, contemplating her answer. She tried to think back about how she viewed every single classmates she had. Then she came into a conclusion, "I don't think I even have a type, to be honest."

"What?! That can't be right!"

"I really don't have any!"

Joseph sighed, it almost sounded like it was in relief, "Polnareff, stop bothering my granddaughter. If she said she doesn't have any, then that's that."

"But there's gotta' be someone! You're in high school and all. Maybe someone like Jotaro-"

His hair was suddenly gripped in Kirika's fist, "Gross. Don't ever say that again."

Kakyoin stared at him judgementally, "Can't believe you just said something so disgusting."

Meanwhile, Jotaro started cracking his fists, "Polnareff, come over here." Joseph beside him were crackling the joints of his prosthetic hand.

"Oi, oi! No need for violence! Please, let go of my hair! I mean someone who behaves like him, you know what I mean!"

"No way! Jotaro himself isn't a boyfriend material at all in the first place! He'd probably break up with any of his fangirl who'd date him in just a month." In the background, both Joseph and Kakyoin put their hands each on Jotaro's shoulders, as if pitying him, much to the raven's chagrin.

"Well, at least we know what you don't like." With that the Frenchman dropped the topic and went to talk with the Indian girl behind him, or rather, trying to convince her to give up on Hol Horse.

"Brain separated from his dick, indeed."

Kirika lightly elbowed her brother on the back.

Varanasi.

A city closely associated the holy river of Ganga, it was considered the holiest city in India, as part of the Sapta Puri, the seven sacred cities. It was especially famous for its numerous ghats, embankments made of stones where pilgrims performed ablution rituals, as well as for people to send off the burning corpses to their final resting place. It was said that the Buddha first created Buddhism here, and that the god Shiva favoured Varanasi.

To die here is to receive salvation.

It was also a main producer of silk and muslin fabrics, as well as brocades with gold and silver threads. Kirika was especially amazed with the handiworks displayed on the stores around the city. "Jotaro! Jotaro! Do you think Mom would like this?" she showed him a lilac dress made from muslin, decorated with golden threads.
"How should I know what she kind of clothes she likes to buy?"

"Gee, thanks, you're real helpful."

"Are you really planning to buy that? We can't bring it around everywhere we go." It wasn't like any of their bags are even big enough to store it, either.

"Well, no, but... We've been to so many places, and Mom can't be here. So I just," she trailed off, "I at least want her to have something from it, when she wakes up."

For a while, the raven watched as his sister stared sadly at the dress in her hands. In the end, he couldn't help but thinking the same thing. After going through what could basically be chalked up as something that would be a month-long near-death experience, their mother at least deserved something good. Something from the travels would be just nice. "Whatever you want to get her, and if there's anything you want, I'll pay for it."

Kirika looked up to him, eyebrows quirking, "Wait, we can't bring it with us. You just said it yourself."

"After that, we can just find a postal service to send it to our address. How does that sound?" He smiled when her face instantly lit up. Jotaro then let himself be hugged out of gratitude, his hand went to lightly pat her head.

"Thanks a lot."

"No big deal."

"Alright, I'll look around again for a bit!" But before she ventured around the store again, she stopped, "We have to group up soon, by the way. Grandpa told us to meet at The Clarks at 4. Do you know where the others went?"

"Beats me. Kakyoin said he just wanted to wander around, Polnareff went with that girl, he said he wanted to take her home to her family. Probably trying to date her." Sometimes, Jotaro questioned why they had to travel with someone like that.

"Well, figures." Then again, she hoped Polnareff was okay. Even after they arrived in Varanasi, the girl, who claimed that her name was Nenna, still felt a little unnerving to her. Kirika half-expected her to just attack them in the middle of their bus ride, but nothing came off it. She frowned a bit afterwards, "I wonder if Grandpa’s bug bite is okay now. I don't know if we should even call it that, it looks more like tumour."

"If it is, then at least the doctor could easily remove it. Though," green eyes narrowed, "I have the suspicion that it's not either of those either."

As Kirika suspected, the girl turned out to be a Stand user. She planted her Stand on Joseph's arm, which continuously grew as it attached to him, so Jotaro assumed right about it not being a tumour or a bug bite. But it wasn't the young girl who was their enemy, rather it was another woman hiding within the skin of said young girl, the real Nenna seemed to have killed her to use her as a disguise. So apparently, Hol Horse was also tricked in a way. Joseph was able to defeat her, but because the Stand killed a doctor and framed the murder on him, they were forced to continue on their way to
Pakistan.

The girl sighed, "Well, at least the Stand user was defeated, right? Shame we didn't get to rest for a bit, though."

"And here I thought we'd finally be able to sleep in a bed," commented Kakyoin. They had to go on another road trip, and he was pretty sure they'd be stiff all over by the time they reached the next country.

"Maybe we would be, if Gramps hadn't fucked up and got the cops chasing him." To be fair, it was kind of their fault not realizing that it was a Stand on his grandfather's arm. But Jotaro reasoned to himself that there was really no actual way for them to be sure, considering the girl never made any real suspicious move on them.

The elder Joestar then called out to them, "It's all taken care of. We're taking this car. Polnareff, your turn to drive." He threw the keys at the Frenchman, which ended up sticking into his cylinder of a hair. The man himself barely reacted. Kakyoin looked like he almost gave a chuckle at that. "Hey, are you still in shock? I'm the one who got attacked by the Stand."

Polnareff quietly replied, "I think I would have preferred that..."

"Good grief, at least now you learnt to stop wasting your time being a skirt-chaser."

"It's just she looked like a nice girl, so I thought..."

Kirika tapped him on the back, "Seemingly nice girls could be a wolf in sheep's clothing, you know? Remember that."

"Come on, Polnareff, we really need to go soon." Kakyoin tried urging him, while at the same time, being pretty amused by the whole thing.

In the end, the silver-haired man decided to let it go and started up the car.

Chapter End Notes

I was checking around and found that both Hotel Clarks and Hotel Grand are real. Only that Hotel Clarks is named The Clarks, and Hotel Grand is The Oberoi Grand.

Also should I tag underaged drinking? I think we tend to forget that both Jotaro and Kakyoin are still just 17.
The next day, they arrived in Delhi and stopped there for a while. After being on the road for around 6 hours, it was another reprieve for them. But they couldn't stay the night. They still needed to get to Pakistan at least by the end of today. At the very least, right now, they could get some food. They ordered some mutton biryani, butter chicken, and some kebabs, with Kirika getting some custard apple kulfi for dessert. It was fulfilling enough to sustain them for the next 5 hours on the road. They did have to lay low for a bit, since Joseph was essentially still a fugitive.

3 hours later, they're almost at their destination.

"We'll be at the Pakistani border soon," Kakyoin mused, "and saying farewell to India."

Joseph hummed in agreement, "I wasn't sure what we had gotten ourselves into at first, but I'm already missing the chaos of Calcutta and the rushing waters of Ganges."

"It really was a great place to visit once we got used to it, so many things that are so distinctly different from Japan and we ended up enjoying them." commented Kirika.

"I'll be going back there soon," Polnareff's tone turned sombre, "I need to make Avdol a proper grave."

Everyone else in the car tensed a bit. That's right, they still couldn't tell him the truth. It was still for Avdol's sake, they had to wait until he could at least recover fully, but how long could they keep it up? The car ride stayed silent for a moment after that.

After a while, Polnareff spoke again, noticing that the road was starting to narrow. A red car was driving slowly before them. Its tires ground against the sandy earth, blowing dust into their car, particularly at the driver. The Frenchman coughed, "What's the hold up? Move it!" When the other car was kept on the same pace, he decided to swerve so he could pass the car. Flinging some pebbles onto it in the process.

Kakyoin flinched as the car jolted up and down from the rocky road, "Polnareff, that was reckless!"
The man just laughed it off, "Four-wheel drive is great!"

"Hey, did we just fling pebbles at that car?" Joseph asked as he looked concerned at the other car.

"Well, I could have." Polnareff grinned.

Kirika lightly jabbed a finger at the man's head, "Don't even think about it, we don't need anymore trouble after what happened in Varanasi."

Her grandfather sighed, "I'm still wanted for that. Let's just make it across the border alive."

"Fine, fine." So Polnareff continued to drive normally, before suddenly stopping after giving a yelp.

It jolted everyone in the car. Jotaro gave a grunt, "Fuck! What was that for?!"

"What's wrong, Polnareff?!" exclaimed Kakyoin, for a moment he thought there was danger coming.

"Kirika and I just finished telling you we don't need anymore troubles!" scolded Joseph.

Polnareff pointed at in front of them, "I- It's not that! Look! There's someone in the way!"

Just a short distance from where the car stopped, stood a very familiar figure. Their temporary companion, whom they thought had gone her separate way back in Singapore, had returned. No one was really sure how she even knew they'd be here, but here she was. "Yo, we meet again!"

Everyone in the car gave a soft, confused groan. Kakyoin grimaced, "She must've sneaked into the train and the boat with us."

Jotaro clicked his tongue in annoyance, "Gimme' a break..."

Kirika then stuck her head out of the window, "Anne, what are you doing here? I thought you're meeting your dad in Singapore!"

"Well, I lied. Both of my parents are still in Hong Kong. But I needed an excuse so you'll take me along, and that's that." She replied nonchalantly as she approached them, "Can I ride with you?"

The older girl pursed her lips, "It's not that you can't, but-"

"Just get in." Jotaro barked as he gestured Kirika to move back and opened the door for Anne so she could squeeze in.

"Look, let's just get to Pakistan as fast as we can for now. Then you'll have to stop following us by then." Joseph warned the little girl.

She immediately objected to it, "No way! I'm following you guys all the way!"

"You already saw what happened when you were with us, it's too dangerous for you. Our journey isn't a normal holiday trip like you think it is." added Kakyoin, purple eyes narrowed as he tried to convince her.

"Oh, come on. Don't try to scare me! How can it be worse, anyway? Besides, Jojo defeated them all, so we'll be just fine."

There was a collective sigh from the rest of the group.

For the next hour, Anne kept talking about how it was her dream to travel around the world and that
this was her only chance to do it. Explaining that since she'd be a teenager soon, she was going to have to doll herself up to impress the boys, and that she'd look pathetic travelling the world like that. Kirika didn't really understand how those two elements even correlated, but she supposed she grasped what she meant a little bit. It was still an admirable dream to have. Then again, as they had been trying to explain to her, they were absolutely not suitable travelling companions right now.

"I still feel a bit bad for lying about seeing my dad in Singapore, but let's just forget about that."

"But don't you think your parents are worried sick by now? You're gone for almost 2 weeks at this point!" Kirika quirked her eyebrows.

Anne pouted at her, "I don't see you worrying about it, and you've been gone longer than I am!"

"I told you we're doing this for my Mom, Dad's away on his job, so-" she was cut off by a honk from behind.

"It's the car from before," noted Jotaro, "he seems to be in a rush."

"Let him pass." his grandfather told Polnareff, who complied and signalled the driver to pass him. Jotaro suspiciously eyed the car as it did just that, feeling something permeating from it, but he wasn't sure what. He looked to Kirika, who shuddered slightly as the car moved. He took that as some sort of confirmation that they should watch out.

The car settled in front of them as it continued to drive as slowly as before. The dust from the road it ground got into the group's car, causing them to cough as it invaded their respiratory system. "What is he doing?" asked Polnareff, irritated. "I just let you pass, so get moving!" Once again, he tried to pass the car again, but there wasn't big enough opening for him to do so.

"Do you think maybe he's still angry about your reckless driving earlier?" asked Kakyoin, but then thought to himself that the other driver was displaying a rather odd behavior at the same time.

Jotaro leaned towards Polnareff, "Did you see his face?"

"No... Maybe it was just the dust, but I couldn't see him." replied Polnareff.

"Same here." the raven added, nothing the vehicle's dirty appearance. His suspicion towards the driver ramped up, "It couldn't be..."

Joseph nodded, "Watch yourself, Polnareff."

"W- Wait, what's going on?" Anne frantically looked around, searching for answers.

Kirika held her shoulders, "Stay calm, whatever happens, we're here." That seemed to ease the younger girl a little.

The car's window then rolled down, and a hand came out. Giving Polnareff a signal to pass him. The Frenchman scoffed while the others was slightly relieved, though still alert, "I guess he realized his car can't handle it. You should have just stayed behind me in the first place, you dumbass!"

So Polnareff swerved to the front of the car.

A pickup truck suddenly appeared so close before them.

Everyone in the car shouted.

"What?!!"
"We're gonna' crash!" the redhead braced himself. Joseph instinctively covered his granddaughter and Anne, while Jotaro leaned more to the front, trying to shield them.

The two vehicles collided, and Star Platinum was summoned, the force behind its fist flung their car into the air and onto the ground again on its wheels. "Th- That was close!" exclaimed Polnareff. "If it weren't for Star Platinum, we'd have all been crushed."

"Everyone alright?" Kakyoin looked behind him in concern, checking the other passengers.

Kirika was still a little shaken by it, while trying to calm Anne who started hyperventilating, "Y- Yeah, we're fine. Everyone's fine."

The elder Joestar then realized something, "Where is it? Where's that car?!

"Looks like it drove off," green eyes scanned their surrounding once more, finding no sign of it, "so, you think the driver is one of the Stand users that's after us? Or was it just some random asshole?"

"Of course it's someone coming after us! We almost got killed!" yelled their driver.

"But we haven't seen anything resembling a Stand attack yet." argued Kakyoin.

The hazel-haired girl gritted her teeth, "My gut feeling about it has been right thrice. He's one of them, I'm not taking any chances."

"Even so," Joseph spoke up, "we need to be careful as we approach the border. If anyone else comes after us, we'll have to take them out without question."

Everyone seemed to agree to that. Kakyoin then looked at the truck they just crashed into, "What about the truck? Star Platinum put a pretty mean dent in it."

"Should we at least check out the driver? Make sure they're okay?" asked Kirika.

But her brother had another idea, "Just pretend like we were never here. Ignore it."

"Yeah, let's do that." Polnareff drove them off quickly.

The younger Kujo just hoped that the truck driver was doing just fine after that.

After driving for another hour, they arrived at a teahouse to wind down for a bit. Kirika was rather eager to try the sugarcane juice the place served. She had only tasted a gulp before her grandfather suddenly noticed that the red car was parking under a tree nearby. Jotaro and Polnareff went to check it out, only to discover that no one was inside. That could only mean one thing, the driver was one of the other guests.

"Mister, I need to ask you something!" exclaimed Joseph to the shopkeeper. "The driver of the car parked out there, who is it?"

The man was utterly confused by the sudden question, "I- I wasn't paying attention when that car parked there..."

Kakyoin clicked his tongue in annoyance, "I doubt he will reveal himself."
"He's fucking with us!" Polnareff gritted out, his eyes staring at the 3 men sitting on the other side of the teahouse with intense scrutiny.

"That leaves us only one option." Joseph gestured to his grandson, "Jotaro..."

Kirika got a bad feeling about this, "Wait, don't tell me- We don't know for sure!"

But her brother then pointed at them, "No, he's right. Since none of them will come forward, we'll just have to beat them all!"

"H- Hold on, what do you guys think you're doing-" No one listened to Kakyoin and Kirika as they started trying to pummel the guests to the ground, "Hey, Jotaro, stop! You too, Mr. Joestar! You're going too far!"

The girl tried to pull her brother first, away from his victim, "This is absolutely one the worst ideas you ever had! It can't be this easy, damn it!"

"Polnareff, don't join in too!" the redhead yelled exasperatedly as the Frenchman was ready to punch one of them.

But the man ignored him as he held up one of them by his scarf, "You've got a real shitty face, pal!"

At one point, the shop owner tried to stop them too and get them to leave, but the one-sided brawl only ended when the group heard the red car's engines being started. The driver then drove away, leaving the men dumbfounded.

"W- Were we seriously just played?" Polnareff stuttered.

Joseph promptly released the clearly traumatized man he was holding, "Guys, did any of you catch his face?"

Everyone shook their heads. "N- No," Kakyoin began trying to analyze the situation further, "what do you think he's up to? He seemed like any other bad driver, but now it looks like he's following us."

Kirika hummed, "I've been thinking about it, but... Don't you guys think this is eerily similar to the movie Duel? Does that mean we can predict his next move with that?"

"It sounds dumb as hell, but you might be right on the money." Jotaro gritted his teeth.

"I'll be pissed if we can't track him down and take care of this!" the hot-headed Frenchman grunted as he ran towards the car. The others followed suit. "And he's got another thing coming for that stunt he pulled with the truck earlier!" They drove as fast as they could, following the direction the smaller car took. After a while, they finally saw it, and Polnareff gave chase. "Shit! For a piece of junk, that thing is pretty quick!"

They reached an intersection with a sign pointing to Pakistan on the right, to which they followed the car, still. Noticing their surroundings, Kakyoin scrambled to get the map and opened it, "That's odd. According to the map, we should be running a parallel with train tracks right now."

"Who the hell cares? We almost have him!" The Frenchman accelerated the car to get to the other car faster, cursing when his target did the same. "I'll get him for sure on the next curve!"

Only they lost the car, and they almost fell off a cliff. The other side of the road was only connected by an old rickety bridge. They had been tricked again.
"He's gone, where'd he go?!" Joseph became even more wary as seconds ticked away, no one could locate it at all.

Kakyoin was slightly panicking, purple eyes frantically looked around, "Did he really disappear after the curve? No car could cross such a tiny bridge."

"There isn't anywhere for it to hide, either! Did it fall down?" Cold sweat started running down Kirika's temple.

Just as she finished saying that, they were rammed from behind.

By the red car.

Jotaro held his sister closer as he glared at the car, "What the fuck-"

"How did he get behind us?!!" Kakyoin cried out. "Polnareff, move us out of the way!"

"I'm trying!" He changed the car's gear, but no matter how much force he put for the car to move, the red car still managed to push them. "He's pushing us with insane horsepower! Is that thing built like a tank?!" The closer they got to the edge of the cliff, the more Polnareff lost faith in their car, "It's no use! Guys, get out of the car and run!"

"What kind of driver gets out of the car before everyone else?!!" the redhead pointed accusingly at him. "Who will hold down the brake pedal?!"

The front tires finally went over the cliff. Silence permeated, as Polnareff slowly turned around at Kakyoin, a sheepish grin on his face. "S- S- Sorry!"

As they fell down, Kakyoin took the initiative to summon Hierophant Green, which Joseph dreaded, "Don't! Your Hierophant won't be able to hold all this weight! It'll be torn apart!"

The teenager instead, gave him a smirk, "Mr. Joestar, I beg your pardon, but I know my own strength. I'm no fool." He already had his Stand flew up with the car's wire winch, connecting it with the red car above so it'd hang from it.

"Good job!" Kirika gave him a thumbs up, the other gave a small wink in response.

Her brother gave a short exhale, resembling a chuckle, "Not bad, Kakyoin. By the way do you like sumo?" Right as he said that, Star Platinum was summoned again, the teen having it grabbed the wire, then pulled on it with as much force as it could before punching the red car so there was some sort of a pulley effect between the 2 vehicles. Sending their car up, and in exchange, flipping their opponent down the cliff. "How about a good deadlock? Pretty exciting, huh?!!"

As the car landed on top of the cliff, Kakyoin grinned at his friend despite the pain from bumping with the car's ceiling. "Yes, I do enjoy sumo. But Jotaro, you should know it's against the rules to punch your opponent."

He returned the grin, "Breaking the rules once in a while is fine."

"In your case? It'd be every single time." Kirika scoffed. "Well, guess this situation isn't really following Duel, then."

After the situation calmed down further, they went out to check the fallen car. Smoke blew from the flames engulfing the vehicle below. The driver definitely wouldn't survive that. It'd take some kind of miracle to do so. So it might just really a disgruntled driver trying to kill them without anyone
knowing for some petty revenge. On one hand, it was just them enacting some self-defense. But on the other hand, the man probably was not a Stand user. What was that feeling she felt, then?

"But it's so strange," Anne spoke again after a long time, "that car came behind us out of nowhere. It's really weird..."

The older girl couldn't help but agree with that too. Blue eyes looked around their surroundings, before landing at faint tire tracks on the stone walls behind them. Before she could say anything about it, their car's radio came to life.

"There ain't... Nothin' weird... About it!" It startled the group. "This was all the work of a Stand, Joestar!"

That solidified it for them.

"Where is it coming from?" Kakyoin began looking around again. "Could it be from the car that just fell?"

"It can't be!" argued Polnareff. "That thing was totalled!"

A sudden realization hit Kirika, "Unless... The car itself is his Stand!"

"Just like the Stand, Strength, was a ship." Green eyes glared at their car, preparing his stance.

It then announced itself as the Wheel of Fortune, before the ground rumbled, as if an earthquake started.

"Everyone," the elder Joestar gestured the others to follow him, "in the car!"

Jotaro snapped up, "No, stay out! Get away from the car!"

All of the sudden, their car was rammed from below, as the red car shot up from inside the ground. When it landed, it landed with so much force it caused the group to fall down. Despite its banged up appearance, it appeared menacing before them. The dreadful feeling Kirika felt slightly when they first noticed the car, was now even stronger.

"I think it's safe to say that car is definitely a Stand!" exclaimed the silver haired man.

"The Stand's user is controlling it from the inside!" added the redhead.

The car suddenly started changing its appearance. From a normal car, it slowly formed into a monstrous one. The front turned into something that almost looked like a monster. Almost like something that was living, and it was ready to hunt them. It was rapidly racing towards them.

"Jotaro, get out of the way!" Kirika summoned Galileo and tried flipping the car, as she had her Stand creating spikes from the ground on its way and under it. But the car kept going, crushing her attempts with its enormous strength, no doubt a result of it being a Stand. "Shit!"

The raven grinned as he formed a fist, "It wants to see who's stronger."

"Don't, Jotaro! You can't fight it yet!" Joseph warned his grandson. "We don't know what his Stand is capable of!"

Before he could even summon his Stand, multiple things suddenly shot out and punctured Jotaro all over his body like bullets. He began stumbling, "N-No way, I didn't see a thing! What did it shoot
Their opponent laughed gleefully, "Ya' missed it? You'll figure it out soon, once ya' got a foot in the grave!" He then raced towards him again. Polnareff and Kakyoin quickly tried moving him away, only for the three of them to be shot by the same things.

"Jotaro! Polnareff! Kakyoin!" cried out Joseph. He started summoning Hermit Purple, but then realized that the others were out of his range. The car suddenly jumped over him, his granddaughter, and Anne, so he grabbed both to cover them.

Kirika gritted her teeth as she broke away and fished out some pencils from her pockets. Using Galileo's ability, she changed the structure of the graphite inside, turning it into graphene. Let's see if I can crack the windows. With that's done, she shot the graphene sticks out of the wooden layers. The amount of pressure Galileo put on it allowed it to fly out of the pencils with high speed, almost like bullets.

But just like the spikes, the graphene cylinders broke without even leaving a scratch on the glass, causing the girl to growl in frustration.

Joseph then approached the others, "Everyone! Jotaro! Are you okay?"

"Don't worry about me. More importantly," he eyed the already charging car, "I can't tell what type of attack that is, but it has good accuracy."

"I'll break yer legs so you can't escape, then trample you to death!" threatened the Stand user. They had no choice but to run.

"Get between the boulders!" ordered Joseph as he carried Anne.

"You can't escape me!" the car's front bumper - turned - pincers started chipping away at the opening of the two rocks, as it tried making it bigger for itself to enter. "Are you guys pretending to be cockroaches?!"

"Oh, no! It's forcing its way in!" cried out the elder Joestar.

"We don't stand a chance against him!" Not even Emerald Splash could penetrate the strong exterior of the vehicle, considering Kirika just shot graphenes that are 200 times tougher than steel.

"He's like an idiot who can't solve a simple puzzle ring, and is taking out on us!" Polnareff gritted out.

Kirika took some steps back, "More like he's angry about a puzzle piece that wouldn't stick into its completely wrong spot!"

"Keep going!" Jotaro told them, making sure the others got further first before he himself ran. But then Anne stayed behind too long because of shock, before tripping as she ran and fell. She panicked when she saw no one else before her and started crying, "Yeah, it's true! I ran away from home, and I'm a good - for - nothing, and I'm all alone, and nobody loves me! I'm gonna' die!"

As she continued rambling, a hand suddenly grabbed her by her overalls. "Good grief," Jotaro deadpanned at her, "you could've run away in the time it took you to ramble, you brat." Apparently the group took the initiative to climb up one of the stone walls in an attempt to lose the Stand user.

"Jotaro, I love you!" Kirika heard that from above as she waited to help the others with her grandfather, and proceeded to cringe.
When they thought they were no longer chased after, a familiar shrill laugh resounded from below, "Climb all ya' want! There're no roads left to take! Not to escape, not to survive, not to Egypt, and not even toward yer bright future! And that's because my Wheel of Fortune is gonna' grind you into mincemeat and splatter what's left over the rocks!"

As is started climbing up the cliff, Polnareff bit a finger in anxiety, "Is there anything this car can't do?!"

"Gimme' a break, looks like we'll have to face it. Everyone stay back. When it reaches the top, we'll see the underside of the car." The teen stood his ground. "That's when we'll find out who's stronger."

Kakyoin nodded in understanding, "I see, once we see the underside, we'll be able to attack it."

"Right! It might put on a shield all over its top parts, but that's because it's the more obvious parts to hit!" Luckily she still had 3 more pencils in the other pockets. She just hoped this plan works.

The car finally reached the top, Star Platinum was already waiting.

"You've got some spunk, Jotaro! But yer pretty stupid! You guys reek something, and ya' didn't even notice it!"

Before Jotaro could launch an attack, he started smelling something. The others with bullet wound - like injuries did too. Kakyoin's eyes widened, "Now that he mentions it, I smell gasoline!"

"It's us!" Polnareff checked on his wounds. "We all smell like gasoline!"

The Stand user then shot out more of its attacks. They are revealed to be gasoline shot at high velocity, so it acted like bullets. Its strategy was revealed, and Jotaro was shot again, he began wavering. Dread started filling up Kirika, "Jotaro! Run!" When her brother didn't move, she immediately took off, only for Kakyoin to hold her back. "Jotaro!"

"So ya' finally got it. But it's too late!" The Stand user's hand broke a cable and revealed sparking electricity, which shot currents straight to Jotaro. As it made contact with the gasoline, it immediately ignited a flame, which slowly engulfed him. He began crying out in pain.

Anne's scream rang through the valley.

"Jotaro!" Joseph himself tried to get to his grandson, to save him somehow, but Polnareff stopped him. "Polnareff, that's my grandson right there, stop pulling me!"

"Stand back, Mr. Joestar! We're covered in gasoline, too!" Polnareff yelled back.

Kirika hitched a breath when her brother fell on his knees. "Jotaro!" She tried to run again, but Kakyoin wouldn't let her go. "Kakyoin! Let go- JOTARO!"

"It's too dangerous! There's nothing much we can do at this point! You'll only end up catching fire too!" The teen's eyebrows scrunched up as he watched the raven kept burning. Purple eyes closed, he couldn't stand to look at how much pain the other was in anymore.

Finally, Kujo Jotaro fell.

The hideous laugh of their enemy echoed in their ears.

Blue eyes watched, almost hopeful. Her older brother would suddenly stand up again, he'd survive this. He did the same those other times! But as the flame kept burning relentlessly, there was no
movement whatsoever from the teen. The hopes within her was slowly dashed away. She heard her grandfather's distraught call, Polnareff sounded like he was holding back tears. Kakyoin didn't say anything, but his grip tightened around her waist, before loosening as his arms fell on his sides.

"Jotaro..." She couldn't believe it, she didn't want to believe it. That was it? Her brother was dead just like that? He was not coming back with them. Mom wouldn't ever see him again. "No, no, it can't... Jotaro!"

No response.

Tears started leaking like a pipe just burst. There was this unbearable force from within her chest, travelling through her throat, forcing out a sob. She almost couldn't differentiate it from the urge to vomit.

"Nii - san!"

"I win!" Their enemy continued to laugh, taunting them over the death of Jotaro. "Part 3 is over!"

Right at that instance, her grief turned to fury, not unlike when she found out that Dio would be the cause of her mother's death.

The laugh stopped momentarily as the man yelped. Something just grazed his arm and it bled. "Shut the fuck up!" Kirika just shot one of her graphene bullets at the hand that was still sticking out. "Get the hell out of that car so I can shoot your brains out!"

"Kirika! No!" Her grandfather screamed, pleading. He couldn't lose another one of his grandchildren.

Another laugh rang, "You seriously want to take me on, Kujo Kirika?! You won't stand a chance! You will die, just like your brother!"

She prepared another pencil, "You bastard."

"Oh? And who exactly is going to replace me, Kujo Jotaro, as the main character?" A familiar voice caused her heart to skip a beat, then a fist shot out of the ground and out came Jotaro. He somehow had Star Platinum burrow him through the ground before he could actually burn to death. It was only his jacket that turned into crisps.

"Jotaro!" The others were overjoyed, Joseph and Kirika, especially. Jotaro was alive, he got to go back home with them once their journey was over.

Green eyes glared at their foe, "By the way, weren't you saying something about roads earlier? You were wrong." The teen stood up, "A road is a path you make for yourself. So let me, Kujo Jotaro, show you how it's done." What followed was a barrage of fists from Star Platinum, crushing the car until it constricted its driver. One last punch sent him flying out of the vehicle.

Revealing a man with a small body, yet muscular arms.

"And that's how it's done. Where you went flying, a road has been made. Very good, very good."

"Jotaro!" The teen turned at his sister's voice, only to receive a kick to his leg from her. "You idiot, I told you to run!"

"Oi, it's not like I planned to get shot again." He then noticed the trails of tears and her red nose. She must had been scared shitless watching him seemingly dying, again. Jotaro ruffled her hair, "It's fine.
I'm still alive, aren't I?"

She wiped her remaining tears, finally giving him a small smile, "Don't protest when I patch you up later."

"Yeah, yeah."

Joseph then put a hand around his shoulders, "That's my grandson! Always got a trick up your sleeves, eh? Just like your old man!"

"Heh, I thought you'd have figured that out in the first place, Gramps."

"Welcome back to the world of living," Kakyoin smiled at his friend in utter relief. "You should teach me a your tricks to cheat death sometimes."

The raven gave a short chuckle at that, "We got plenty of time for that, they're not exactly trade secrets."

Afterwards, Kakyoin joined the others to observe the Wheel of Fortune's user. He couldn't help but be amused by their opponent, "He's an odd one. His arms are enormous, yet the rest of him is so small. What a facade." His tone almost sounded like he was disappointed.

The man tried to run away, only to be stopped by Polnareff and being stomped by him. "Hey, don't run away!"

"Please don't kill me! I only did it for the money!"

"That's what you all say," Kirika held a pencil so close to the man's eye, making him yelp, "I don't even need to turn this into graphene to hurt you."

"No, please, spare me! I'm sorry!" he shrieked. The fact that now the man was grovelling for mercy, after boasting and taunting them about how he'd kill them all, amused the group so much that they laughed at him. Adding more into his humiliation.

Now that the Stand was defeated, the car he road also turned tiny, a broken one at that.

"Oh god," Joseph mused, "I can't believe his Stand was hiding such a tiny car. It looks like a sheep that's just been shorn. How pathetic!"

At that image the old man supplied, the group laughed again, even louder this time.

"I never pegged you to be a sadist, Jojo."

"Shut up, it's not like you wouldn't do the same."

"Well, you're not wrong on that."

"I knew it." Jotaro smirked, teasing the redhead.

"Don't go spreading false rumours about me now."
"Why should I? Though it can be a good blackmail material."

"Oi, don't you dare!" he elbowed the other on his arm, grinning all the while.

Jotaro and Kakyoin then laughed together, as their former enemy struggled against his chains before them, being bound to a rock by it. The chains themselves were also pinned to the ground by stakes. The raven teen put up a fake sign before him, telling passersby that he's a monk in training, that no one was allowed to release him. It was cruel, but Kirika could only smile gleefully at his fate. For all the grievances he gave them earlier, it was only fair that he was made to suffer.

"Now then, we'll take this car across the border, seeing as ours was totalled." Joseph pointed at the tiny red car.

Polnareff rubbed his chin, "It's in pretty bad shape. I wonder if it will make it to the border."

"Let's just try it out, Pakistan isn't too far away from here anyway. So if it broke down halfway, we can still walk." suggested Kirika.

Her grandfather nodded at that, "Alright, everyone, hop in!"

"By the way," Jotaro pointed at Anne as the car drove off, "we're putting you on the next plane to Hong Kong."

"Huh, why?!"

"Shut it! Can't you see you're just getting in our way?!" The Frenchman barked at her, before jolting at the sudden noise shooting out of the car's exhaust pipe.

"Well, we might not be making it very far." the eldest of the group sighed.

Once they finally reached Pakistan, the group made good on their words to send Anne to the nearest airport. Joseph purchased her a ticket, a one-way trip back to Hong Kong, back to her family. The young girl was furious. She kept struggling against Polnareff, trying to frame him as a kidnapper in the process, while Kakyoin handed over her tickets to the airline officer.

"No! I don't wanna'! I wanna' stay with you guys!" shouted Anne, only stopping her tantrums when Joseph put his hand on her head.

"Little Miss," he gently spoke to her, "my daughter, who's Jotaro and Kirika's mother, is in grave danger right now. We're on this journey to save her life."

The girl furrowed her eyebrows. So this was what Kirika had been trying to tell her? She never went into details, so she never really thought further about it. The girl suddenly felt a little guilty for not knowing how serious this journey was for them, and that she really was dragging them down.

The old man gave him a little smile, "Quit running away and go home, I'm sure your parents are worried about you."

Polnareff then released her, feeling that she had finally given up, "There."

"Pfft, fine. I'll let you off easy this time, grandpa." she pouted as she started walking, dragging her
feet behind her.

"This doesn't mean you can't travel the world anymore, you know?" Kirika's encouraging voice stopped her in her tracks. "When you get older and you want to do this again, doesn't matter if you're a girl, just do what you like. You don't have to dress up and impress the boys, or whatever. Then again, even if you do it, I don't think you would ever look pathetic while travelling the world."

Brown eyes widened as she turned to look at the older girl, who simply smiled at her.

"... I get it," she then started to walk towards the stairs, but not before looking around for a moment, or rather looking for someone.

"What's wrong?" asked Joseph.

She didn't find whom she was looking for and sighed in disappointment before running up the stairs, "Nothing. See ya! I guess life really is just a bunch of goodbyes!" They watched as the door of the airplane closed, as their last passenger settled in.

"She was looking for Jotaro, wasn't she?" asked Kakyoin.

Kirika sighed, "Yeah, well, hope she grows out of it in at least 5 years."

Scratch that, it wouldn't be happening for another 10 years. Jotaro, who came back from a tailor, wearing the a brand new gakuran jacket which he requested to be made to look the exact same with his old one, decided he would slowly walk towards the opposite direction of the plane as the transportation was ready to take off. There was no doubt that the young girl could see that, and that probably elevated Jotaro's charm up to 11 in her eyes.

"Kakyoin, please bury me in a hole somewhere so I can die from embarrassment alone." the younger teen squeaked as she covered her face after seeing her brother's antics.

The redhead could only sympathize with her, chuckling slightly.

Chapter End Notes

I always found it funny that Jotaro has to get the SAME JACKET WITH THE SAME CHAIN from the tailor. That walk at the airfield too with the wind blowing his coat! Oh my god Jotaro, you're fucking 17, you can't be a chuunibyou anymore. What a dork.
A Town of No People

Chapter Summary

In this town filled with fog, sinister forces lurks.

Chapter Notes

*crawls in*

I'M REALLY SORRY THAT THIS CHAPTER IS SO LATE. I kept writing, erasing, and rewriting parts- Basically I got a writer's block for this one. Then I went on a trip to the east coast of the US and I thought I could come up with something along the way but it took a while before I even settled on what to write. Then there's still the horrible jetlag.

I always thought of the Justice arc as something out of Silent Hill, even though Silent Hill was out at least a decade after Jojo. I mean, strange town surrounded by fog with people who don't sound like people? Silent Hill 2, and that game's my jam. So I had fun writing that bit.

There was a man, a traveller, lying dead on the streets with holes all over his body.

No one seemed to notice, no one seemed to care. No one would reply to their questions, and if they even got a response, they sounded off. To be completely honest, no one here behaved like normal people.

Nothing felt right in this town.

There was a choking feeling down her throat too. She wondered if it was the fog surrounding the whole area. Her lungs felt like cotton when she breathed the air in. The silence in this town only made it all the more unbearable. It was slowly weighing her down.

What was this place?

An elderly woman approached them, offering her place for them to stay. But Kirika quickly felt it, barely suppressed malice and wrath permeated the air around her. The kind words she said felt like venom instead, it almost made her sick. The moment her brother sensed the smallest hint of deception from her when she said their grandfather's name, she wanted to tell the others that they should immediately leave. But with the roads being covered by the fog, they were essentially stuck here. Continuing on their way would just put themselves on another set of danger.

They had no other choice but to accept her offer and entered her hotel.

"Here you go, my dear guests!" The old lady pulled out a book from under the counter. "Please write down your signatures."
Kirika let the others do so first, her blue eyes kept their gaze on the woman. She didn't seem to be trying to be doing anything to them yet. But since they were basically forced to enter this building, it wouldn't be a surprise if this was her trap. After all, her guts regarding this had never been wrong before.

"Oi, Kirika! Why're you just standing there? Sign your name." called Polnareff, gesturing the book to her.

Right. Her brother said to use aliases. It's a good method to trap the woman later, when she decided to sneak around and make her move. At this point there was no doubt she was their prominent suspect to be a Stand user, they just still needed to know what her Stand is.

After writing “Kiku Kujo”, she closed the book.

"All of you must be tired from your long journeys, especially you, young miss." She gave her a wide smile. If she stretched her lips any further, Kirika wondered if it'd split her face open and reveal anything underneath. "You seemed to be so far away from home. Wouldn't your mother be worried about you?"

She smiled sheepishly, "Well, I don't doubt that she would be. But this journey is for her sake, so I have to go."

For a split second, the glint in the woman's eyes were almost sinister. "Oh my, is your mother ill?"

"You could say that..." she trailed off, distrust grew even more within her.

"Ah, such a sweet child, your mother would be proud to hear that you're braving such a dangerous journey for her."

The aura was somehow getting worse as she continued to speak, and Kirika wished she would just stop talking already. "Well, I'm not so sure about that, honestly."

"Nonsense, every child is their mother's pride and joy. They could do no wrong in their eyes." For a moment, her words felt genuine. Along with it, there was a hint of sorrow. But she couldn't tell why. "Well, then! I'll show you to your rooms. I'll give you your keys later, it's been a while since there are any guests so I wasn't quite prepared. I hope you could forgive me for that."

Once she was shown to her room, Kirika immediately looked out of the window. The fog was still thick, but she could still see some people on the streets. All of them are walking slowly past each other. None of them even stopped to interact in the several minutes she had been observing them. It was as if no one was supposed to exist here, that they never belonged here in the first place. Was it possible that all of them are just illusions? Or hallucinations maybe?

But the dead body was definitely real, there was no doubt about it.

What if their brains were tricked into thinking that it was corporeal?

"Somebody, please, make it go away." Kirika muttered to herself, pressing her head onto the glass. She didn't even know whom she pleaded to. They just really needed to leave soon, the race against time was still on.

Lifting her head up, she turned towards the small TV on the desk next to her. In the meantime, maybe she could calm herself down by watching something. Take her mind off of the situation. But the screen only produced static when she turned it on. The antennae didn't seem to have any damage and it was connected correctly. So it seemed like it simply didn't receive any signal. Were they
isolated from the outside world now too?

That reminded her, her grandfather could use the TV to gather information with Hermit Purple. But if hers didn't receive any signal, it should probably be the same case for his and the other rooms, then. She decided to go and check it out for sure.

"Oh, hey, Kirika!" called Polnareff when she emerged from her room. "Is there any bathroom in your room?"

"Ah, no, actually. There isn't one in yours?" She raised her eyebrows.

"Nope, Kakyoin suggested that this hotel probably has a communal one. I'm going down to check. So see ya!"

For some reason, Kirika had a bad feeling regarding his search for this place's bathroom, "Hey, Polnareff, be careful."

The man quirked his eyebrows and scoffed as he kept walking, "It's just the bathroom! It's not like anything bad's going to happen."

That's a really glaring red flag! But she supposed she shouldn't worry so much, Polnareff could definitely defend himself. She knocked on her grandfather's door before turning on the knob, and that's when she noticed something odd. It wasn't locked, and now that she thought about it, there was no locking mechanism for her door either. The lady didn't even give them any key. She was too caught up with how strange the town was and the woman, so it took a while for that to click in her mind.

Once she was in the room, her brother and Kakyoin were already with him, "Hey, Grandpa. Does the TV work for you?"

Joseph shook his head. "Not at all. Everything looks fine, though. So I think it just can't receive any signal." This was troubling. He also noticed that there wasn't even a phone on the reception desk when they entered. They were essentially trapped in this town without a way to gather any information or a method to contact the outside. God, this town was already strange enough in the first place.

"It's the same for mine and Jotaro's too. It's probably the fog blocking the signal with the moisture, so we'll have to wait for it to subside." explained Kakyoin.

Kirika frowned, "I guess... By the way, can any of you lock your doors? I just realized that mine probably doesn't even have a deadbolt. Yours too, Grandpa."

"I checked, it's safe to assume that it's the same case for every door here." said Jotaro, moving away from the window. "Not much of a problem since we seem to be the only ones here, but it's odd nonetheless for a hotel. I swear that old woman is really up to something, whether she's with Dio or not."

"I have to agree with you. Good thing you suggested not using our real names, Jojo. Let's just hope we can find something to get some more steps ahead of her, specifically her Stand abilities. If she has any." Kakyoin then looked at Kirika. "Did you feel anything from her?"

"I definitely did. I don't think she was even trying to suppress it, or maybe, she thinks she's doing a good job hiding it." she replied. "Again, I'm not taking any chances. I might be wrong somehow, but after all the ones we had to face, I'm pinning her down as one of the Stand users."
Joseph nodded as he crossed his arms, “Now we just have to figure out the Stand itself.” He hummed as he glanced outside the window. “Whatever it is, it was surely able to make this entire town and the people to turn like this somehow.” He was then reminded by the incident when he was almost impaled by the spiked iron fence. "It also might be able to produce hallucinations, or rather illusions. Considering it made me think that I parked the car in a different spot."

His grandchildren snapped their heads up in unison at that. That would explain some things to Jotaro, and to Kirika, it gave more credence to her assumptions. “First thing first, we have to make sure she isn’t aware of our suspicion towards her.” Jotaro paused for a second before sighing, “We have to warn Polnareff, but we have to get him back here first. It's too risky to just discuss it out in the open. We can’t have her eavesdropping on us."

"Well, he’s just going to the bathroom, so just wait until he's finished with his business. Jeez, that guy's too laid back sometimes..." Kirika then walked towards the window, just to check what's outside again. That's when she noticed that the front door was opened. Her eyes squinted in concern, "Did someone else just came in? It's probably a new guest, should we go down and check? Just in case, we don't want any victim here."

Just as she said that, there was suddenly a strange noise, coming from downstairs. The group didn't waste time to move towards the source. When they finally got to the part of the hallway that faced the balcony, it didn't seem like anyone was there, aside from Polnareff who was descending the stairs. The old woman was nowhere to be seen.

"Polnareff, what's wrong?" called out Joseph.

"We heard a strange noise just now." added Kakyoin.

"It's probably nothing, but I'm taking a look anyway. I'll be in the lobby, so yell if you need me." the Frenchman then continued to walk down.

“Hey, when you’re done, meet up in Grandpa’s room. We have something to discuss.” said Kirika.

“Also, keep a lookout, you don’t want to be caught off guard.” the redhead beside her chimed.

Polnareff waved his hand at them. “Fine, fine. Come on now, I can take care of myself!"

As they turned around to go back to their rooms, Kirika noticed the hard frown on her brother’s face. She tugged on his sleeves and spoke in a low volume. Hopefully only audible among them, “You noticed something else?”

Jotaro slowly nodded, “There was a dog when we entered the city. It was impaled on a spike, but earlier it was walking just fine."

She made a confused noise, “Are you sure it’s the same dog?”

He shrugged, “But you guessed it too, didn’t you? Everything’s really off, it might as well not be real."

“Yeah, like Grandpa said.” She quirked her eyebrows, “But it doesn’t really make sense. Illusion, or hallucination isn’t supposed to feel real, no matter how intricate it is.” Then she paused, frozen in place. Blue eyes widened almost in fear, “Unless...”

“It messed with our brains.” Kakyoin chimed, understanding what she was trying to say. “It’s a Stand that somehow manipulated the chemicals in our brains to register what isn’t even there as real. Then again... It still doesn’t add up. There was no doubt that the dead man was real, our brains
couldn’t just make us feel something wholly solid when there’s absolutely nothing there.”

“You’re right, even if the Stand tried to make us think that this whole thing is real, we still wouldn’t be able to touch them in the first place. This isn’t something like tactile hallucinations, there was no specific trigger to it for us.” Joseph scratched the back of his head in puzzlement.

Kirika gulped, anxiety rising in her stomach. She tried suppressing it down. “Then we’re back to zero, then. Crap, we really have no choice until she decided to make her move, or at least until the fog goes away and we book it.” In the back of her mind, she wondered if the fog would even lift up. She couldn’t help but suspect that it was the cause of the strange occurrences in this town. That it might be a Stand, and they had been inhaling it, that’s what made them to confuse the reality around them.

It seemed so farfetched, that she started doubting her own theory.

Come on, Kirika. Focus.

They went back to Joseph’s room to wait for Polnareff. The clockhands were ticking. Time passed to a quarter of an hour, before it almost became half of an hour. The silver haired man never arrived. They were getting antsy, so Jotaro decided to go search for him while the others stayed. After some moments passed, Kirika looked out of the window again. The fog was still very thick. But she did notice that the streets were suddenly completely empty. The town might have been silent, but there was still a couple of people walking before.

"Where's everyone?"

Kakyoin stood up from his seat on the bed at that and decided to check it out for himself. "It's not the evening yet, people couldn't have retired to their homes already."

"Considering how dense the fog is, maybe they decided to end the day early? There's probably a superstition that it's bad luck to stay longer than that outside in this kind of condition." suggested Joseph.

The redhead nodded, "I suppose, but no one seemed to be really bothered by it earlier. With how slow they walk and their sluggish movement, I have to doubt that. None of them showed any sign that they were in fear about it."

The girl beside him furrowed her eyebrows and scrunched the fabric of her skirt, "Now I'm just thinking back to the hallucination theory. Maybe they were really not real." Then her head suddenly snapped up, eyes looked to the others in panic. "What if it's all because of the fog? God, we all breathed it in. I should've realized something was wrong! The air already felt weird enough when we first came in, it was probably the Stand! Wait, what if it's going to turn us like those people too?"

"Kirika, calm down for a bit." Kakyoin's voice was gentle as he spoke. But he no doubt felt some anxiety, because what the girl said might be the truth, or somewhat close to it. "Let's just say the fog did create those hallucinations, that it's the Stand. Maybe it was also capable of manipulating our senses to the extend of everything here being real to us. But it doesn't really make sense to create all those people and have them do nothing to us, does it?"

Her grandfather then patted on her head, trying to ease her anxiety. "I'd say we're not in danger of turning into like any of the townsfolk. It's safe to assume that if the fog was what changed them and it did so by just breathing it in, with how much of it is surrounding the area, the effect would be immediate. So we're not in any danger for now."
She was still worried. But she supposed both of them were right. No reason to get worked up by it, accounting all the factors. "Right. Still, now we can't rule out the fog. I still think we have to at least be wary about it now."

Kakyoin hummed in agreement at that, "Now the question is, how would we defeat it? It's not like any of our Stands would be capable to deal with something like this."

"Before we discuss that, Jotaro is taking a while too." Joseph quirked one of his eyebrows. He glanced towards the two teenagers. They quickly nodded, catching on what the old man wanted, and they exited the room.

At the room to the side of the lobby, Kakyoin was proven wrong.

"Those fake names really came in handy, huh?"

They ran from the end of the hotel the moment they heard more loud noises, which urged Joseph to join them. But when they finally got to the source, Jotaro had already defeated the old lady, and Polnareff was saved. Hol Horse was apparently there too, arriving to meet the woman, only to be attacked by her. It was revealed that she was Enya Geil - the mother of J. Geil - and she wanted revenge on them for her son's death.

Understandable, but at the same time, he had it coming.

Sadly, it didn't seem like Enya herself understood that. She seemed to believe that her son was without sin, that everything he did was good. Simply because he was her son. It was an incomprehensible logic to follow, but at least, Kirika now understood that moment when her voice was genuine. But she would be lying if she said that she wasn't the slightest bit apprehensive.

"I figured you're smart enough to follow the example. That hag has been bothering me ever since she said "Joestar." He then gave a short chuckle as they both walked outside, "Should I call you Kiku now?"

She responded with a small laugh, "Heh, try it. I probably wouldn't respond still."

Meanwhile, Polnareff was trying to evade questions when asking their grandfather for a disinfectant. "Quit asking stupid questions!" he said, before coughing and hoping it covered his confession.


"Who even cares? I want to disinfect my tongue! Just get me some medicine!"

Kakyoin then whispered to the older man, "I'm pretty sure I heard some said toilet."

It elicited some hushed laugh from him, prompting the man to cover his mouth before whispering back, "Actually, I already know. But I can't resist messing with him!"

Polnareff didn't quite hear what he was saying, but judging from how gleeful Joseph was, his face started getting redder, "Hey! Did Jotaro already tell you?! You fucking old geezer! He's messing with me! Forget about the medicine!" He then started walking away.

"Alright, alright! My bad." Joseph put his hands up with an apologetic smile. "I'll fix you right up,
Polnareff. It'll get infected if we don't take care of it." But he wasn't done. He proceeded to cough into his fist, whispering "toilet licker", and covering it with another cough. Beside him, Kakyoin was trying valiantly to hold his laugh.

As the old man started pounding his fist onto the floor and roared in laughter, the silver-haired man had enough of it, "God damn it! Let's get back to our journey! Jotaro! Kakyoin! Kirika!"

"Everyone," Jotaro suddenly called, "get outside."

Kirika stared at what's before her. Hundreds of gravestones, in place what was a bizzare quiet town. It really was all just an illusion. The town had been Enya's trap for them all along. Those people they interacted with were corpses, controlled by Justice. Something about that really disgusted her. Not the fact that they were long dead bodies, but that Enya dared to use them, controlling those who had reached their final resting place.

"At least, the fog cleared up. We can continue on our journey now." Joseph then turned towards the tied up Enya. "We'll take her with us too."

Polnareff balked at that, "T- Take her with us?! The old lady?!"

The raven nodded, "Yeah, we need to know how many more Stand users there are, what their powers are, and where in Egypt Dio is hiding." Jotaro's frown deepened, "Not to mention what Dio's Stand's power is."

The Frenchman looked like he wanted to argue, so Kakyoin stopped him, "He's right, we have no other choice, Polnareff. We know she's Dio's closest confidante now. Out of anyone, she knows him the most, and she was the one who recruited all those Stand users we fought."

"If we can get that old lady to tell us that alone, we'll have a major advantage." added Joseph.

"Not saying that all of us are okay with bringing her along. Personally," Kirika narrowed her eyes at the unconscious woman, "I would rather her to be as far away from me, but this is our best chance."

In the end, Polnareff relented. He was still uncomfortable by the fact that they have to spend their journey ahead, with the mother of the late man who murdered his sister. But he had to agree with the rest of them. Now they might get an upper hand on Dio.

"I highly doubt she'll tell us, though..." Kakyoin frowned. "She doesn't seem to have a flesh bud on her, so I don't know how we're going to persuade her if she's already this loyal to Dio."

The elder Joestar put a hand out and summoned his Stand, "We just need to use Hermit Purple to project what she's thinking onto a TV."

"Now I see! Since there's no TV here, we'll just do it in the next town!" cheered Polnareff, but then his eyes widened. The engine of the only vehicle that existed in this place was started, and they all turned to find Hol Horse at the steering wheel of their car. They proceeded to run after him. "That bastard!"

"I'll be payin' Dio a visit! See ya' later! So long as ya' ain't killed first!" The cowboy shouted at them as he kept driving. "But lemme' warn ya'! Kill the old lady soon as ya' can! She'll show you how scary Dio really is if ya' don't! Later!"

Jotaro sighed, "Well, there goes our other ride."

"What the hell is he talking about?" Polnareff wondered to himself, puzzled.
"He said Dio." muttered Kakyoin. "Not that we have to kill Enya because of what she'd do to us, but Dio."

Kirika turned to look at Enya again, "He's... Not saying that Dio's power is connected to her, isn't he?"

Her grandfather then groaned, "Right now, let's just get out of here first and somehow find a way to Karachi."

They finally arrived in Karachi in a horse carriage with Enya in tow. The woman still unconscious from her fight with Jotaro. They went past some blocks of the city without much incidents. But they still need to find a television, so Hermit Purple could project her thoughts into it. The elder Joestar stopped after a while when he spotted a doner kebab stand and went to buy some for them.

As her grandfather ended up having to haggle with the kebab vendor, Kirika turned a bit to check on the old lady. But what she found was Enya trembling, sweating and her bulging eyes stared straight ahead, but not at her, her brother, nor her grandfather. The girl was confused, rightfully so. She followed her line of sight, finding it to land on the kebab vendor.

What got her so afraid of him?

The others started noticing it too, including her grandfather who just came back and warned them to beware. But there was no attack from her. The old woman then started rambling, pleading. "I- I haven't said anything! Wh- Why have you come for me? Do you think that I, Enya, would actually tell them the secret of Dio's Stand?!"

That got the group to turn their attention to the vendor. The man himself slowly opened his head covering and his sunglasses, his disguise. His reddish eyes stared back at Enya with a wicked smile. The hazel-haired girl instantly turned her head back towards Enya and gasped in shock. Worms, or tendrils, started crawling out of the old woman's eye sockets, ears, and mouths. They weren't slow either, as it ripped and burst its way out, causing the woman to spurt blood around her seat and her clothes as she screamed in pain.

"Tentacles?!" shouted Kirika as she jumped out of the carriage with the rest of the group.

The tentacles then started going wilder. It broke apart the carriage. Panicked neighs filled the air as the horse started running away.

"Why- Why have you come to kill me?!" Enya screamed, the tentacles continued to tear her apart from the inside.

"Because it’s clear that Lord Dio trusts no one.‘’ said the man, his tone cold and sinister. "It’s my job to make sure you never speak again. And as for the five of you,‘’ he turned to face the the Crusaders, "I will be taking your lives."

More large amount of blood started spraying out of Enya. There was no doubt that she was at death’s door. While it was true that she was a despicable woman, this was too cruel. Polnareff seemed to realize that. He might be the mother, and the enabler, of his enemy. But she didn’t deserve to be betrayed like this, “Ma’am!”

The man smiled as the old woman writhed in pain on the ground. “My name is Dan… Steely Dan.
My Stand represents the Lovers card. I will see to it that you all meet the same fate as Enya.”

“How could you?! She was one of you, right?!” cried Polnareff, clenching his fists at him. He clicked his tongue as he turned around to somehow save the woman, “Ma’am!”

“L- Lies… Lies… All lies…” she croaked, stopping Polnareff in his tracks. She was barely moving, barely breathing. “Lord Dio would never do this… To me…”

“Polnareff, move away!” Kirika couldn’t take it anymore. The old woman couldn’t continue to suffer like this. She summoned Galileo after the Frenchman complied, and manipulated some sand. She compiled them before turning them into a thin sheet of glass, moving it at high speed forward so it would cut across the tentacles. But even after doing so repeatedly, they just kept coming out endlessly from her. “What the hell is this Stand?!"

“Those things coming out of her body aren’t a Stand! Those are corporeal! Actual, moving tentacles!” shouted Kakyoin, and he began to fear they were what he thought they were. But it couldn’t be. It was much too big to be the parasite that invaded his mind and Polnareff’s!

“My Lord would never do something like this to me… He would never plant a flesh bud…” Enya’s eyes started getting unfocused. “I live to serve Lord Dio… I believe in him…”

Polnareff then summoned Silver Chariot and started cutting off the tentacles along with Kirika. But only when did the severed tentacles were exposed to the sun, it stopped growing and finally receded. But it was far too late. It already destroyed a majority of Enya’s organs.

“It’s a flesh bud… It really was a flesh bud!” exclaimed Joseph. Kakyoin beside him swallowed audibly. He couldn’t help but wonder if he wasn’t saved by Jotaro. That’s what he was going to end up as. He survived, but this sight would haunt him still.

“That is what a flesh bud from Dio’s cells looks like when it’s fully grown. I simply helped it sprout a bit faster.” Steely Dan explained condescendingly. “Enya, apparently you were the one who told Lord Dio of the existence of Stands, but there is no way Lord Dio would trust a decrepit old woman such as you. It would appear this never occurred to you.”

“What about you, then? What makes you so special that he sent you to deal with her, you slimy bastard?” growled Jotaro. He wracked his brain. Since Enya never had any flesh bud on her, when did he even have the time to plan one on her?

“Watch your tongue, Kujo Jotaro. And maybe I wouldn’t humiliate you so much when I have you wrapped around my finger.” he smirked. “But for the record, he doesn’t. I didn’t need his trust anyway, he was just the one with the money. Isn’t that how this supposed to work?”

Joseph, followed by Kirika, approached the dying woman. Trying to persuade her, begging and pleading to her. Hoping that in her last breath, she would tell them the truth to Dio’s Stand. “Please… Please I want to save my mother.” Kirika didn’t even know why she thought Enya would even sympathize with her. At this point, she was just desperate. She fell onto her knees beside her. “We’re not asking much, please just tell us about his Stand!”

But all of their hopes were dashed in an instant.

“Lord Dio… He still believes in me… I will not speak…”

Enya Geil lied still in the pool of her own blood. Smoke rosed from her body, signifying her own Stand’s death. Until the end, she was truly loyal to Dio.
The monster who betrayed her.
Jotaro sent Steely Dan flying for his taunts, and Joseph bled as he was thrown backwards at the same time.

"You idiot!" Dan spat at the dumbfounded teen as he sat up. Pieces of the glass window that broke from the impact his body gave were lodged into his back. "I was still talking! You could have just killed your grandfather!"

"Grandpa!" Kirika didn't waste her time to help the elder Joestar. Her hand supported his back as she helped him to get up as carefully as possible. She wouldn't want to put any strain on any possible internal injuries he was having. What the hell did he do to him? "Can you stand up?"

"I'm fine- I'm fine." He wiped off the blood from his mouth. When he tried to stand, he winced. It didn't feel like anything was broken or ruptured. But it was still painful, like he really was punched by Star Platinum. "Don't worry, I just need a minute."

Steely Dan spat some blood from his mouth before addressing the group again. "Listen carefully! Did you really think I appeared before you just to kill Enya?"

"Y- You bastard," hissed Joseph, "you have the Stand representing the Lovers card, right?! W- What is it?!"

"The only thing you must know is that this battle has already begun, Mr. Joestar. You fools," he scoffed as the rest of the group started looking for his Stand, "you will never find my Stand no matter how hard you look."

"Fuck, could it be invisible?! Is that even possible?!" Polnareff started sounding frantic.

"That'd defeat the purpose of having a Stand in the first place! But where is it?!" Kakyoin tried to keep a cool head. It wouldn't solve anything if he started to panic, but it was still frustrating.
Jotaro clicked his tongue and glared at Steely Dan. The man himself called a boy who was sweeping the dusty street. It confused him when he decided to pay him money, then he told him to hit his leg with his broom. But it was then that what the man said earlier it began to click in his mind.

"It can't be!"

Before he could say anything, behind him, Kirika instinctively stood up and started running towards the boy as he swung his broom. But despite managing to hold the boy's hand, she was too late to stop the impact. Another shout of pain rang through the air from Joseph as he fell down once more.

"Gramps!" Jotaro gritted his teeth. His grandfather was writhing in pain as he was held up by Kakyoin and Polnareff. He turned to face Steely Dan again, with a stance showing that he was ready to fight. "Where did put your Stand, you son of a bitch?!"

"When did he even have the time? I didn't see anything on him!" Kirika checked on the possibility of a small Stand latching like a flesh bud on his forehead and maybe controlling his nervous system through a feedback loop, but there was nothing like that on Joseph.

"Mr. Joestar, what happened?" asked Kakyoin, eyebrows furrowed in concern.

"The pain- The pain's unbearable! It's almost as if my leg broke and its bones shattered!"

"You haven't figured it out, Joseph Joestar? Your grandchildren seemed to have caught on, but not quite. My Stand enters the body of others! The moment Enya died, it entered your brain through your ear!" He chuckled gleefully. "My Stand and I are one and the same. If my Stand is hurt, I will be as well, and vice versa. So if you so much as scratch me, my Stand will react to my pain and suffering in that exact same moment by going berserk. It will inflict pain several times greater to the same part of your body. I'll say it once more... You will not be able to lay even a single finger on me."

No, this is even worse than I thought! The girl began baring her teeth at the man. This coward, he dared hurting her grandfather like this, and they couldn't even do anything to him.

"Ah, right," he sneered in response to Kirika's anger, "I should also mention that Lovers has taken Lord Dio's flesh bud into your body. It's growing inside your brain. Just like Enya, it will eat you from the inside and kill you!"

Just when they thought the situation couldn't get even more terrible, now Joseph could be suffering the same gruesome end as Enya.

Another scream of pain erupted from her grandfather again. Kirika cursed the fact that she didn't notice that he'd do it again. The boy innocently hoped to be given some more money by this strange man

"Did I say you could hit me twice? You fucking brat!" He instead hit the boy and caused him to collapse, before running away in fear. Meanwhile, the man nonchalantly brushed his pants, while explaining how the Lovers was a weak Stand in terms of physical ability. It wasn't like that information was any use to the group considering they couldn't even touch the Stand itself right now.

Even just him cracking his own fingers cause pain to Joseph's prosthetic hand.

It was only then that Dan told them, they only had 10 minutes left until Joseph's brain was devoured.

Jotaro shot his hand and grabbed at the man's collar. His menacing gaze burnt as he lifted Dan up, his fist was ready to pummel his face with Star Platinum summoned. But he was stopped
immediately by Kakyoin, "Jotaro, calm down! Don't do anything stupid!"

The raven snarled as he struggled to get his friend off of him, "No, I'll kill him so fast, he won't feel a thing."

While she knew that her brother was probably bluffing, she can't let him just hurt the man even a bit. "Stop! Jotaro, you can't!" Just as she said that, Joseph started to choke. It prompted his grandson to let their enemy go.

"Won't feel a thing, huh? That's a great idea. Let's see you try it, Jotaro." he then started to taunt Jotaro. Urging him to attack, mockingly suggest to him to bash him with a rock. His arrogance grated on Jotaro, he was losing his patience.

The teen grabbed him the second time, "Don't underestimate me. When I say I'll do something, I fucking do it."

Kirika watched in fear as her grandfather struggled to breath. He was in pain. She shouted at Jotaro again, "Don't you fucking dare! Let him go!" He didn't relent, "I said let him go, Jotaro!!"

There was a hint of fear in Steely Dan's eye when Star Platinum appeared again.

"Don't do anything rash, Jotaro!" Kakyoin summoned Hierophant Green in reflex to hold them both back. "You've already seen his power! Are you trying to kill your own grandfather??"

Polnareff somehow caught on that the taller teen was probably trying to bluff. But Steely Dan was one tough nut to crack. Still, he tried to help, and maybe the man would pull his Stand away from the elder Joestar. "H- He's the kind of guy that would do it!"

However, Dan didn't buy it. He grinned, "You're not taking me seriously." When Jotaro finally released him, realizing that his threats couldn't get through, the despicable man proceeded to hit him in the gut with said rock. "Don't underestimate me, asshole! After Grandpappy Joseph dies, next on my agenda is sending Lovers to kill you!"

Purple eyes widened as Steely Dan raised his hand that was holding the rock, "Look out!"

But the rock cracked before it could hit Jotaro. On the ground behind him, a graphene stick was embedded in the ground. Steely Dan instantly glared at Kirika, who was holding an empty pencil shell. Galileo looming behind her. "You little-"

"10 minutes, you said we have 10 minutes. A flesh bud normally needs months before it grew like that, right?" She looked straight back at him. "Lovers must be doing something in my grandfather's brain to accelerate its growth. The flesh bud must have matured substantially, it would be able to eat through pretty fast by now."

"Heh, and what? You want a reward for figuring that out?" asked Dan, putting his hand on his hip as he stared her down.

"Move the Lovers to me, you don't need to make him suffer so much. Obviously Jotaro is your big target."

It shocked the group. Joseph pulled her by the arm, "Kirika, what are you saying?! No, I won't let you do this!" His grandson getting beaten up because of him was enough. He was not letting his granddaughter risk her life for him like this.

"Grandpa," she called to him and whispered, "you and the others are here, so I know what I'm
"Kirika!" Jotaro shouted at her. He gritted his teeth when she kept her eyes straight ahead, "Damn it, look at me! You can't do this!" When she finally glanced at him, he could only see firm determination in them. It was at that moment, that Jotaro knew she couldn't be stopped. She had a plan, and he hated it. He turned to look at that vile face before them, "I-"

"No, Jotaro, I need you in this. We really have no choice." She cut him off, then she looked back at their enemy, "What do you say? You'll still have your meat shield, Grandpa will still die today. It's a good deal."

Steely Dan let out a loud laugh, "Kujo Kirika, you're a bold one, aren't you?" he smirked at her. "Not bad, not bad at all... Well, I supposed I could kill two birds in one stone."

She didn't know how, but she could feel it. Something was already inside her. But it wasn't just the Stand, there was something else embedded at the core of her brain. It was small, but it started whispering something unclear to her. Calm down. You knew he'd do this.

"Do you want proof that it's already inside you?" The man proceeded to pick up the graphene, that now turned back into a pencil lead, and stabbed the palm of his hand with it. Kirika let out a loud yelp that turned into a shout as something felt like digging into the bones and the muscles of her hand. Blood started pouring out from the wound. She gripped her wrist and squeezed hard, as if it would cut off the circulation for a moment so she wouldn't feel the pain so much. Her grandfather was right, it was unbearable. "I hope you don't mind the bonus. I did say I was going to kill all of you, so you just gave me a good opportunity to get my job done faster."

"You asshole! You hurt her one more time, I'll crush you when this is over!" Polnareff cursed. If he didn't already hate the man before, now was a good start. He clenched his fists at him, growling in frustration. No matter how angry he was, he still couldn't do anything to the man, lest he hurt Kirika in the process.

Kakyoin beside him was fuming. This wretch dared to use such an underhanded tactic. His purple eyes then shifted to the girl who was still holding her hand. There must be a reason for her to do this, but regardless of what it was, her life now was in horrible danger. She could die, he'd see her die. The girl whom he became friends with was going to die the way he supposed to before this whole journey. He couldn't let that happen

Jotaro winced as he got up from the ground. He noticed that his sister's eyes were glassy, no doubt from holding in the pain. The raven then gritted his teeth, "You idiot. You goddamn idiot." he spat not in anger, but desperation.

It surprised him when she gave a soft chuckle as a response, "Yeah, I am. I'm sorry." She then smiled apologetically at him, "Beat him up for me later, alright?"

I have to do something, I need to do something. Joseph then turned to Kakyoin. It only took a second for the teen to understand what the old man was trying to say. As he turned to look at his granddaughter, she gave him a small nod. It then occurred to him that it was part of her plan all along. Polnareff immediately followed the 3 of them as they started running away. Putting a distance between them would weaken Steely Dan's control over Lovers.

"Jotaro! Keep him away from Kirika! We're gonna' get as far away from him as possible!" Kakyoin wished his friend good luck, and for them themselves. This had to succeed, or the girl was doomed.
"Grandpa, quick! Kill the flesh bud in your head off now!" said Kirika as they ran through the city, once they were far enough away from Steely Dan.

"Right!" Joseph didn't waste time to send a wave of Hamon throughout his brain, killing off the flesh bud which accelerated growth started slowing down. "That man kept boasting about having the upper hand on us, but it didn't seem like he did much research on us!"

"We're not off the hook yet!" Kakyoin looked around the city blocks, scanning every corner. "There! It's an electronic store!"

"H- Hey, what are you guys doing?" asked Polnareff, still confused that they were suddenly running away. "And Kirika, I couldn’t believe you’d do something like this without thinking it through!"

"Polnareff, did you seriously think we were running away?" Joseph then started checking the TVs displayed on the window, making sure he could use them.

Kirika looked up to him with a stern gaze. "We're taking this fight to the Stand inside my head. I did think twice about it and there’s no other choice. At least with this, I reset the time for us to get rid of the Stand."

"F- Fight?!"

"We don’t have a lot of time still," added Kakyoin, "I need your help for this."

"Huh?!" This whole thing just baffled the Frenchman. How did they just think of this on the fly?

Joseph then summoned Hermit Purple. Some of the purple vines wrapped gently around Kirika’s head, while the others were channeled into one of the TV. The electronic device flickered as it came to life. Static was on the screen before it showed an image of a peculiar creature, holding a flesh colored string in its pincer.

"There!" Kakyoin pointed out.

"Oh no! What’s that he’s holding?! A nerve?!" shouted Joseph.

"Grandpa, never mind that. Just focus on the Stand!" It unnerved her to be honest, but they have more important things to deal with.

"S- So that super tiny Stand… It really is inside or Kirika… But how are we gonna’ defeat it?" Polnareff turned to the redhead beside him.

"Our Stands will enter Kirika’s body, and we’ll defeat it there!" He then explained further, "Stands are images created from energy. They should have no problem shrinking."

"Kakyoin!" Polnareff still felt really concerned about how effective this plan would be.

Joseph turned to them, his tone was tinted with fear. "Hey, take it easy on her."

His granddaughter’s lips curled upwards, "Don’t worry so much about me, I’ll be fine. I told you, you’re all here. So I know what I’m doing."

"Kirika…" It shouldn’t be like this. If only he was more careful. He sighed, "You’re just like your mother."
“We have no time to lose. We’re going in, Polnareff!”

“A- Alright!”

Hierophant Green and Silver Chariot were summoned. Their users started shrinking them so they would be able to enter through the girl’s ear. Kakyoin watched her expression as his Stand continued through her blood vessels. She seemed calm, but he realized that she was also clutching her skirt. Of course she would be scared about this, she too saw how Enya died. Their journey was full of dangers, even so, all of them wanted to keep surviving and come back home safely. Kirika would especially want to see his mother again.

“Kirika,” blue eyes turned to him, “we’ll get it out. Polnareff and I won’t let you die. You’ll be safe.”

Polnareff couldn’t help but give a smile at that, “It won’t be easy, but have faith in us, alright? It’ll be over in no time.” At least he hoped they’d be done quickly.

The girl simply looked at them for a moment, before giving a small laugh. “I wouldn’t even do this if I didn’t believe you, guys.” She was still anxious, fear stewing in her stomach. But she did trust them. She knew what they were capable of.

As they continued to traverse through Kirika’s body, all of a sudden, an excruciating pain shot up her left leg, before the limb slowly felt numb. She let out a scream and doubled over as she held onto her leg. It was so much worse than when Dan simply stabbed his hand with the lead.

Purple eyes widened in surprise, “Kirika!”

“What’s wrong?!” Polnareff then gasped when he spotted a bruise peeking out from under her socks.

“Just focus on my brain!” she hissed as the pain took a while to subside. Her teeth grinded together as she tried not to whimper.

“What the hell is Jotaro doing?!” Joseph muttered under his breath. But he couldn’t possibly be attacking Steely Dan, knowing that he was connected to his sister. Could Dan be hurting himself intentionally to threaten his grandson? “Son of a bitch!”

Soon, they finally located the Lovers at her brain stem. But to enter it, they had no choice but to cut open the nearest blood vessel. There was no way for the Stand to just shrink even more and just slipped through it, the walls were simply too thick. It was already hard enough for them to maintain this size inside her body. “I’m sorry.” The redhead gave an apologetic look. “But It won’t be much of a problem because the incision would be really small.”

“It’s fine. Do what you have to do.” Kirika gave them a nod of approval. When Polnareff made Silver Chariot cut through her blood vessel, she felt a sharp pain. A grunt escaped her, but it was gone as quickly as it came. But soon she was assaulted by a ticklish feeling that actually became painful after a while. She bit into her lip, so she wouldn’t let out any noise that would attract people’s attention in this crowded city.

The sight that greeted them when they finally got the view of inside her brain was disgusting. Numerous tentacles had started swarming the place. At the centre of her brain was the Lovers, gathering brain cells to feed to the parasite it brought. Sooner or later, the flesh bud would be big enough to start devouring her brain.

“I’ll slice them up!” Polnareff exclaimed as Silver Chariot brandished its rapier. “Well, not slice. I’ll grate it like daikon raddish!”
Yes, yes, whichever you like, Polnareff. That statement was just a little odd.

Silver Chariot quickly moved its sword at Lovers, missing and hitting at some places. One fatal swing seemed to finally hit it. Kakyoin gave a grin at that, “We did it!”

“No, we’re not done! That bastard is pretty fast, Kakyoin.” said the Frenchman as the Lovers fell. “But I already know all its tricks. If that’s the best it can do, it’s no match for-”

“Polnareff, who are you talking to?” That startled the silver haired man, as Silver Chariot turned around to find another Hierophant Green. “Polnareff, that isn’t me! And the thing you cut wasn’t his Stand! It’s starting to melt!”

“What the hell? Where is it hiding then?” Kirika squinted her eyes as she looked around the screen. Trying to discern anything that could be the Lovers.

That’s when Polnareff noticed something dripping beside Silver Chariot. “What?!” It was the fake Hierophant Green, leaking yellow fluid as it started to deform and melt.

“I’m Lovers!” It announced, before pouncing from its disguise. Jabbing its pincers into the Silver Chariot. The result was instantaneous. Blood was immediately coughed up by its user.

“Polnareff!” yelled Kirika.

“It was disguised!” The redhead quirked his eyebrows deeper. “Brain cells… It used Kirika’s brain cells! It was using the mash of kneaded brain cells to disguise itself as my Hierophant! So was the dummy, it’s made of the cells too!”

“Man I totally had you fooled, you fucking idiots!” the Stand started laughing with a shrill noise. It was as grating as the laugh from the Wheel of Fortune’s user.

“Whoa! Kakyoin, look!” Using Silver Chariot, he pointed at the dummy he sliced. From the head that was cut open, a half set of the Stand’s body started emerging, effectively creating a duplicate.

“W- What the hell is it?! It’s splitting into two!” said Joseph, surprised by the sudden development.

“Listen up,” the Stand started to talk, “in this world, the one who knows himself the best is the victor! In Aesop’s fable, the tortoise beats the hare, because the tortoise knew his own strengths and weaknesses better than anyone. I’m well aware that I lack the power or speed necessary to mortally wound you. However, your strengths only really starts to show once you acknowledge your weaknesses!”

Several more duplicates started emerging from her brain. Then a couple more, then some. They gasped at how fast it produced itself. Kakyoin decided to strike them with Emerald Splash. But it only made them spawn even more, “M- More dummies made out of brain cells, they’re multiplying! But a person can only have one Stand, that means only one of them is real!”

“How do we even find it then, then?” Kirika started frantically trying to identify each and every one of them. Maybe there was some imperfections between the copies, a small defect or slight differences, something that she could point out through the screen. But it seemed that unless she was in her own head, it was impossible.

“This is like trying to find a needle in a haystack, only that the haystack is also a pile of needles!” Polnareff exclaimed. “Where the hell is the real one?”

A few of them suddenly ambushed them from behind, once again injuring Polnareff, who shielded
“Polnareff! Tch, damn you!” Kakyoin launched another attack of Emerald Splash towards the group of Lovers. He hoped to god that he at least hit the real one this time. But as the crystals his Stand produced hit and sliced every single one of them, they’re all proven to be fake. More kept manifesting from the fallen copies. More kept blending in. “They keep multiplying when we hit the wrong ones!”

Blue eyes looked deeply concerned at Polnareff, who was bleeding from the injuries he received. The wounds looked serious. “Polnareff, get out of there. Withdraw Silver Chariot.”

Grey eyes widened at that, and he shook his head, “Huh?! No way, I’m going to stay and fight. I can’t just leave you!”

“It’ll kill you! I don’t want you to die like this for my sake!” she said in a tone that was almost afraid. The time was almost up, and as much as she wanted to survive this, she can’t sacrifice them like this.

“And I’m not just going to give up just like that! I told you, put your faith in us. I’m not going to betray you by just running away.” Despite the pain, he still tried to smile at her, trying to reassure her that everything’s going to be alright. “I chose this for myself, none of this is on you.”

“Kirika,” her grandfather called her, “I know you must be thinking that we should just stop. That we don’t have much time left anyway, so we should just leave you. Well, none of us is going to do that, we’re seeing this to the end. Besides,” he gave her a sad smile, almost pained, “what kind of grandfather would I be if I just abandon you?”

“Grandpa…”

Kakyoin nodded in agreement at the old man’s words, “We won’t give up, this is just a small hurdle. We’ll get through this. I promised we’ll save you and we’ll do exactly that. So don’t give up, either.”

Kirika bit her lip, her hands once again scrunched her skirt. She lowered her head as she closed her eyes for a moment. When she opened them again, the fabric was released from her grip, as she looked back at the rest of the group with a steely gaze. “Alright, let’s keep going. We’ll beat this guy.”

The redhead smiled, before scanning the many copies of Lovers littered on the screen. “Damn, they all look the same. Which one is the real one? I can’t tell them apart at all.”

They all suddenly started chanting in unison. Boasting how powerful they are despite their weakness, that their awareness of their own ability was what would bring them victory. Hearing them do so was just as grating as the user of the Wheel of Fortune’s arrogance.

But unbeknownst to them and the original, it did make Kakyoin realize something. He chuckled, he couldn’t believe that he wasted time trying to make out any differences when he could just use this. “Your strengths only really starts to show once you acknowledge your weaknesses, eh? I see, I’m inclined to agree. Though, clearly you don’t know your enemies very well, you haven’t done your research. Didn’t you realize what I did with Hierophant Green?”

The green Stand’s legs had unravelled itself into countless of strings. Each tendril was wrapped around each of the Lovers leg. One of them suddenly started sparkling, giving a signal to its owner. Jackpot.

“Take this! Emerald Splash!”
Numerous green crystals launched themselves from the palms of Hierophant Green. Some of them pierced through the copies surrounding the original. But it didn’t matter. One of the crystals flew and lodged itself right into the real Stand’s head. Blood immediately burst out from the wound.

Somewhere on the other side of the city, a man suffered from the same injury.

He deserved every bit of the pain he felt from it.

“Success!!!”

Realizing it’d die if it stayed any longer, Steely Dan had started calling back the Lovers. The Stand started frantically digging through the artery to escape to get out of Kirika’s brain. The girl started whimpering softly from the slight pain it caused. It wouldn’t be any problem like when Hierophant and Chariot had to cut through it to get to her brain, but it was still uncomfortable. “You little-”

Joseph didn’t waste time to start channeling his Hamon from his hands to the girl’s brain, instantly disintegrating the flesh bud rooted into it. “Overdrive!”

“The flesh bud is disappearing!” cheered Polnareff. When the last remnant of the parasite was finally destroyed, they all heaved a sigh of relief. A moment of silence ensued before Polnareff broke it.

“Now, we can all be more buddy - buddy.”

Kirika deadpanned at him, “Polnareff, no.” But she then gave a chuckle, before laughing out loud, the Frenchman followed suit, so did Kakyoin and her grandfather. Once she got it out of her system, she smiled at them, “Thank you. Really, thank you.”

The red haired teen gave a small chuckle, “And thank you, for not giving up.”

“Eh, don’t sweat it. We’re all in this together. Remember that.” Polnareff grinned at her.

Joseph proceeded to pull her into a hug, “Please, don’t do something like that again. I beg you.” But then he suddenly realized something. “O- Oh, but wait- If it’s leaving her brain, that means the Stand is going back to Steely Dan!”

“That’s not good, Jotaro doesn’t know that!” exclaimed Polnareff. “We have to go find him!”

“Don’t worry, I knew he’d try and do this. But Star Platinum has a very precise vision. It’d have seen the Lovers and prevent it from entering him in the first place.” Kirika confidently informed them.

“I’ve also laid out some precaution in case it tries to invade Jotaro.” added Kakyoin. Let’s go, Hierophant Green will lead us to where he is!”

They ran through the city again, following the tiny string from Hierophant. It took a while for them to find Jotaro and Steely Dan. After all, they did put quite a distance from the two. But when they did finally came across them, the raven teen had just summoned Star Platinum. The purple Stand then proceeded to punch the bloodied and broken man into the air, and started pummeling him.

Its fist came down hard on Steely Dan face first.

Then another.

Then another one.

And another one.
A couple more punches were thrown to the various parts of his body.

His legs.

His arms.

His chest.

His solar plexus.

His stomach.

His groin.

There were several more punches.

Then there was another set of several more punches.

At this point, the barrage of fists were too fast to even count. They were seemingly endless. It was surprising that the man was still conscious through the attacks, even more surprising that he was still alive halfway through it with how merciless Jotaro was with his Stand. But that ensured that Steely Dan suffered, and he would not forget the immense pain it caused from messing with the Crusaders.

With one final punch, he was sent flying into a building. The impact crashed the wall and a scream rang through the air. Finally, Steely Dan was allowed to fall unconscious.

It was unlikely he would be able to walk normally again.

A paper with a signature flew to his direction, as Kujo Jotaro walked away from the scene.

“We already wasted time, so I thought transferring the Stand from Grandpa would slow the flesh bud’s growth a bit. I know he has Hamon so he could just kill it with that. Then I needed Hermit
Purple so we can see inside my head.” She paused for a moment to look at her brother, sitting beside her on his bed. He was still scowling while staring ahead. “I figured that Kakyoin and Polnareff are better suited to deal with the Lovers. I just thought that maybe Emerald Splash would corner it like it did Tower of Gray, and Chariot would just skewer it. I didn’t expect it to make clones out of my own brain cells, but it worked out in the end. I knew Star Platinum would immediately stop the Stand from getting into you, so… You’d knew then that you can just beat him up.”

“And I’m supposed to just be okay because you told me all this?” his voice was harsh towards her. He still refused to look at her.

She shook her head, “No, I just want you to at least know that.”

“You were the one who went off on me for doing shit like that, risking my life like nobody cared if I’d die. Then you did this.” he snapped.

“I know. I’m sorry.” Kirika knew very well it made her a hypocrite. She regretted yelling at Jotaro back then. It was still justified, but at the same time, she regretted not understanding him more.

“You’re lucky that asshole is a fucking dumbass, or you’d really be dead.” He gave a short exhale before continuing, “I’m probably not the right guy to judge you for doing something that reckless. But you’re my sister, and that was really stupid.”

She nodded in agreement. How else should she respond to that? He was right. It was the part of the same reason why she got angry at him in the first place for trying to shoot himself. Because he was her brother, the only brother she had.

“I’m sorry.” she said, as she smiled wryly. “I’m sorry, I just… I needed to get him to stop hurting Grandpa.” Blue eyes then glanced at him before looking away once more, “I’m sorry it ended up with you hurting. I’m sorry I still made you all worry. I just- I just didn’t see any other way.”

Silence stretched for several minutes between them.

“Look at me.” Jotaro finally said.

Kirika slowly turned to face him.

SNAP!

“Ouch!!” He just flicked her forehead. “Okay, I deserve that.”

SNAP!

“Ow!” She rubbed her fingers around the reddened skin. “Yeah, that too.”

SNAP!

“Ahh!” She knew she deserved this, but it was getting annoying. “Jotaro, you can sto-”

Her head was suddenly pulled in and she was pressed to his chest. She tried to look up at him from her position, and she couldn’t exactly see his expression as he turned to stare at the window behind them. “I know this trip is dangerous… But when this is over, I want you to come home. I don’t want Mom to wake up, for Old Man to come home, and find out you’re gone. And,” he lowered his head, “I don’t want to lose you.”

It wasn’t like she didn’t know what to say for a while. Rather, she didn’t trust herself to open her
mouth. She knew she’d start wailing if she said anything. She knew she was just going to end up saying sorry again. Jotaro didn't need that to be told to him over and over. It was just going to be something empty in the long run. In the end, she just let the tears flow, small sobs spilling out from her lips.

Jotaro simply rubbed her back as they stayed like that for a while.

The next morning, Jotaro woke up with Kirika curled horizontally next to him, with her feet pressing onto his back and his neck. Her own head was almost dangling from the edge of the mattress. He deadpanned at her as he sat up. The girl was still fast asleep, and didn't budge when he poked her.

After a moment, he sighed, the corner of his mouth curled up slightly. Something tugged at his heart. With what happened yesterday, he once again felt relief as she watched her sleeping face. She was still here, she was safe and sound. He silently vowed to keep it that way, and he swore he'd bring her back home.

It didn't seem like she would wake up anytime soon. He supposed she could sleep a little longer. Yesterday was a long day.

Before he woke her up by flicking her forehead when the time was up.

“OW! JOTARO!”

Chapter End Notes

HE HAD IT COMING, HE HAD IT COMING, HE ONLY HAD HIMSELF TO BLAAAME. IF YOU’D BEEN THERE, IF YOU’D SEEN IT, I BETCHA YOU WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME.

Man, I know it's not as extreme as the Muda Beatdown but, this is still a massive highlight.

But yeah, I made a major change in this by having Kirika getting the Lovers instead of Joseph. I just felt like I can't skip this arc, and I thought of other scenarios, but they all just basically render Kirika useless. It's not like her Stand can join in the fight, and it's not like she will just step aside from it. She can't use her pencils and using Galileo to manipulate Joseph's brain is just gonna be a disaster. Like what's the point of having her be there and do nothing? So I ended up writing all this. I'm sorry if any of you hate this change, but I don't know what else to do.
Chapter Summary

You die in the nightmare, you die in real life.

Chapter Notes

I'm sorry Polnareff, I bullied you too much in this.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"What is it now? Gonna' berate me for not doing anything again?"

A shrill laugh reached her ears, it honest to god sounded pleased.

I actually would like to congratulate you, you finally understood what you're supposed to do... Another laugh, Good... Good...

"You'll never stop being so damn vague, huh?" Kirika pursed her lips. "But well, I can make some guesses, is it about me taking the Lovers into my brain?"

Joseph Joestar would still live without your intervention, but it was still a very clever decision. It meant that you've started to catch onto what to do to save them. The voice then sounded exasperated. I've shown you what happened, what would have happened if you continued to be a useless shell.

Kirika clicked her tongue, "This thing, where you talk to me and choke me once in a while, is a dream. I was a crying when I woke up from what you did to me that day, it's only normal that I forget that jumbled mess." There were still bits of pieces she remembered. Blobs of saturated colors, forming the palettes for numerous incomplete images in her memories from their previous meeting. It still wasn't enough for her to remember exactly what she saw. But what she could recall, was how horrified she was.

She recalled death and destruction.

Deafening silence filled the air. She never noticed it before, but she didn't even hear her own breathing or her own heart beating. She reasoned to herself, it made sense, this was a dream. Why would she hear any of that? At the same time, it bothered her, like here she was just a voice and nothing else. Like her body was non-existent. It was why it was so terrifyingly loud when the entity's voice resounded from behind her.

Are you really sure this is just a dream? How foolish...
She gasped and jumped as she turned around. Once again, nothing was there. But as the voice continued to talk, she kept hearing it coming from right in front of her.

But very well, I suppose I could waste some time making you realize your position in this. It's your reward. Kirika wasn't sure if she's supposed to be happy about finally having some sort of clear explanation. Those are my memories... Yours... Ours... Memories of the people I wish to save, their fates, your failures.

That just confused her even more, "My memories- What- Am I your reincarnation of some sort? So, now I inherited your memories?" It would make sense with what she told her about the two of them being the same, yet separate existence. Her mouth suddenly fell agape as her eyes widened, eyebrows slowly crooking. The last sentence. The colors.

「Memories of the people I wish to save, their fates, your failures.」

"They- Did they- This-"

Close... But not quite. It cut her off, There was nothing as high concept as reincarnation between us. It paused for a moment. There's only desperation... There's only exhaustion... Why? Why... Why are we here? How many times...?

The sudden sense of loss and confusion from the voice caught Kirika off guard. But it didn't push away the foreboding feeling the words planted in her. Fear was slowly stewing within her, what it said were implication enough, no matter how ambiguous it was. "Hold on. Just- Just wait a minute! What do you mean they're going to die?!"

I thought I was clear enough-

"Just answer me, damn it!

She could feel an icy gaze directed at her, and she stared back with defiance.

I told you before... If you fail again, I'll make you regret your own existence.

"You can't sleep?" Kirika snapped her head as Kakyoin came closer to sit beside her.

"Ah, uh, yeah... Got a weird dream and I couldn't go back to sleep." she replied quickly. It was a lie, but she couldn't possibly explain to him right now that she just figured out his doom. How? How was it going to happen? She was already in fear of her mother's condition, now she was told that the fate of the boy beside him and possibly Avdol were more or less pre-determined. That it was her job to find out how to prevent that from happening.

The boy tilted his head, his eyes looked concerned as she avoided looking at him, "A nightmare?"

Was it too obvious? She averted her eyes from the redhead and pulled her robe tighter around her body in the process. "Something like that, but it's fine. It's just some nightmare."
"Do you want to talk about it?" The girl might be smiling, but he could hear the telltale of anxiety in her voice. It obviously affected her if she couldn't immediately go back to sleep. He wished she could tell him about it, but it didn't seem like she was ready to talk about it.

"I'm good, I'm good. Really, I just need a breather." she tried to grin, even though she knew it did nothing to convince him. So she immediately changed the topic. "What about you? What woke you up?"

The boy shrugged, "I don't know, but I don't think I can go back to sleep soon. Maybe it's just one of those nights where I wake up for no reason."

"Do you... need to go to the toilet?"

"I'm not a toddler, Kirika." he deadpanned at her.

It immediately elicited some giggles, which the girl suppressed into small snickers behind her palms, "I'm sorry, I'm just joking!"

Kakyoin couldn't help but follow suit, though he was mindful of his volume. The others were still sleeping.

For a moment, they just sat side by side, letting out some small laughs. It's been a while since they could relax like this. It was what Kirika needed right now as well, after the revelation. For a little while, she could just put those foreboding thoughts of grim fates in the back of her mind. It'd be back in the forefront, but now she could give it a small rest. Once they got it out of their systems, they stayed quiet. Eyes staring at the sky littered with thousands of sparkling diamonds against the inky black backdrop. The cold winds of the Arabian deserts howled, filling in the silence, accompanied by the crackling of warm fire behind them.

"How long has it been since we left Japan?" Kakyoin asked. He was honestly quite worried that they might had already wasted too much time. With so many things happening in this journey, time was almost forgotten and it passed without them really knowing.

"26 days." The answer was instantaneous. It was almost as if she had been repeating the numbers over and over in her mind, so she'd always remember. "If we hadn't had so much setbacks, we'd be in Egypt trying to find Dio already."

"We'll be there soon. Tomorrow, we'll reach Riyadh and we'll get on the plane to Egypt." There would be a small detour along the way, but a Cesna would make it easier for them to reach the country. "Before 50 days are up, we'll find Dio. Then Ms. Holy will be saved."

Kirika appreciated the other's attempt to reassure her. It didn't exactly ease all of her worries, but it distracted her a little. Kept her from going deeper into despair. "Hey, Kakyoin," she spoke up, changing the topic, "you're graduating with Jotaro next year, right? What are you going to do after that?"

The redhead smiled wryly at that. "It's nothing special. I'll go to university, probably just around Miyagi. Get into a business major, then maybe just work somewhere as a salaryman. I honestly hadn't thought that far yet." But that was what most likely would happen. Once he got older, he realized that he'd simply live his life following the stream. Achieving anything higher than that had no point to him. It meant attracting attention, it meant being surrounded by people who could barely understand him. People he couldn't even begin to reach out to, either. So he'd settle this way his whole life. "What about you? I know it's still around 2 - 3 years for you, but have you decided on anything?"
"Ah, well," she grinned sheepishly, before her blue eyes confidently stared up at the sky, "I want to be a composer. I just knew I want to be one ever since I started listening to the music I heard from the movies or the shows I watched. Different pieces brings out different feelings out of you when you listen to them at certain moments. It can make people cheer, laugh, or cry. I want to do the same, I want to create music that would make people feel those emotions. Then someday, I want the world to listen to it." The girl gave a small, shy chuckle afterwards, "Sorry, I ended up rambling there."

It was at that moment, that Kakyoin swore that her eyes sparkled as she spoke of her dreams. It would be a lie to say that he was not the slightest bit envious, but the feeling of awe of her dreams and ambitions won out in him. A genuine smile tugged at his lips. "That sounds wonderful," he complimented her, chuckling when she blushed at it and sheepishly smiled, "have you written any piece?"

"Uh, I did, mostly guitar pieces for the music club's small performances. But I have a few personal projects I keep at home! I've worked on them for months, wonder if I can suggest one or two for bunkasai next year." She almost seemed giddy when talking about it. "Will you consider joining any of the clubs, by the way? Maybe the arts club! I think you'll like it there."

"Yeah, maybe. But well, with me being gone for almost a month by now after entering the school so late into the year, I think I'll pass. I have to focus on my studies once we get back. Exams are coming soon, after all." But he was pretty intrigued by the idea. Maybe he'd visit the clubroom sometime around next semester.

"Oh, that's a shame. I mean, I haven't seen your other works, but that painting you did of Jotaro looked great!"

Kakyoin widened his eyes at her, before averting them slightly, "You really think so?"

"Of course! I'd love to see more." It was funny how this suddenly became her bigger motivation to keep Kakyoin, and all of the others for that matter, safe. It wasn't like she needed one in the first place, but she swore to herself that she'd make sure that Kakyoin would be able to continue creating the art he loved, and everyone would survive to see it. "How about this? I'll let you listen to my projects when I'm testing them, and you'll let me see your paintings."

A chuckle bubbled up from his throats, "Heh, we don't have to make a deal for that. But," he raised a fist, "it's a deal. I would really love it if I could listen to the music you make."

Kirika grinned as her fist made contact with his.

They arrived in Riyadh the next day, and had to stay for the night before they can board the Cessna in the morning. Joseph would be flying it, which Jotaro had been complaining about once in a while throughout the day. Kirika chided him for being so paranoid, but to be honest she was slightly worried too, considering the preceding events. But they had no choice, their grandfather was the only one who knew how to fly a plane, so she crossed her fingers, hoping that there wouldn't be anymore setbacks.

As she reached the airstrip with her brother and grandfather, the dealer suddenly told them he couldn't hand over the plane right now. An emergency, he said, a baby appeared to be ill with a fever and needed medical assistance, the dealer had decided to bring him to the next town since there was
no doctor nearby. Thankfully, the man was willing to offer a refund. But Kirika couldn't help feeling guilty for seemingly jinxing it.

"What's up?" asked Polnareff who just arrived with Kakyoin. "Some kind of argument?"

"Yeah," replied Jotaro, seemingly a little disgruntled, "apparently we can't take the plane right now and might have to wait until tomorrow to fly."

The Frenchman scratched the back of his head and crooked his eyebrows, "Wait, why's that? We already paid yesterday!"

"A baby got sick and there's no doctor in this town, so they have to take him to the next town." Kirika pointed to the basket the robed lady was holding. The girl then heard Kakyoin muttering under his breath. When she turned around, the boy's eyes were focused intently on the baby. She was going to ask what was wrong, but then she noticed something else. "Kakyoin, what happened to your hand?"

The redhead looked at where the other was pointing, the bandage on his hand. "Ah, this. I woke up with this cut. I might have injured myself somehow, but it's fine now." But as he examined it over again, his brows furrowed again. With how fresh it looked this morning, he could only imagine he cut himself when he was asleep. He couldn't figure out how it would be possible. The void in the back of his mind was bothering him again, did this have anything to do with his nightmare?

"Did you get enough sleep? There are dark circles under your eyes." Jotaro pointed it out to his friend.

Kakyoin raised his eyebrows, "Really? I should have had enough. Then again I slept quite late, so maybe that's why."

"Is it because of Polnareff singing all night long?" Kirika narrowed her eyes at the Frenchman.

"Part of it, yeah." he deadpanned in the same direction.

"Seriously, cut it out. It's a hotel, not your own house." Jotaro snapped at him.

Polnareff rubbed the back of his head, "Sorry, sorry!" The man in turn was quite sheepish about it, but the teens doubted that he was actually apologetic.

Eventually, they agreed to bring the baby along with them. Kirika accepted the basket containing the child from the woman and asked for a bottle of powder as well as baby oil, in the case that they would need them, and placing them in her duffel bag. She sat between Kakyoin and Polnareff, while holding the baby on her lap. The plane was then activated, it seemed to be working just fine and it would be able to take off without issue, so it seemed like their flight would just smooth sailing. Jotaro was still quite skeptical, and Joseph on the other hand started worrying about the fact that a baby was now with them.

"I told them it would be dangerous..." the old man muttered.

"What's there to worry about, Mr. Joestar? No one would send their Stand after us while we're on air. We even checked if the plane itself is a Stand, it definitely is not!" said Polnareff, trying to reassure the group.

"Polnareff, if you keep saying things like that, you're gonna' jinx it." said Kirika as she nudged the man on the arm.
"Hey, don't tell me you're being paranoid like Jotaro now. You're the one who's been telling him not to worry the whole day." the Frenchman teased.

Jotaro then chimed in at that, "It's called being cautious, not everyone is as careless as you."

"Oi, what's with the insult?" Polnareff squinted at the teen, who promptly ignored him.

"Alright, make sure all of your seatbelts are fastened. We'll take off in a few minutes." Joseph made some last minute preparations, before they finally took to the sky.

Everything seemed like it was going to be alright. It probably sounded too optimistic, but Polnareff was right, no one could really reach them when they were in the air. A wave of drowsiness swept Kirika following the Frenchman declaring that he was falling asleep. Kakyoin beside her was slowly dozing off as well. "Jotaro, Grandpa, if the baby's crying, can you wake me up?"

"Sure."

"Just rest up, it's alright!" her grandfather chimed in. "I can just wake the others up to handle the baby."

"Eh, it's fine, just wake me up. I'm probably just getting an half-hour nap." She then looked towards the baby. Checking the temperature, it seemed like the fever was not going down soon. The girl smiled wryly, "Hang in there, you'll be okay soon."

Kirika then closed her eyes, she noticed her eyelids got a little heavier as she did so and they easily snapped shut. The world around her darkened further and further as she tried to shut it out of her mind, like a computer shutting down. After a moment, her breathing slowed down and her posture relaxed further into the seat of the plane. She was diving slowly into her subconscious.

Nothingness consumed her.

SAVE THEM!

She tried not to gasp as she jolted awake. Her eyes frantically looked around, Kakyoin and Polnareff were still simply asleep. She didn't feel the usual anxiety and fear that came from her sensing the presence of a Stand user, or rather a Stand's. So what was the entity warning her about? The girl subconsciously clenched her fingers on the basket holding the baby. Her brows furrowed as she looked at the baby, if someone, one of Dio's followers ended up attacking them here, then his life would be threatened. Something began bothering her in the back of her mind as she came upon that thought, and it was as if it was fighting against her instinct.

"Kirika."

Jotaro's voice snapped her out of her thoughts, "Y- Yeah?"

"Huh, that's a really quick nap. Anyway, you need to replace the baby's diaper. Just use one of the clothes under him."

Now that he mentioned it, she just noticed the unpleasant smell in the air. "Oh- Oh! Wait, I'll need someone to help me with this." She considered asking Kakyoin first, but she remembered that the boy probably needed the sleep, so she turned to Polnareff. "Polnareff," he shook the man, "hey,
Polnareff.

The man groaned as he rubbed his eyes, he wasn't exactly awake yet. Joseph threw a small ball of paper at him to urge him to wake up, "Polnareff, the baby wet himself. Help, Kirika change the diaper."

"Oh, uh... Wh- What?" Polnareff muttered under his breath, seemingly a little disturbed by something. His face was a little pale, but gradually became more normal as he gained more consciousness.

Kirika quirked her eyebrows as she noticed that, "Are you alright? What happened?"

"I... I think I'm fine. Yeah, I'm just fine." he shook his head. "It feels like I had a really bad dream. But... I don't remember having a dream. I forgot."

"Once you've changed his diaper, you can go finish that dream. I won't wake you up again." said Joseph.

"Well, that's normal, sometimes I think I might be dreaming, but I forget what I was even dreaming." added Kirika, hoping that eased Polnareff a little.

He chuckled, "Heh, I guess. That's silly, I got worried over nothing! Alright, let's handle the little tyke."

"Okay, help me clean him up first," she handed over her wet tissues to the man, "I'll get the powder and the baby oil."

As the man did so, he almost threw up, "H- Hold on a second! He took a dump! Look, just look at this!"

"He's a baby. Why do you think he wears a diaper?" asked Joseph, in a nonchalant tone.

"Seriously?! For real? I never knew! You gross creature!" Polnareff squinted at the baby in displeasure.

Jotaro sighed annoyedly, "Are you seriously this stupid? Like you never shit yourself when you're his age."

"I'm not that disgusting!" he protested. "It's all over the place..."

"Quit complaining and clean him up already, it reeks!" The elder Joestar simply wanted the man to shut up so he could concentrate in piloting the plane.

"Polnareff, it's a baby, they don't have much control over this stuff. Just pack it up and wipe him with the tissues." chided Kirika, ready with the powder and the oil in her hands.

"Hhh... Aren't you embarrassed? Grow up and become an adult already..." With his job done, he let Kirika do the rest.

This was the first time Kirika doing this, but she vaguely remembered what her mother once showed her when helping one of their neighbour's with their newborn once. "Okay! Polnareff, hold that side, I'm going to pin it."

"Ah, like this?" the man held the end of the cloth, as Kirika carefully pin it with a safety pin.

"Yep, it's all done! Now you're clean!" she put the baby back into the basket. "Wow, you're really
calm. Didn't even cry once."

All of the sudden, they heard a slight groan. Jotaro was the first to notice it coming from Kakyoin, who was still asleep. "Is he having a nightmare?"

"He definitely is. Kakyoin, wake-" Before Kirika could try and shake him awake, the redhead suddenly screamed and started kicking, his arms flailing around. She fortunately managed to avoid being hit and immediately covered the baby. "Kakyoin!"

"Stop! Stop it!" His voice was full of fear. One could only imagine what he was dreaming about.

"What's wrong, Kakyoin?!" Jotaro asked, concerned about the other. But Kakyoin kept screaming, he was still not awake yet.

"Hey, snap out of it!" Polnareff took the initiative to cover Kirika from the flailing limbs and tried to reach to shake Kakyoin, but the unconscious assaults from the boy made it hard.

"Stop! Stop! Stop it!" Kakyoin kept flailing around, until his leg shot out and hit Joseph in the face. It caused the man to accidentally push the plane's controller. They began rapidly spiralling down from the action.

"Damn it!" Josep tried to gain back control, but at the speed they were going as they fell, it made things complicated. "It's out of control!"

"H- Hey, are we seriously gonna' crash?!" Jotaro knew this would happen, the others kept telling him that it was only paranoia, but his grandfather really couldn't be trusted as a pilot. "Polnareff, don't let go of Kirika and the baby!"

Meanwhile, Kakyoin kept screaming as his nightmare continued, "STOP!!!"

"Kakyoin, what the hell is wrong with you?!" Polnareff shouted. "This is how he was acting this morning!"

"It doesn't matter, just calm him down!" yelled Joseph, still trying to fix the issue at hand.

Jotaro beside him was pushing back Kakyoin's leg before he hit his grandfather again. "Gramps, hurry up and get back in control!"

After a few moments, Kakyoin stopped moving and seemingly calmed down, but it looked like his nightmare was still continuing. Kirika tapped on Polnareff's arm that was holding her, "Polnareff, hold the baby tight, I'm gonna' wake Kakyoin up!"

"A- Ah, alright!" the man let Kirika go and cradled the baby in his arms.

"Level the fucking plane, Gramps!"

"Listen up! The word "panic" isn't in my vocabulary, I can fix this!"

In the midst of the chaos and yelling, Kirika tapped on Kakyoin's face and shook him roughly. "Kakyoin! Kakyoin, wake up! Can you hear me?!" She tapped on his cheek more insistently, almost slapping him, "Hey, Kakyoin! Listen to my voice! Wake up!" It didn't seem to work, and she was getting desperate. Before she began actually slapping him awake, Kirika suddenly noticed something from her peripheral. From under the boy's left sleeve, there was a continuous stream of red, and there was no doubt that it was blood.
"What the hell's happening to him?!"

"We're gonna' crash!" Jotaro had been shouting the same thing for the umpteenth time.

Joseph then suddenly realized something, "Hermit Purple can control it!" Purple vines slithered from his hands and it took hold of the plane's controller, invading the machineries within. Within minutes, the plane stopped diving down and went back into the sky. "We did it! I got control back just in time!"

"That was a close one!" Polnareff cheered as they flew low, relieved that they were saved.

The old man laughed, "You guys see that?! How do you like my flying now, huh?!"

But for Kirika, they still had one problem. The boy's arm beside her hadn't stopped bleeding. Despite her confusion regarding to the boy's condition, she knew one thing was clear. Kakyoin had to wake up. She unfastened her seatbelt and went to face the boy, despite the others' protests. Her hands took hold of his shoulders, "Sorry, Kakyoin!"

She drew back, before slamming her forehead onto the other's.

Purple eyes immediately snapped open.

Just as the plane ended up crashing onto a palm tree.

"Gimme' a break, are you kidding me?!"

They set up a fire camp, staying for the night nearby the ruins of their plane. Luckily, all of them came out of it without any injuries. But on the downside, this was another setback. Just when they thought they avoided it when taking the plane this morning. Not even in the air by themselves they were safe. This time, they weren't even really attacked by a Stand.

"We survived, but," Polnareff then called out to the redhead who was sitting nearby, "Kakyoin, what's going on? This is all your fault!"

Kakyoin didn't respond for a while, still looking distraught and rather disturbed by what just happened. "... I don't know. I feel like I had a bad dream again. When I woke up, I was dead tired." He closed his eyes, "Is there something wrong with me?"

"Cheer up, you're just feeling fatigued." Josep tried to put on the lighter mood. "We left Japan about a month ago, and it's been nothing but non-stop encounters with enemies since then."

"Well, I guess, you're right." Polnareff grumbled a little.

"Hey, Kakyoin, does it still hurt?" The redhead turned to Kirika. Her forehead was still slightly bruised from slamming onto his earlier. "Sorry, I didn't know how else to wake you."

"Ah, it's alright. Don't worry about it." He tried to smile, but the corners of his mouth didn't reach his eyes. "But it did hurt a lot, how much force did you even put into it? Are you alright?"

"Yeah, I'm fine! It's just a small bruise, it'd be gone by tomorrow."
"Hey," called Jotaro, "the baby's fever is down."

Joseph then eagerly approached the giggling baby, "Oh, thank goodness you're safe! I don't know what we'd have done if we lost you!" He cooed and played peek-a-boo with the baby, causing him to giggle louder, amused by the faces the old man made. "That's a cute smile!"

"What's so funny about that? It's not even a joke or anything. Stupid." Polnareff commented as he walked away from the scene.

"Polnareff, don't be mean. Babies haven't developed object permanence yet, so when you play peek-a-boo with them, it's the funniest thing ever for them." explained Kirika.

"Is this your very first time with a baby, or are you just really this dumb?" Jotaro asked with a blank expression on his face.

"Jotaro, I swear to god I'll hit you!"

The teen simply ignored him again as he went to check the plane's radio, "Hey, Gramps. The radio's still good. What's the plan? Send SOS? But Dio might find us..."

Joseph gave it some thought before replying, "It can't be helped, let's call for help. For the sake of the baby."

Kirika sighed at that, "Just when we thought that things are going smoothly." She then walked to join others at the plane to grab her duffel bag. There were some snacks and breads that she bought in the previous town, so maybe they could have that for dinner. For a moment, she looked back at Kakyoin, and suddenly remembered that he was bleeding as he was checking his left arm. The boy was seemingly perturbed by what was probably the injury that caused it, checking his switchblade to find that it had no blood.

"Am I forgetting something important...?" she heard him muttering.

She meant to call out to him, but Kakyoin suddenly stood up and slowly walked towards the baby. There was a voice in the back of Kirika's mind, and it got louder. It was telling her to stop him before he did something he would regret. The girl immediately ran and grabbed Kakyoin's right arm, taking him towards the trees behind. "K- Kirika, what-

The girl pulled his left arm into view and widened her eyes at the words "BABY STAND" carved onto his arm. It hadn't scabbed yet, and Kirika became worried it was going to get infected. "I saw it... You were sleeping and I saw you bleeding for no reason. That's why I felt that I really have to wake you up. I almost forgot about it because of the crash." She looked up at him, "Are you really sure you don't remember dreaming anything?"

He shook his head after trying to recall anything. Anything at all. But none came, frustration was written all over his face. "I don't. I only felt like I had a nightmare, but I really don't remember anything from it. It's like," he furrowed his brows as he turned to look at the baby, who still tried to avoid looking at his direction, "something's blocking me from trying to remember anything about it."

"Polnareff said the same thing when I woke him up to help me with the baby." Kirika clicked her tongue, "How did I not feel it? If the baby really is the Stand user, then how didn't I feel anything from him, like I did with others? If I did, then maybe I'd wake you up sooner."

Kakyoin stopped her right there, "No, if you can't feel anything from him, then it's not your fault. It's not as if you're some kind of alarm for enemy Stands. It helped us before, but we can't depend on it like a machine, so don't feel pressured about it." He swept his fingers up his forehead and held his
hand there, "For all we know, the baby might be able to conceal his Stand completely somehow... Or I could just be delirious and it's just all in my head. There's no way a baby could be a Stand use-

A finger pressed into his scar and he flinched, hissing in pain.

"Your wound is still here, and you felt pain from it just now. There's no blood on your knife. You didn't injure yourself during the crash. Even if you did, no glass shard could carve definitive letters like these." Something suddenly clicked in her mind, "God, this is what it tried to warn me. It woke me up, it prevented me from sleeping because it knew..."

"It?" Kakyoin quirked his eyebrows, "What do you mean? Someone warned you about this?"

"Uh! Mm..." She debated whether to tell him or not, about the entity that was supposedly living within her. For years, she only confided this to Jotaro, not even their mother knew the full extent of it. She didn't want to scare the boy standing before her by telling him everything, either. Maybe omitting some things should be alright.

"Look, it's going to sound really weird, but... Please listen to me until I finish." She took a deep breath before starting, "All my life, ever since I was 8, I've had this voice in my head. Only Jotaro ever knew about this. It's telling me things when I met certain people, making me feel things... What it said doesn't matter at this point, but lately, it's been visiting me in my dream. Starting from when we started this journey, that night when I woke up at the airport. I didn't understand what it wanted, it just seemed really angry at me. But," she gulped, "you remember 2 nights ago? When I told you I had a nightmare?"

Kakyoin nodded, "It was the voice. Did something change in its demeanor?"

"It just condescendingly told me that I did something right by taking Grandpa's place when we were dealing with the Lovers. But basically, once in a while, it'd act up and scream in my dreams, almost like warnings. In the plane, I was falling asleep, before it jolted me awake. So it was aware that something was up." she looked at him sternly. "That is very possibly the baby. Who else could it be? It can't be some invisible person that followed us into the plane, somehow."

To be fair, it was weird that they were accusing a baby right now. But they had Stand, and they were travelling to chase a vampire. Anything could happen at this point.

"Why are you telling me this?" It just seemed like something that was very personal, very sensitive to her. Given to the wrong people, they would immediately use this information against her, and might consider her insane. Kakyoin wouldn't do such a disgusting thing, of course. But what made her decide to tell him about this? Then again, he did tell her that she could come to him to share things she couldn't share others.

"I trust you, and I'm asking you to trust me. Even if the others will think of you as crazy when you reveal this to them, I'm on your side. We unknowingly let an enemy in." She sternly looked at him, "But we have to be careful, we want to do this without setting any alarms off, or they'd think both of us are out of our minds."

"Agreed." Kakyoin put a hand under his chin, "We should at least show some evidence that he really is not a normal baby to the others. That means... We have to wait."

"Alright, we got a good plan going on here, then!" she grinned, before walking towards the open grounds.

"Kirika?" He stopped her in her tracks.
"Yeah? Anything else you need?"

"... Thank you for believing in me."

She raised her eyebrows, before smiling, "Well, we're friends, aren't we?"

"Something smells good! Whatcha' making?" Polnareff asked Joseph, who was stewing something in a pot by the campfire.

"Baby food," he showed the other the contents of the pot, "it's milk, egg yolks, bananas, and bread all stewed together. Here, want a taste?"

The Frenchman momentarily gulped, before receiving a spoonful of the food. He tasted it in his mouth and exclaimed, "Delicious! Now that's the stuff! Gimme' more, more!"

Joseph pushed him away to stop him from continuing to eat the baby food, "Hold on, this food is for the baby!"

"Polnareff, you haven't even finished your own food. Does that mean I can have your portion?" Kirika smiled teasingly at the Frenchman, her hand was reaching for his plate.

"Oi, no way in hell I'm giving it to you! You have your own food, Kirika! Keep to it!" But the man kept getting some more spoonfuls of the baby food.

When he managed to get another taste before Joseph wrenched the pot away from him, "You've had enough!"

Suddenly, Kakyoin started yelling, "Mr. Joestar! Polnareff! Did you see that?"

"Huh?" The two man looked at him in confusion.

Kirika on the other hand tensed. No, this was not a good idea. Kakyoin couldn't just do something rash like this! She looked towards her brother, Jotaro's expression was unreadable, but she could tell that he was also confused. No one would believe him.

"That baby really isn't normal!" He pointed to the child, "He just killed a scorpion! It happened so fast, he stabbed it with a safety pin!"

"Kakyoin, calm down. What are you saying?" asked Joseph.

"This is no ordinary baby! He's not even a year old, yet he knew what a scorpion was. He killed it with his own tiny hands!"

That alerted the others immediately, "A scorpion?" He ran towards the baby and picked him up from the basket, checking him. "Where?!"

"In here!" Kakyoin rushed towards the basket itself and started rummaging through it, "The dead scorpion should be in here..." But as he searched the whole basket, he found nothing. "I- It's not here..."

"Really?" Kirika ran towards Kakyoin's side and started checking through the sheet as well, "But...
But I saw it, there was a scorpion crawling into-

"Kirika." Jotaro's hand was on his shoulder. "You were eating your dinner the entire time, you couldn't have seen it. I get what you're trying to do, but there's no scorpion there. He could have been seeing things."

"Jotaro!" she tried to protest.

"I- I'm telling the truth!" Kakyoin exclaimed before trying to pry the baby away from the old man. "Where are you hiding it?! Is it in your clothes?!"

Kirika swore she saw the baby dripping in cold sweat.

"We get it, Kakyoin! That's enough! Stop!" Joseph quickly moved away from the teen. "I told you this earlier, but you're exhausted. We'll discuss this tomorrow, once you've calmed down."

"But- But Grandpa! He really isn't lying, something's really not right!" she tried to defend the boy.

"Kirika, please, I know you just want to cover for him. But, really? A baby being dangerous? That's ridiculous!" Polnareff countered her.

She pursed her lips, there was nothing she could really say to that. She could tell him that there was no limits to their situation. They just encountered a Stand in the form of a big ball of flame similar to the sun. Then again, there really was no way to prove it to them at all. Kakyoin saw the incident where the child killed the scorpion, but he hid it where he couldn't find it. They couldn't prove that the baby was their enemy. So for now, they had to retreat. She looked towards Kakyoin, who looked stressed out. 

"I'm sorry, Kakyoin, I'm really sorry."

As the situation was settled for now, Joseph began trying to feed the baby. "Now, open wide! It's yummy!" He put the spoonful of stewed food nearer and nearer towards the baby's mouth, but the baby seemed to refuse to open his mouth. "Oh? Dat's weird! You wook pwetty hungwy, but you're not gonna' eat? Say "aaah"!"

Just as the spoon touched the baby's lips, Kakyoin's hand came out of nowhere and slapped the spoon out of Joseph's hand. "Mr. Joestar! I'm convinced now!"

"Kakyoin!" Kirika called out to him. This is bad! I know we need proof, but this is making the situation worse for you! She stood up and rushed to the other side, "Kakyoin, wait!"

But he wasn't listening, "I don't know where he hid the scorpion, but he has to be a Stand user!" He then pulled up his sleeves, "I have all the proof I need right here! Look! Read what it says on my arm! It's a warning! I must've gotten this wound in my sleep!"

The reaction was predictable. Everyone was startled, but mostly disturbed, as they thought that Kakyoin carved the words by himself because of some manic episode they thought he was going through. Kirika kept standing by Kakyoin. She trusted him, and she told him that he could trust her. So she would do her best to defend him.

"I saw his arm bleeding when he was sleeping in the plane, he couldn't have just done that to himself!"

"As much as I want to believe you, he couldn't just suddenly have that kind of injury. Where would it even come from?" Joseph tried to reason to his granddaughter.

"He's trying to say that a baby is a Stand user. Even if I entertain the possibility, you didn't even feel
anything from him, did you? If he really was the Stand user, you would have." argued Jotaro. He felt a little bad doubting his sister, but this was too ridiculous.

"We have Stands! We have Stands because a 100 year - old vampire stole our ancestor's body and triggered them to manifest! But this, **this** is beyond the realm of any possibility to you?!” Kirika yelled angrily. She couldn't believe that they could be this dense.

"K- Kirika, calm down! I understand what you're trying to say, but still! He's a baby! When we got him he was sick! How could he have done anything?"

She supposed what Polnareff said was what triggered Kakyoin to go full offensive, "I'll have to use force!" Hierophant Green was summoned before Kirika could stop him, since she was arguing with the other three. She instinctively summoned Galileo to hold off the the other's Stand. Before he could make the Stand attack the baby, Silver Chariot hit it on the back of its head. Kakyoin immediately collapsed to the ground.

"It's no use, he's lost his fucking mind." the silver - haired man muttered.

"No, Kakyoin!" He's going to fall asleep, he can't fall asleep!

As she tried to reach for him, prevent his fall, a sudden pain flared in her head. It became worse overtime, causing her to clutch her head and giving loud whines. She vaguely heard her name being called, but she couldn't hear it clearly. There was suddenly too many voices drowning them out. She couldn't concentrate enough to listen to any of it, as the pain started to bring her to the brink of unconsciousness.

She felt herself fell, and the world around her slowly became pitch black.

Save him.

When she woke up, the sky was green.

She blinked a few times to see it would change colour, but it didn't. Kirika slowly rose from her position, and realized that she was in a psychedelic amusement park. Confusion filled her, before she remembered that she had an excruciating headache before falling. "I'm in the Stand's dream." she muttered.

"Kirika!" Kakyoin's voice sounded like he was panicking. She turned to see him beside her, "How- You're not supposed to fall asleep! The others would sleep too, and that baby would use his Stand to kill all of us! If we die here, in the real world-!"

The girl immediately reached for his shoulders and held him there, "Kakyoin, calm down! Look behind you."

At first, the redhead was confused, before complying. His purple eyes widened when he realized that Hierophant Green was right there with him. The "friend" that he had since he was born, was here with him, "Hierophant..."
"You know what this means?" The boy turned back to Kirika and noticed just then that Galileo was there with her too. "It seems that whatever we brought with us when we're sleeping, it also appears in this dream world. That's why you have that wound, you probably used your switchblade here to carve the words onto your arm here. The same applies to our Stands. So now we have a chance to beat him!"

His wide eyes slowly closed as he gave a small, relieved smile. He was beyond happy to find that he wasn't wrong to put his trust in the girl before him. For a moment as he fell onto the ground, there was some doubt to his decision to do so. But she proved to be a very valuable friend and ally in this. She stood by him, even when others were distrustful towards him. He then grinned, "Let's do this together, the others should be here soon."

Moments later, after looking around the amusement park for the rest of their group, they finally found them at the mercy of the baby's Stand. Appropriately named Death 13. Kakyoin sent Hierophant Green ahead as distraction, as Kirika sent Galileo to help the others. First she shot graphene sticks to cut off the strands of Polnareff's hair that was curled around the poles, Joseph's prosthetic hand was turned into graphene so it became lighter, then she had to melt Jotaro's chain to stop him being choked by it. When the baby was weakened enough from Kakyoin squeezing his Stand's neck, it all turned back to normal, as Kirika ended the effect of her Stand's power at the same time.

Death 13 began spinning around and swinging its scythe, trying to slice Hierophant Green, to no avail. "Quit it, Death 13!" Kakyoin called after it. "It will never leave your blind spot. If you keep resisting," he stepped down from the teacup he sat on with Kirika, the girl following suit, "even if you're just a baby, it will break your neck."

"Kakyoin! Kirika!" Joseph, followed by Jotaro and Polnareff, ran towards them. "We really owe you two one! And Kirika, you worried me there, what happened to you?"

"Don't worry about that! At least you guys are safe now!" One day, maybe she'd tell her grandfather about the voices telling her to save his long-lost friend. But that time had yet to come.

"I thought you had really lost it." Polnareff said regretfully to the redhead. "I didn't believe you. You fought this battle by yourself... I'm sorry."

"Same here," chimed Jotaro, approaching them both, "we doubted both of you too much. I was focusing on the entirely wrong way."

Kakyoin and Kirika looked at each other before chuckling in unison. "It's fine, Jotaro, Polnareff." the boy said. "I was acting too rash, there was no way any of you could have known that I was telling the truth."

"Now that we have the upper hand over him, though. What do you guys suggest we do?" Kirika directed their attention back to Death 13.

Just as she finished her sentence, the clouds in the sky suddenly moved in a circle rapidly in unison. The sky turned dark and had a disorienting shade to it. The clouds then centered itself around Death 13. Then they were compiled further up in the sky, before popping into a bigger form.

"Don't try anything funny, Death 13!" threatened Kakyoin.

Kirika had a terrible feeling about the changing atmosphere around them. She tugged on Kakyoin's sleeve, "Kakyoin, take Hierophant back."

"Wait, why? I have to keep it there. I already told him that he'd put himself at risk if he dared to do
some underhanded tactics."

But Jotaro suddenly shouted, seemingly getting the same gut feeling as his sister, "Get Hierophant away from his back! Kakyoin!"

The ball of clouds suddenly turned into a hand which grabbed Death 13’s scythe, and proceeded to swing it through both Hierophant Green and the wielder of the scythe itself. Everyone yelled his name in fear as they saw Hierophant was cut from the hips below.

"Kakyoin, no!" screamed Kirika as she held the faltering boy. She was frantically checking the other, barely prepared to see his bisected body, before she realized that he was in no danger at all and flicked his forehead lightly in reflex. Polnareff gave hushed chuckles at it, while Joseph held in his laughs. The boy flinched slightly, but he still gave her a wink. She shook her head as she signed, and smiled mischievously, "Go get 'em."

"As you wish."

"Good grief."

"Didn't you know?" the Stand was too busy boasting to notice that Kakyoin in the dream world didn't get brutally murdered by its trick. "Death 13's body is actually hollow! Death 13 is nothing but head, arms, and a giant scythe!"

"Just kidding." the boy stood up, nonchalantly dusted off his uniform. "Take a closer look. My Hierophant isn't so careless as to stay on your back forever."

The enemy Stand gasped, as it realized something was invading it. Something slithering and slimy entering it through its ears. It disrobed itself to realize that Hierophant Green simply unraveled itself. It broke itself down more and more into strings from its body, invading Death 13, and slowly but surely, it started taking control of it. It moved Death 13’s arm that was holding the scythe closer to its neck. "M- My arm is moving by itself! It's going in!" It began shouting in fear as Hierophant's head took shelter in its mouth.

"Like I said, he was on your back so the scythe couldn't touch him. Now, if you're not happy being thorn up from the inside," Kakyoin pulled up the sleeve covering his scar, "why don't you heal the wound on my arm? Anything is possible in a dream, so you should be able to heal my cuts, right?"

"Y- Yeah!"

"Kakyoin, that was really gross."

"Yeah, it really was."

"You don't sound apologetic at all."

"Well, do you think I should be?"

"Heh, no."

Both teens laughed together as they walked off from the house where the baby's parents lived. They were relieved that they were able to save everyone from being killed by the baby, of all people.
Kakyoin was especially pleased that he could exact a little sadistic revenge towards the child. He wouldn't kill him, being a child murderer was still something that he would definitely not cross. But his vindictive soul was satisfied for torturing him in such a way.

"Hey, what are you guys laughing about?" asked Jotaro when they returned to the group.

"Nothing, nothing at all." Kakyoin gave a small chuckle. "Anyway, the parents apparently had been looking for the baby for a few days now, he just suddenly disappeared from home. So maybe he was kidnapped."

"Then he was just dumped in that town. I guess the kidnapper thought he was too much of a trouble to get ransom from. He probably got the fever after being left overnight in the cold. Poor guy." Kirika suppressed the urge to start bursting out laughing after saying so.

Polnareff hummed, before grinning from ear to ear, "Say, what happened between you two, huh? You suddenly got real close."

The both of them raised their eyebrows at that. "What do you mean, Polnareff? I mean, we're friends, of course we're close."

"Ah, it's just that I feel it's more than usual. But well, never mind. Good luck to you, guys!" he then sauntered off.

Kakyoin quirked his brows in confusion, "What was he talking about?"

"Ignore him, he's just saying more dumb shit again." said Jotaro.

It was Kirika who immediately got what Polnareff was trying to say, and dashed towards him, before kicking him behind his knees.

"Don't get any weird ideas, goddamn it!"

"OW! KIRIKA, WHAT THE HELL!"

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the 2 weeks late update! I've been really, terribly tired.
Beginning of The End

Chapter Summary

Now, it's time to get closer to their destination. But challenges would keep coming, no matter how much they tried to avoid it.

Chapter Notes

I'm no expert in reading tarots at all, so if anyone does, do correct me on these things so I could change it. Also, it's kinda shitty of the group to basically troll Polnareff like that in the original. I mean, I get why, but don't play with Pol Pol's feeling like that, man. Don't torture Pol Pol even more.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

"Remember, we can't let Polnareff know what we're doing today. At least, until we're done with all of our preparations for the next step." Joseph reminded the teens. They just received news that Avdol had fully recovered from his wounds and would meet them at an isolated island, just a couple of miles off the coast of Al Qunfudhah, where the largest seaport in Saudi Arabia was located. So they were going to cross the Red Sea with a speedboat Joseph would buy.

Kirika had some reservations about that. She knew that her grandfather was really well-off back in New York, being a real-estate tycoon. But it just seemed really wasteful that they'd just abandon the boat and replaced it with a submarine to get to Egypt. Jotaro sort of shared the same sentiment, but there wasn't really anything they could do about it. Submarines would hopefully be their best chance not to get noticed and attacked by another of Dio's minions. With that, they could finally get to Egypt quickly and safely.

"Well, I'm just glad that Mr. Avdol is doing well, and that we can stop lying to Polnareff about it." Kakyoin was a little bit more relieved about that. He came to despise the fact that he had to keep the silver-haired man out of the loop about their friend.

"Yeah, we owe him some serious explanation for that later. Speaking of him, where is he?" asked Kirika. They had to board the boat in less than half an hour and she hadn't seen him since 3 hours ago. "Any of you guys saw him going anywhere earlier?"

"Don't tell me he got caught up with another enemy Stand." Jotaro groaned in annoyance. He was ready to start looking for him when he saw said man walking towards them. "You're almost late, where were you?"

Polnareff sheepishly smiled at them, "Ah, sorry, sorry! I had to look for a bathroom on my way from the market. Thankfully, there's a pretty clean public toilet here, so thank god for that."

"At this point, I think half of this journey for you is just your quest to find a decent toilet." said Kirika.
"Hey, it's not my fault some of the bathrooms around here aren't so well - taken care of." Polnareff then gave the plastic bag he'd been holding to her, "Here, you mentioned you love the luqaimat we found back in Riyadh, so I thought I'd buy some for you on my way back."

"You didn't bring it to the toilet with you, right?" asked Kakyoin. He just meant to tease, but he was a little bit concerned if Polnareff actually did that.

"Kakyoin, seriously, who do you think I am?" the man deadpanned at him. In response, the red haired teen simply chuckled.

"Well, I won't be surprised if you did, to be honest." It was hard to tell if Jotaro was just pulling his chains, his expression was still one of stoicism as usual.

"Oi, shut up! What's with you guys thinking I'd do something as stupid as that?!"

But while Polnareff was busy glaring at the two older teens, Kirika lit up as she eagerly took it from the man, smiling as she looked upon the ball - shaped snacks packed neatly in a small box, "Oh, thank you so much, Polnareff! Man, we didn't have much time to find them in the last two towns." Avdol would appreciate it if he could have some too, she was sure of it.

Polnareff grinned, "Well, you're very welcome! See, at least someone knows how to appreciate my efforts."

Joseph gave a small smile at his granddaughter's reaction to the gift. At times like this, he regretted bringing her along with this, Jotaro and Kakyoin too for that matter. In the heat of the moment, his only concern was Holy, his only daughter. But soon after, he realized that by getting his grandchildren and Kakyoin involved in this, even though there wasn't much choice on their hands, he just threw them into a situation where they could very possibly lose their lives while they were supposed to be just enjoying their youth.

The three of them had almost lost their lives in different instances too.

There was no option to turn back for them, either.

He didn't really believe in any higher power, but he prayed to whoever is listening, that fate would be more merciful on them.

"Alright, let's head over to the port right now, the boat should be arriving there soon."

Once they arrived the island, they found Avdol... Or rather, Avdol disguised as an old man that was supposed to be his father. Polnareff spotted him too soon when the Egyptian man was supposed to simply observe them arriving. So in the end, instead of telling Polnareff about the truth, they all had to play along with the facade, that they were here to tell Avdol's father of his son's passing.

It would have been funny if it weren't for Polnareff despairing over the fact that he was the reason why Avdol died in the first place.
As the man decided to clear his head by going towards the beach, Jotaro stared at his retreating back in regret. Once he was far enough, Jotaro clicked his tongue and spat his next words in indignation, "That wasn't fucking necessary at all." He knew he was the one who pointed out that Polnareff shouldn't know, but to lie to him now when Avdol himself was standing right before them felt so wrong.

"I understand how you feel, but the preparation isn't done yet. If we tell him that he survived now, then we'll have to explain to him the next steps. For all we know, no matter how careful we are, Dio might have sensed us and sent another one of his follower here. We're trying to get to Egypt as quietly as we could here." explained Joseph in hushed voice.

"How long, then?" Kakyoin narrowed his eyes in utter displeasure. He hissed, "How much longer do we have to lie to him? No matter what we say, he's still going to be distressed over his involvement in Mr. Avdol's "death", Mr. Joestar. When can we tell him the truth?"

"Not much longer. If things go according to plan, it'd arrive by tonight. Right now," he gestured towards the house, "he's simply double-checking everything so things would go smoothly later." The old man sighed, "Listen, I'm sorry. I know it's wrong, I know very well how he feels. But we just can't mess this up. I wish there was another way, but we don't have much option."

Kirika was honestly pretty upset about what happened earlier. But she supposed her grandfather was right. It still didn't justify them to continue lying to the Frenchman at all, though. "Once everything's settled, let's look for Polnareff. For now, we can go talk with Mr. Avdol now, right?"

"Ah, right. Let's go in, then." Joseph opened the wooden gate and held it to let everyone else in. He knocked on the door of the hut, moments later the familiar voice told them that they could come in, the door's unlocked. Once the man pulled it open, Avdol was inside, having changed his outfit and was cleaning up his make up. He greeted them with a warm smile.

"Welcome to my humble abode, it has been a while, hasn't it?"

"Mr. Avdol!" Kakyoin was the first one to approach the man first, his hands went to hold his forearms, "You're okay... You're really okay. God, I thought you were really dead back in India."

The Egyptian chuckled wryly, "Yes, forgive me about that. It's quite selfish of me to go along with it, but it had to be done. After all, I vowed to help you all to defeat Dio and save Ms. Holy. This is the only way I could join you again once I fully recover. I am glad to be able to see you all again."

"How are your wounds, Avdol? Not hurting anymore, I hope." Joseph walked closer to his friend and shook his hands.

He eagerly returned the gesture, "Well, the first - aid that Ms. Kirika gave helped in the first place, so I have to thank you first for that." The man smiled at the girl, "I suppose you really are our resident combat medic."

Kirika grinned, "I'm trying my best! We'll have more battles, and that means more injuries, so I have to be prepared." She then offered the box of luqaimat to him, "Here, Polnareff bought it back in Al Qunfudhah. I hope this is enough for your recovery gift."

"Oh, it's luqaimat. Thank you, Ms. Kirika. I'll have to extend my gratitude to Polnareff too, later." he
gladly accepted the box, before looking towards Jotaro, chuckling. "By the way, Jotaro, do you still not swelter in that jacket?"

The boy smirked and went to put one hand on the man's shoulder, "Am I glad to see your face again, Old Man. Good to see you doing just fine."

"I already told you I'm not that old." but Avdol still laughed nonetheless. "Ah, right, I've just settled the rest of the payment once I received the confirmation that they're sending the submarine over here. So right now, we'll just have to wait around until it arrived, they'll send a message when it's finally here."

"I see. Well, maybe this time everything will go smoothly, and we'll arrive in Egypt by tomorrow morning. Then we'll rest up for a day in Shalateen, before we get to Aswan." Joseph laid out the next steps for them. He hoped to god he wasn't being too optimistic.

For the next hour, they got Avdol up to speed with the events they experienced after they left India. From the death of J. Geil, the chase by Wheel of Fortune, their meeting with Enya Geil, and her death at the hands of Steely Dan. He laughed at how stupid the Sun's wielder's strategy was to attack them, and he laughed even harder when Kirika mentioned that she was going to laugh along at how funny it was. Until she saw how terrifying Jotaro looked when he started laughing.

He was also quite surprised that they came across Anne again, relieved when they told him that she was sent back safely to Hong Kong.

After a while, Joseph decided to venture the island, Jotaro and Kakyoin following suit. Except for Kirika, she opted to stay behind with Avdol. She had some important business to deal with.

"Kirika." Jotaro called her name before he exited the place. As she turned around and looked at him in the eye, he didn't need to say a word. Are you sure about this? The smile on her face somewhat reassured him, but he couldn't help but still feel a quite worried. His sister had started getting answers after years being plagued by this "voice" in her head, and now, she was trying to uncover more. He was the one who suggested her to ask Avdol for his wisdom, despite not believing in fortune telling or anything of the sort at all. If the answers turned out to be something that would show her some sort of grim reality, he wasn't sure how he would protect her from that.

Kakyoin was looking at the both of them, seemingly understanding about what was implied between them. He knew that he didn't know the full extent of the issue with the "voice" that Kirika told him, and probably it'd take a long time before he even found out about the details. Probably never. Regardless of it, at the very least she seemed like she'd be closer to the truth, "It'll be fine," he whispered to the raven, "this is a good step for her."

The taller teen hoped the other was right.

"Dead- What do you mean? How does it even know all this?" Jotaro was sort of expecting that Kirika would talk to him about the voice in her head when she dragged him to this alleyway. What he wasn't expecting was her talking about how the voice more or less informed her of how their companions were doomed.
"I don't know. It was saying it like this happened before, and the flashes it showed me before was my memories- Its memories. It doesn't make sense, but when does it ever make sense?" she frowned as she paced around, arms crossed. "Kakyoin, Mr. Avdol, and Polnareff... It didn't even tell me what's coming. It just expects me to know what would happen to them and I have to do whatever I can so they can avoid it."

"Which includes getting yourself hurt in their place..." He didn't like this one bit. The voice started as something that was mildly irritating for his sister. But now, with it slowly turning into some kind of a malevolent force and would possibly drive her into more harm than necessary. "Listen, whatever you do from now on, don't listen to it. Just shut it out. This is actually worse than I thought."

The girl instantly stopped in her pacing and turned to her brother, brows furrowed and from the look in her eyes, the raven could tell that she was about to reject that notion, "Jotaro-"

"Just because it keeps telling you to do these things, doesn't mean you have to do it. You're just one person, Kirika. It can't expect you to change fate, or whatever it is it's trying to make you do just all by yourself. And I won't allow you to get hurt because of it." Because at this rate, she might actually go and do something, in which he wouldn't be able to shield her from any danger that would come her way.

She shook her head adamantly, "But it was clearly warning me. I- It kept telling me, if I don't do anything, then they would die. We can't let that happen! I know that this journey is dangerous and we might die at any moment, but I still want all of us to be safe! I want all of us to go home and live normal lives after this! It's not only me who wants that, you know. It's not too much to ask, right?"

Jotaro stayed silent for a moment. This girl was still 15, for god's sake. What kind of world was this to put this much of a burden on the shoulders of his sister? He hated the voice, the entity within her, for driving her to act like this. He hated Dio for seemingly being the force behind all these premonitions, he was the one who caused this journey to happen, thus triggering all of these to start happening to Kirika. But no matter how much he blamed all those factors, it seemed like nothing could change her conviction to try and save the others, even at the risk of her own well-being.

The kindness of the Joestar ran in the family, his grandmother once told him when they were younger. They would go to even the end of the world for the sake of the ones they love and care for. Jotaro couldn't help but agree with it, it was why he was even in this journey for his mother.

But he knew the same kindness had cost them so much throughout the ages.

It was what claimed George Joestar's life, it was what claimed Jonathan Joestar's life, it was what claimed George Joestar II's life, and it was what almost claimed Joseph Joestar's life.

If fate was truly cruel, the same might claim Kujo Kirika's life.

He couldn't let that happen.

"I can't stop you, can I?"

"... No, I'm sorry."

He sighed in exasperation, looking down at his feet after doing so. The raven then finally looked up to her again, smiling wryly, "You're still just one person." Before she protested again, he put a hand
on her head to stop her. "That's why I'm here for you. Whenever you need my help, I'll be there to help and protect you, like always."

Kirika widened her eyes at his statement, before a smile slowly grew wider on her face, "That was really cheesy."

He let out a short chuckle, "Pot calling the kettle black, that speech was just as cheesy." It prompted a giggle out of her.

She was glad to have him as her brother.

"... Jotaro, thank you."

"It told you that I would die from your inaction, as well as Polnareff and Kakyoin." It was worrying, the fact that this voice residing in her head had started acting up once they started looking for Dio. He couldn't help but think that, from what the voice itself implied, they've been here before, and things happened differently. He didn't exactly subscribe to the theory of alternate universes, but he couldn't completely deny the possibility. "You've only told Jojo and Kakyoin about this, correct?"

"Yeah. I haven't told Kakyoin the whole detail, but at that moment... I feel like he deserved to know at least a part of it since things were pretty dire back there..." Avdol was going to ask what she meant, but she cut him off, "I- It's a long story! But- So, what do you think? What does this all mean? ... What should I do?"

The man hummed, before standing up to get his deck of cards. He unpacked the cards and began shuffling and mixing them all together for a few moments, with Kirika staring intently at the process. After that, he laid out 7 cards in an arc on the table. "Each card represents different aspects. From the left; it's your past, present, future, the advice suggested, the influence that'll lead you to the answer, the obstacles you'll face, and the outcome of your action if you disregard the guides. Mind you that tarot cards don't show you your future, they're supposed to be simply used to guide you. Now, you may flip the cards one by one, and I'll tell you what they say."

She stared at the cards, a little skeptical, but undeniably curious. Her hand proceeded to lift the first card and flipped it. It showed the Six of Swords.

"The Six of Swords represents regretful, but necessary transition. You left with a baggage from the past, while trying to move forward somewhere that would give you peace and tranquility."

That honestly didn't sound like anything she ever did in the past, but she decided to move forward. This time, her present was represented with the Hermit card.

"The Hermit, it symbolizes self - discovery, introspection of self, if you will. It's what you're doing now, you're trying to find the guiding light you desperately need to find the answers regarding the voice."

This time, this was familiar. But whether she'd find the answer in this, she doubted it, unless the voice came clean and decided to tell her everything without being a cryptic, condescending asshole to her. She flipped the next card, the reversed Tower showed on its face.
"Reversed tower," Avdol quirked his eyebrow, "interesting... This implies that with how you're going through things, you'd be able to avert a major disaster. So you're already on the right path more or less."

"That's... Unexpected." She almost couldn't believe it. It was too early to say that things would end up okay. It gave her a little more hope. Next, she flipped the card representing the advice she needed. It was the Nine of Wands.

"Resilience, courage, persistence... They're what this card represents. I may have only known you in a month, Ms. Kirika. But you do have these qualities in you, you trudge through hardships. But sometimes," he closed his eyes, "you do so without asking any help from others and always trying to deal with your issues on your own. That's why I think sometimes, these qualities aren't always the best in certain situations."

She gave a short exhale, almost like a chuckle, "Jotaro reminded me about the same thing before we got here. I'd like to think I'm getting better at it."

Avdol smiled, there was a hint of pride as he did so, "Then, I am happy to hear that. Remember that I am also here if you need any assistance, Ms. Kirika. In fact, we are all to help each other when one is in need. So you are not alone at all."

A grin rose on her face, "Thank you... Thank you so much, Mr. Avdol." With that, she flipped the next one to reveal the obstacle she'd face. It's the Eight of Swords.

The fortune teller frowned as he read the card. But he supposed, this was the challenge that she needed to overcome, after all. "Something will trap you, limiting you from moving forward. With that, this was just my theory, but the voice residing in your head would be the one to cause this. You told me that it'd make you yourself regret your existence if you fail. It might be unintentional, but with how it is going about things, it would actually end up causing you to fail."

What's with this thing living within her? It was telling her to save people, but then it was apparently the bane of her goals. She sighed and brushed her fingers up her fringe. "This is just getting frustrating..." But she proceeded with the last card. Her nails when under the thin sheet and her fingertip pushed it away from the surface of the table, before she fully flipped it around.

The outcome of her ignoring these possibilities.

Two of Swords.

"Your refusal to deal with obstacle we mentioned earlier, it would further lead to your failure. If you continue not to acknowledge the fact that the voice might do something that impedes you in your goal, and if you decided against reaching out to other people, there would be a catastrophe in what you're trying to do." He put a hand on his table. "Again, tarot cards do not represent the future. While I pride myself in my precise premonition, whatever is said here wouldn't be the exact result of your actions. They are just simply something you have to be mindful of."

Kirika was silent for a while, contemplating Avdol's words and the cards presented to her.

She realized that she didn't exactly received any answer from this, but one thing it did was helping her open a new path of figuring out this mystery. The card representing the past didn't necessarily refer to her, but perhaps it was the entity within her instead. Something caused it to behave like this,
despite needing her to do its bidding. Sooner or later, she'd have to confront it in order to dig into further information. Otherwise, it'd ruin any chance for them in saving the others.

"...I understand." She then stood up, "Once again, thank you, Mr. Avdol. I appreciate the help."

"You are very welcome."

---

Once Avdol received news that the submarine was heading closer towards the island, they started looking for Polnareff. Only that he was nowhere to be found. He was heading towards the beach, but he wasn't there at all. Even after looking around the hut and places nearby the beach, they still couldn't find him. Joseph scratched the back of his head in confusion, "Where the hell did Polnareff wander off to?"

Jotaro had been trying to look around the boat, thinking that their friend might be there. But it was sadly not the case, "Not up there. He must still be somewhere around the forest."

"It's pretty dark out now, where could he have gone?" Kakyoin wondered. It'd be hard to search him in the forest right now.

Kirika sighed, "Jeez, I hope Mr. Avdol has better luck in finding him, considering he'd been staying here for a few days now."

Her brother's ever-present frown deepened, "It couldn't be an enemy, could it?"

The red haired teen clenched his fists at that, "We did consider the possibility of Dio's follower being here, it probably followed us from Al Qunfudhah somehow."

"Grandpa..." Kirika looked towards Joseph, who started considering on what they should do.

After a moment, he stared ahead with determination, "All of you, stay here. I'll go find him, I'm partly responsible in making him walk away earlier, after all."

Jotaro widened his eyes, "Wait, Gramps. If there's a Stand user out there, it'd be dangerous to go alone."

"Don't worry about it! I'm more than capable to handle a single enemy."

But he didn't need to venture out into the forest, as Polnareff came back, with multitude of puncture wounds and lacerations, blood dripping down his face. Yet, he looked so cheerful as he approached them, "Hey! Guys, you won't believe it! Guess who I just found!"

"Polnareff, you had us worried!" exclaimed Joseph, his eyes directed towards the injuries all over his body in deep concern. They needed to get his wounds tended quickly. The one on his neck was looking especially severe. His Stand's healing ability might help, but it was still seemingly quite deep.

"When did you get those wounds?!" yelled Kakyoin in concern.
"It's the enemy Stand, isn't it?" Jotaro asked, scowling at the damage the enemy caused to the man.

Kirika quickly fished out her first-aid kit from her duffel bag, "Sit down, we need to patch you up right now!"

"Who the hell cares about my wounds?" the silver-haired man said, still grinning as he got closer to them. "Listen! Don't let this shock you, Jotaro! And don't pass out once you hear this, Kakyoin! Kirika, don't scream when you see him, okay?" He then went to Joseph with the same gleeful expression, "Who do you think I found, Mr. Joestar?"

"Wh- What-"

"Behold and rejoice!" He spun around in a dramatic fashion, as he imitated a celebratory trumpet. Avdol stepped out from the tall grass, and Polnareff happily announced his appearance. "Here he is! The man himself, Avdol, is alive!"

Silence permeated the air.

No one responded like Polnareff hoped them to.

He swore he heard chirping crickets amidst the crashing sound of the ocean waves.

"Oi, I said Avdol is back with us and he's alive! A dead man came back to life! What the hell?! Why aren't any of you surprised at all?!" he was getting a little irritated by the lack of reaction.

"... Um, Polnareff, first of all," Kirika quickly bowed at him, "we're really sorry. Please let us explain."

"Wh- What do you mean-"

"Oh, Polnareff, I'm sorry." Joseph rubbed his cheek, hesitating a little before he said his next words, "When I said I buried Avdol in India, that was a lie."

For a moment, Polnareff didn't even know how to react to Joseph's confession.

But when it finally clicked, the man shrieked, "WHAT?!"

"After my head and back were injured in India," Avdol began explaining the extent of his circumstances, "Mr. Joestar, Jotaro, and Kirika tended to my wounds."

"Y- You assholes knew Avdol was still alive back in India, and you didn't tell me?!!" He then pointed an accusing finger at Kakyoin, "You too, Kakyoin?!!"

"I was only told the day after. However, we couldn't let the enemy know." The redhead sighed, "And since you're a loud- Sorry, I mean, since you can't lie, it was decided that we not tell you until now."

"If you had fucked up and spilled the beans, Avdol wouldn't have recovered in peace." added Jotaro.

Kirika made a gesture with her hands to calm the man down, "Just to be clear, we're all here against keeping it from you, but we had no choice. It's the only way we can keep the enemy from finding and attacking Mr. Avdol."
"We were planning to tell you as soon as we knew he was safe. But you already ran into him first." Kakyoin smiled sheepishly at that.

Polnareff was suddenly reminded of something, "Oh, yeah! Avdol! Your dad's on this island."

Hearing that, Kirika subconsciously brought her hands to her cheeks, "Oh, no."

The man was already excitedly running towards the forest again when Avdol dropped one last bomb, "That was simply me in disguise..."

A loud thump against the sand was heard as Polnareff tripped and fell down. For a moment, he stayed there, in disbelief and betrayal. He slowly lifted himself and turned to look at the rest of the group. "W- What?! Th- Then you guys... That was all... Was that all really necessary?! I thought we were friends and you left me out like that?!"

The unbearably sad tone as Polnareff started shedding tears made the group feeling even more guilty. "Hey, hey, no need to bawl your eyes out." said Joseph as he tried to calm the man down.

"I'm sorry, it was cruel of us. But at the very least, Mr. Avdol is doing just fine now." Kakyoin's tone was most apologetic, he wondered how he could make it up to the man.

Avdol went to pat the man on his back, "My apologies, Polnareff. I had good reason to come to this island in disguise."

"Good reason?"

"Although part of it was to avoid the enemy figuring things out, I also had Avdol do some shopping for me." explained the elder Joestar.

"It was a very conspicuous purchase," added Avdol, "I disguised myself as a wealthy Arab to purchase it."

Once it was time for the object they had been talking about to finally arrive, Joseph clapped his hands once to get the others' attention, "Alright, everyone! It's time to go!" He then ushered Polnareff to get up and follow them to a cliff. "Polnareff, cheer up already! Come on! It's almost here!" He proceeded to point at a distance.

But all Polnareff could see was the ocean, so he didn't understand what the whole excitement was all about. "Wait, what's almost here? I don't see any-"

Before the man could even finish his sentence, the area Joseph pointed at started bubbling. Something large and yellow rapidly surfaced itself, revealing what would be considered a luxurious submarine. This was the vehicle that would bring them to Egypt. This was pretty much their first time riding in such a transportation, so seeing it up close was already fascinating by itself.

"Guys, come on, let's get in!" Kirika was giddy as she entered the submarine. Once she was inside, she immediately headed straight to the big lone window. They were not deep enough that she could see the wonders of the deep ocean. But from here, she could see what was to come when they finally descend from above. "It's like going to the aquarium, right, Jotaro?"

"You could say that." His eyes lit up slightly as he looked down at from the window. Peering from
above, he could spot hints of countless of colorful fishes swimming around below the submarine. What else would they see once they reached the ocean floor? Jotaro honestly couldn't wait to see the things that he had only read about in his books all these times.

Kirika chuckled at how her brother tried hard to hide his enthusiasm for what's to come once they started operating the submarine. Her eyes then widened when she spotted something interesting, "Jotaro! Kakyoin! Look!" She pointed at a particular large silver fish, one that looked almost snake-like. Menacing with its prominent sharp teeth.

"Oh, it's a barracuda. This is the first time I see one alive. I did read somewhere that the Red sea is their habitat as well." said Kakyoin as he joined the siblings in looking out the window.

"This one is the great barracuda. It's a common species, so it's the same one we'd find back in Japan." Jotaro started. "The prefer to hunt in the open sea, that's why it's easy to spot them like this. Considering this one is just wandering by itself, safe to say it's an adult. Only the babies and juveniles swim in shoals."

"Well, that's just as expected from our resident marine expert." praised the redhead, quite amused at how his friend's face brightened, as he explained to them of what he researched.

In reflex, Jotaro quickly lowered the brim of his head to hide his eyes from view, "I just did a little reading, it's not a big deal."

"A little? You bought a comprehensive book about the Atlantic ocean and just sat there in your room, burying your face in it for nights." his sister quipped, snickering when he glared at her.

After a while, they finally started moving, and the submarine went deeper into the ocean. Disappearing completely from the surface. Before long, they could already see countless of sea anemones littering the coral reef and the different marine creatures swimming around them. From octopus to sharks. All with the backdrop of the big blue sea.

If only they could dive closer towards them and see what else they could discover.

"Hey, you know how to drive this thing Avdol?" asked Polnareff.

The fortune teller then cheekily tutted, "No problem, you need not worry."

"I can drive it too!" Joseph chimed, but before he could ask Avdol to move over, his grandson's monotone voice cut in.

"But you're not gonna. I'm not getting in another crash because of you."

The old man scoffed, "My grandson sure is harsh. Hey, Kirika, you don't think that we're going to crash if I drive the sub, do you?"

For a moment, the girl didn't respond, while her lips formed a straight line on her face. Then it slowly became a sheepish smile, "I'm not taking any chances."

"Oh, come on! It's not like I'm the harbinger of death!"

Meanwhile, Kakyoin was silently looking around the interior of the submarine. He was especially surprised at how spacious it was. "This is the first time I've ridden in one, it isn't as cramped as I
expected."

Joseph nodded, "Yeah, normally you'd see a vessel like this being used by rich people for pleasure. As you have seen, it has-

"Whoa! Nice!" exclaimed Polnareff as he ran towards one of the windows, almost knocking over Joseph, "I love this kind of stuff! If only I had a cute girl to see it with...

Avdol audibly sighed, but he gave a fond smile afterwards, "It would seem you truly have not changed, Polnareff. But we did not come all this way for pleasure." His attention was immediately directed to the sonar screen before him, checking if there was any obstacle.

"Oh, what's this?" asked the Frenchman, curious about the device.

"It's a sonar," the elder Joestar started explaining to him, "it detects reflected sound waves underwater, kind of like a radar. If an enemy tries to attack from any direction, we'll be able to see them."

"But if we're attacked here, we're shit out of luck." The raven teen suddenly stated. "We're 60 meters below sea levels."

"I guess I should have expected this in a luxury sub for the wealthy." Kakyoin looked around the facilities that came with the submarine. "A refrigerator, a coffee maker, and the latest satellite phone."

Polnareff perked up at the mention of the refrigerator, "Can you get me something to drink, Kakyoin? I'm parched."

"And me too, please." Avdol added.

"Sure." replied the redhead as he opened the fridge. His eyes were drawn first to the supply of cola bottles on the upper shelf. "Is cola okay?"

Kirika peered from over the boy's shoulder to see the contents, "Ah, there are juice cans too! Excuse me," the girl knelt down and slipped her arm under Kakyoin's to get the can of grape juice, and melon for Jotaro, "let me take these."

"Hey, Gramps," Jotaro's voice turned the others' attention to the old man, who was standing before the satellite phone. "You've barely moved, what's up?"

Joseph lifted a hand at them, "Guys, quiet down. I need to make a call."

If Polnareff had eyebrows, he would be seen quirking them, "A phone call? To where?"

"To go through the trouble of making a phone call from here, it must be something important." Kakyoin guessed, as he brought the bottles of cola to the Frenchman and Avdol.

"Yeah," the elder Joestar confirmed, "this is important and very delicate. So please, quiet down."
Kakyoin then proceeded to whisper to Kirika as Joseph was seemingly in the middle of getting connected to whoever it was he was trying to call, "You have any idea what it's about?"

"Not really, but I guess this is the only time where we can safely make a call without getting detected by Dio. So whoever it is-"

"... Oh, Suzie. It's me, Joseph."

It surprised the group when the identity of the person receiving the call was revealed. "Grandma..." Kirika muttered under her breath. Was she told about her daughter's condition? But as the conversation between her grandparents continued, it was clear that the woman was left in the dark too.

"No, you shouldn't bother," the siblings assumed it was a response to Suzie wanting to visit their mother, "she'll be fine soon enough."

"He calls this an important conversation?" Polnareff whispered.

"Yes," Avdol let out a weary sigh, "Madam Joestar is quite sprightly, so he must check in with her now and then to ensure she will not visit Ms. Holy in Japan, and discover the truth."

Kakyoin furrowed his brows, "Does that mean she doesn't..."

"Of course, no one has spoken a word to her about it. She would be needlessly worried."

"I-," Kirika suddenly spoke up, "It's just gut feeling but... Don't you think that somehow... Grandma knew? Or at least, she might know that there's something wrong with Mom."

Jotaro wordlessly looked at his sister, before turning his eyes towards the table, "For her own sake, let's hope that's not the case."

Later, Joseph asked for the phone to handed over to someone named Roses. After making sure that the conversation was no longer audible to his wife and explaining the current situation to the man, he asked, "Tell me, how is Holy doing? Have you gotten a hold of the doctors from the Speedwagon Foundation?" He was silent for a while, as he listened to what the other had to say. To the others, Joseph's posture gave it away as time went by.

Kujo Holy was close to death.

They only had 20 more days to prevent that.

"There's no need for that." Joseph once again declined to tell Suzie the truth. He knew that she had the right to know, it's about their only child, after all. But he didn't have the guts to do so. He couldn't bear hearing her cry. "We're gonna' put an end to this soon. It's better that she just sticks to her daily routine. Under no circumstances should you tell Suzie anything. I'll keep in touch."

With that, he ended the phone call. His hands clenched hard, and if he wasn't wearing a glove on his non-prosthetic hand, his nails would pierce his palm and he would bleed. Joseph just stood there silently for a few moments, trying to keep his composure.

A familiar small hand latched onto his arm, green eyes turned to look at his young granddaughter
who was clearly just as affected as he was, if not worse. But she still tried to keep herself strong. If they ended up losing- No, Joseph didn't want her, and his grandson for that matter, to experience losing a parent. He was a mere baby when his parents both disappeared from his life, but he had his Grandmother Erina and Uncle Speedwagon. He almost lost the latter once and the pain was unbearable. But he had to be strong for his grandmother, and he refused to break down.

"Grandpa," she started, her eyes were downcast, before they looked up at him with determination, "it'll be okay, Grandpa. We'll save Mom soon enough. We're almost there, aren't we? We'll make it, we just have to believe in ourselves now."

"You have my sympathy, Mr. Joestar." said Kakyoin in a sombre tone.

Polnareff felt guilty for brushing off the phone call as irrelevant. It was a man calling his wife regarding their dying daughter, while trying to keep said fact a secret from her, for pete's sake. "Don't worry about it, we're here for you! We're right at Egypt's door."

Avdol nodded at that, "We must defeat Dio posthaste, in order to save Ms. Holy. It is for this reason that I have returned."

"No use in moping, Old Man. You said killing Dio is the only way, so we'll do just that." added Jotaro, his composure calm as usual. Even though fury and fear were brewing within him.

"... Yeah," his hand went to stroke Kirika's head, "thank you, all of you."

Kirika gave a wry smile, before her eyes turned their attention to the phone, "Grandpa, there's someone I need to call."

It was 6AM, the usual time for them to wake up and go to school. But Himari wished she could go back to sleep for a little longer. She spent the entire night awake, trying to finish a particularly hard homework. In the end, once the clock struck 1AM, she decided to give up and ask someone in class later about it. Then she suddenly recalled how she considered asking Kirika about it, before remembering how her best friend was not around.

That got her thinking.

Kirika hadn't came back yet.

It had been a month, and she didn't get any phone call from her at all.

Was something preventing her from doing so?

Just as she finished that thought, she was exiting the room, and the house phone suddenly rang from the first floor hallway. She quickly ran to pick it up before her mother could call her to do so, "Yes, this is Shimizu residence."

[Himari? Can you hear me?]

She had never been happier to hear that voice, "K- Kirika! Is it really you?! Are you okay?"
"I'm fine, I'm just fine." There was a chuckle, "I really miss you. I hope you're doing alright too."

"I miss you too, I really do..." the brunette smiled until her face felt like hurting. "So where are you now? Are you coming home soon?"

[... No, I don't think I'll be back really soon. But I hope that we can get back before the second week of this month. So, if you could tell the teacher that next time they ask...]

Himari gave a slight giggle, "Of course, don't worry about it, I'll tell Miyazono - sensei if she asked again. She's getting suspicious, you know?"

[Really? Well, I hope she didn't decide to arrange any home visit, then.] There was a pause, before Kirika spoke again, [Himari... Did you go to my house recently?]

The girl didn't respond for a minute, prompting Kirika to call her name and that's when she started stuttering, "W- Well, I... Mom told me to deliver some lemonade to Ms. Holy... Then..." she remembered seeing people in uniforms. Members of Speedwagon Foundation, she noted, the famous organization which goal was to improve aspects of human lives. They refused to say what they're here for, except for the fact that they were here to take care of her friend's mother. That had her wondering, what kind of condition was the woman in that she needed Speedwagon doctors to come and treat her? "Kirika... When you said she fainted, it's not just some disease, is it? There was something bigger to it, right? Something dangerous, but you have to deal with it. That's why you had to go."

The minute of silence confirmed it for her.

[Himari, I'm really sorry. I didn't want to tell you any of the details, because I didn't want to involve you in any of this.] She heard an exasperated sigh from the other end. [But... I promise I'll be back home. It's dangerous, but I'll come back home. So just wait for me, alright?]

The brunette could feel tears collecting in the corner of her eyes. Whether it was her feeling upset of scared for her friend, she didn't know. It was all mixed up at this moment. "... Kirika, I want to be angry at you."

[You have the right to be.]

"But... Just make it up to me. Come back, and you have to treat me food for the next semester."

The line went silent for a bit, before she heard a very familiar chuckle, [Make it 3 months?]

"Beggars can't be choosers!" The chuckle turned into a laugh, and Himari couldn't help but follow suit, "But, you know, I'm feeling merciful, so 3 months it is."

After a moment of not saying a word between the two of them, Kirika broke the silence, [Hey, I have to go. It's late.]

"A- Ah, alright. See you next month?"

[... See you next month.]

The line went dead.
She still felt uneasy about the fate of her dear friend.

But she would be lying if she wasn’t a bit more hopeful this time.

4.05AM

Kirika awoke to the voice of Polnareff nagging Kakyoin to make him coffee, with the redhead snapping at him to make it himself. Jotaro was beside her, and letting her lean onto him as he observed what’s ahead of them. As she lifted herself away from him and tried blinking the sleep away from her eyes, she saw Avdol stepping away from the helm to check the surface with the periscope.

His face immediately lit up with what he saw, "Look! The coast of Africa is visible! Our arrival is imminent!" The effect of the news was instant, the atmosphere surrounding them brightened. It didn't matter that some of them went without sleep and were exhausted. Their destination was near, they’re reaching the end point. The man then scrambled to grab the map of Egypt stashed nearby, and presented it to the others on the table. "Near this coral reef, there is an underwater tunnel formed by erosion. The exit is 200 meters inland, we will surface there."

"We finally made it to Egypt..." the relieve in Joseph's voice was immeasurable.

"Yeah, finally." Polnareff wholeheartedly agree with the sentiment.

Jotaro gave a slight upward quirk to his lips, "Egypt, huh?"

"After 30 days, after so many setbacks, we're here." Kirika sighed heavily. It didn't mean that they could relax, but it was still something to be glad about.

"Yes, finally." Brown eyes turned to Polnareff, who let out a quick exhale as he smiled, "Is something wrong?"

"Nah," the silver - haired man grinned, "I'm just really happy. It's been a long time since the six of us are together."

Kakyoin couldn't help but smile at that, "And I hope it'll be something that stays the same until the end of this journey."

As a small celebration, the redhead ended up making coffee for all of them. It would freshen them up as well. 7 cups were put on the table. Jotaro quickly noticed something odd, "Hey, Kakyoin... Why 7 cups? There are 6 of us."

Thin eyebrows quirked when he realized that, "That's odd. I guess I wasn't paying attention."

"It's fine, Grandpa needs the extra cup, anyway." Kirika proceeded to grab one of them, sipping the bitter, hot liquid.

Joseph had already grabbed another. As he decided to let it steep for a bit more, he turned his head away from it. But as he did so, the mug suddenly exploded, or rather, turned liquid and deformed. Forming small clawed hands and a snarling face. It prompted the old man to shout, startling the rest
of the Crusaders into action. Though, before they could even do anything, it formed a small blade, and instantly cut off Joseph's prosthetic hand.

"Grandpa!" Galileo was summoned and Kirika had it manipulate the broken off metallic hand to try trapping the creature with it. But it suddenly cut off the fingers with its fast movements, sending it flying towards Joseph. "Watch out!"

"What?!!" Joseph was falling backwards, and he was preparing his other hand to break it. He wasn't able to avoid his fake fingers in time. Like bullets, the metal pieces pierced into under his chin, narrowly escaping his neck.

"Gramps!" shouted Jotaro as his grandfather fell to the ground with a loud bang.

"Mr. Joestar!" Kakyoin, with Kirika following him, ran straight towards the elder Joestar. Meanwhile, the creature attacking them landed hard on the table, causing it to shake and the coffee cups to fall, crashing down onto the floor. It lifted its hideous visage at the group and let out a hoarse shout.

"A Stand! A Stand somehow made its way into our submarine!" shouted Avdol. He thought of summoning Magician's Red, but he'd risk burning the submarine if he failed to target it the first time.

The Stand then shot up to the ceiling and latched onto it. Jotaro summoned Star Platinum and tried pummelling it down, only for him to miss. The creature shot towards another direction and proceeded to seemingly melt into the metal. The raven - haired teenager gasped as he realized what it just did.

Polnareff started looking around their surrounding in panic, "I- It disappeared!"

"No, you're wrong!" objected Avdol. "It transformed into one of the gauges! Just as it transformed into one of the coffee cups!"

"Seriously?! We're at the coral reef!" the Frenchman clenched his fists in frustration. Just when they finally reached Egypt, something like this ended up happening. "We were only a few hundred meters from surfacing in Egypt!"

On the other side, Kirika quickly administered a first - aid job with Kakyoin's help, mostly to minimize and stop the bleeding from her grandfather's wounds. Thankfully, none of them were life - threatening, but they still needed to bandage them up nonetheless. Once they've managed to patch Joseph up, they both supported the limp man to his feet. "He's unconscious, but his wounds aren't bad. He just lost his prosthetic hand."

"The bleeding should stop soon too, but what should we do now?" The thoughts in Kirika's mind were rushing and swirling around, as she tried to come up with a way to get his grandfather away from the danger. But her thoughts were broken by the sound of the ringing phone.

"Who's calling at a time like this?!" yelled Polnareff in annoyance.

"Ignore it, Polnareff!" the redhead quickly told the other. "Don't get distracted!"

Avdol let out a noise once he realized what they were dealing with, "This is High Priestess! The Stand user we're dealing with is Midler, she could control her Stand from vast distances, so she's likely on the surface. High Priestess itself is able to turn metal, glass, or any kind of mineral. This includes plastic and vinyl, of course."

Kakyoin widened his eyes, "So even if we manage to touch it, unless it attacks us..."
"We'll have no way of seeing it at all." Jotaro clicked his tongue in annoyance, "We really are trapped here."

"But how the hell did it get in here?" Just as Polnareff finished his sentence, water burst out from where one of the gauges was placed and started flooding into the room. The room turned into dark shade of red while the alarm started ringing in their ears. "I see... That'll do it. How quaint, it made a hole to get in?"

Just when things looked pretty bad for them, it became worse.

The surfacing system was damaged.

Even worse than that, they're running out of oxygen.

On top of it, now it seemed that the navigation system was broken.

"Shit, we're gonna' crash, again!" Kirika turned to her grandfather and started trying to nudge him awake, "Grandpa! Grandpa, wake up! We need to get ready! We're sinking, Grandpa!"

The phone started ringing again, and in frustration, Polnareff shouted, "Jesus, enough already! Who the fuck is calling?!" He meant to glare daggers at it, but he was surprised when Jotaro suddenly stood before the satellite phone, "Jotaro?!!"

Avdol quickly noticed that he meant to pick up the phone and warned him, "Hey! Do not needlessly touch-"

"Jotaro, stop, it could be a trap!" his sister shouted.

But the teen picked it up anyway and directed it to his ear. For a minute or 2, nothing happened. Jotaro was silent as he listened the other end of the line. After a while, he finally spoke, "Sorry, but Gramps isn't available right now."

Kirika gasped. "It's Grandma..." She should catch on that something bigger must be going right now.

"... There's nothing to worry about, Grandma Suzie. I'm with Grandpa. Later, we'll call you back once things cool off." with that he ended the conversation.

The situation immediately went from worse to shit from then on.

"Hold on!" shouted Avdol. "We're about to hit the sea floor!"

"OH MY GOD!" Polnareff shrieked in pure fear.

Moments later, the loud crash and the harsh vibration they felt from it signalled the end of their submarine.

"I knew this would happen! Every vehicle we ride gets destroyed!"

"Kirika! Are you alright?" asked Kakyoin, still holding Joseph on his shoulders.

"I'm fine- How's Grandpa not awake yet?!"

Jotaro gritted his teeth as he grumbled and vowed, "Never again will I ride a submarine..."

Once the debris settled, Polnareff offered to start carrying the still unconscious Joseph on his shoulder. They couldn't even relax for even a moment. They were rapidly losing oxygen. It was
getting harder to think clearly and keep their eyes open. But Kirika forced herself to stay alert, the enemy was still within their surroundings. She clicked her tongue, "How are we supposed to find it...?"

"Hey, Kakyoin," called Jotaro, "did you see which gauge the Stand turned into?"

The redhead moved closer to the other and started looking at the panel of gauges, trying to remember which one it was. He finally pointed to one of them, "I'm pretty sure it's that one."

The raven tapped on his arm to tell him to move away as he focused on it. Star Platinum was summoned once again, and the whole room's atmosphere became even more tense as its fist got closer to that one particular gauge. All of the sudden, one of the red lights started flickering. Avdol was the first one to notice it. It blinked slowly, once and twice. Then all of a sudden, it started melting, deforming, and the hideous creature that was High Priestess manifested from it.

"No! Jotaro, it has moved! Now it is behind Kakyoin!"

Kakyoin swiftly avoided the attack from behind, narrowly missing the Stand's claws. "Hierophant Green!" He directed it to launch a short-range Emerald Splash, hoping that it would straight up destroy it. But surprisingly, High Priestess managed to evade it somehow. Once again, it headed for Kakyoin, sharp claws prepared to slash him.

"Kakyoin, move back!" Kirika summoned Galileo and the Stand detached one of the chairs to launch it towards the enemy Stand, but not before manipulating the metal to turn into a harpoon. It managed to throw the Stand off, and the redhead evaded its attack again. But High Priestess didn't let that one small attack stop it. It continued to quickly moved around the room, and it once again avoided being pummelled by Star Platinum.

It roared its ugly scream, before phasing into the hull, disguising itself as one of the machineries.

"Everyone, get to the door! If we stay here any longer, we could sustain serious damage! Head for the next room." Avdol then started running, with everyone else following suit. Once they were all outside, the man started turning the door handle to seal the room.

Only for the wheel to turn out to be High Priestess in disguise.

It almost chopped Avdol's hands, if it weren't for Jotaro's quick reflex to summon Star Platinum and had it grabbed the other Stand before it could do anymore harm. He had it in its hands now. "I guess this thing isn't faster than Star Platinum. What'll we do with it?"

Polnareff let out a cheerful laugh, "Jotaro, you can't hesitate! Show no mercy! Hurry and rip its head off, hurry!"

"Aye, aye, Sir." The teen prepared rip it apart with his Stand's hand, and for a moment, a sense of victory swept over them.

Until blood suddenly gushed out and dripped onto the ankle-deep water below them. It wasn't coming from the obviously still living Stand. But from Jotaro's own hands, scratches littering his palm as he realized that High Priestess transformed itself into a razor. Kirika snarled, "Galileo!" While she managed to bend the razor slightly with her Stand's power, the creature was still too fast for Galileo and avoided being crushed.

In the midst of the struggle, Polnareff accidentally dropped Joseph and the impact finally woke him up. He was delirious for a moment as he stared at his missing prosthetic hand. His attention then was directed towards the laughing Stand on the ceiling. "I'm not sure what's happening, but are we in
trouble?"

"Shut the fuck up, Gramps."

Just then, Avdol finally summoned his Stand, "It will attack us if we touch it, so we shall avoid just that! Magician's Red!" A burst of flame was launched from the humanoid bird's beak, which the enemy avoided. But just as it thought it was safe, Silver Chariot proceeded to attack it. But its exterior was too hard for Chariot's sword to pierce.

Before they could launch more offensive attacks, Avdol warned the others to stand back. The door to another room burst open from the water pressure and Polnareff was the first to enter it. "Th- There's still oxygen in here!"

"Even so, we don't have much time!" Kakyoin reminded them as he ran after him.

Kirika followed suit, "We need to figure out how to get out of here somehow!"

"Are you alright?" asked Avdol as Joseph passed him.

"Yeah!"

As the Egyptian stepped a foot to the other room, he noticed Jotaro was still standing still behind him, "Leave it, Jotaro! It will transform again. Since we are sinking, we must trap it here. Only then we shall find a way to defeat it."

Its laugh resounded as High Priestess phased into the metal once more, becoming part of the submarine.

Green eyes sharply glared at it.

"I, Kujo Jotaro, shall personally beat you to death."

They ended up having to scuba dive out of the submarine and swam along the ocean floor. Polnareff almost died since the diving equipment he used was a disguised High Priestess. It was a joint effort between Joseph and Kakyoin to eject it out of his body. Hermit Purple and Hierophant's tendril caught the Stand before it went too far into the Frenchman's body, and pushed it out from his mouth through his throat. It then transformed itself into a speargun after escaping Hierophant Green's bondage. It shot at them, but Emerald Splash and Silver Chariot managed to buy the group's time to escape.

She thought that was the end of it, and that they finally got away from the Stand once and for all.

The underwater caves that Avdol mentioned were right in front of them.

Only for them to be sucked into High Priestess' mouth, which disguised itself as the sea bed, taking advantage of the available mineral around them. The user must be nearby for it to be this strong. Waiting for them at the coast.

"Hey, have you ever felt like curling up and die, because you saw the finish line, but then you tripped and everyone else passed you?" Kirika pointed at herself, her eyes were blank while her lips formed an empty smile as she turned to the rest of the group. "That's how I feel right now."
Kakyoin became instantly concerned when he saw her expression, "W- Wait, Kirika, you can't just give up now! This is just one more obstacle!"

"I won't. It's just hard to keep being optimistic when you're already in a giant's mouth." the girl kept the same expression as she averted her eyes to the Stand's supposed tongue.

"YES, GIVE MORE INTO YOUR DESPAIR, LITTLE GIRL!" the user's voice grated her so much, so she shouted back in frustration and anger.

Her smile turned into a snarl as she growled, "Shut your fucking mouth, you bitch!"

Jotaro couldn't help the slight smile on his face when he heard it.

"STILL TRYING TO DEFY ME WHEN YOU'RE ALREADY TRAPPED, HUH? WE'LL SEE HOW BRAVE YOU ARE WHEN I FINALLY HAVE MY STAND DIGEST YOU, AND I'LL MAKE SURE YOU DIE FIRST FOR ALMOST BREAKING MY SPINE BACK THERE." She then turned her attention to her brother. "HEY, JOTARO. YOU'RE JUST MY TYPE, SO THIS IS REALLY HARD ON ME. IT'S TOO BAD THAT MY STAND, HIGH PRIESTESS, HAS TO DIGEST YOU."

"YOU'RE NOT GETTING HIM EITHER WAY, YOU FUCKING MASOCHIST."

"THE ADULTS ARE SPEAKING NOW, MY DEAR~" they could hear her smirk as she spoke. "AS I JUST SAID, I STILL HAVE TO KILL YOU. IF ONLY WE HAD MET UNDER BETTER CIRCUMSTANCES. A PITY... THEN AGAIN, LORD DIO WILL PRAISE ME IF I KILL YOU. NO HARD FEELINGS~"

As she continued to ramble, Polnareff was already suggesting something to Jotaro. Everyone else was confused about what the man told him, but Kakyoin seemed to be the only one who understood. Before he could be questioned, what Jotaro reluctantly said almost made Kirika wanted to scream again, "Midler... I would like to see your face just once. You could be my type too. I might even fall for you."

It surprisingly seemed to work, the woman seemed to be taken aback. Their surroundings became brighter. It almost as if her Stand was blushing.

"I- I bet she's a real babe! I can just tell from the sound of her voice." Polnareff decided to join in.

Avdol hummed in fake agreement, "Indeed, I envision her being an elegant woman. I say this as a fortune teller." he said confidently.

"Doesn't she sound like that actress, Audrey Hepburn?"

"Mr. Avdol?! Kakyoin?!" The only girl in the group facepalmed, she couldn't believe that they thought she could be convinced release them just by flirting back. "Oh, Grandpa, not you too..."

"If only I were 30 years younger..." the room became even brighter after that, the darker parts of the Stand's mouth lit up. It seemed like she was blushing.

"Psst, Kirika!" Polnareff called to her in a hushed voice, "Say something too!"

"What the hell am I supposed to say?"

"Just- Anything! Anything romantic! You must have something!"
Kirika deadpanned as Polnareff pleaded to her. In the end, she sighed, relenting. She supposed it was working for their own benefit. She might as well put some extra work into it, to make it more sincere.

"... The moon is beautiful, isn't it, Lady Midler?"

She attempted to deepen her voice a little and used a gentle tone as she said so, in contrast with her usual light, and cheery voice. She doubted it added anything into her line, but Kirika already decided to put some effort into it. Whether the woman liked it or not, that's up to her.

"Uh, I doubt she knew anything about Natsume Ōsēki. So it wouldn't make sense to her whatsoever." commented Kakyoin.

"Well, that's the best she gets from me."

Nonetheless, the space got even brighter and brighter, and it started vibrating. At first, they thought the Stand was going to open its mouth. But Midler's angry voice said otherwise, "YOU LIARS, YOU DON'T MEAN ANY OF THAT!"

"Of course not, we're hostages." Kirika muttered under her breath, before yelping as all of them were launched into the air by the Stand's tongue.

"Holy shit!"

The tongue that sent them flying up suddenly barrelled back down, hitting Jotaro from the back hard. It knocked all the air out of his lungs and caused him to bleed from his mouth. It effectively launched him on top of one of the Stand's molars.

"Jotaro! Run!" shouted Polnareff.

The upper molar that would connect to the one the raven was lying on was slowly closing down. Kakyoin started panicking, "You'll be crushed!"

"He can't, he's injured!" Kirika ran as fast as she can towards her brother as he tried holding off the teeth with Star Platinum, and it seemed like he couldn't last long.

Joseph yelled at the others as Hermit Purple manifested. "Save Jotaro!"

"STAY OUT OF MY WAY!" the Stand's tongue once again barrelled towards them and tried crushing them, but Kakyoin managed to wrap Hierophant Green's tendrils around the other to pull them along with him avoid it. Avdol used Magician's Red's flames to try and burn the tongue, and it seemed like it worked.

Kirika then landed back down and finally reached Jotaro. She grabbed onto his visible hand, pulling at it. But she almost couldn't see the rest of him at this stage, as the teeth continued to cover him. That's when she realized that her wrist was also getting into between the teeth. "Jotaro, hold on to me-"

"Kirika, let go!" she heard him shout.

"Are you crazy?!" the girl shouted back.

"Let- Go!" he put all of his power into pushing her away, and she fell away with a shout.

Joseph launched Hermit Purple to try and pull his grandson in response, but it was too late. As the detached oxygen tank was crushed, the giant molars closed it at the teen. The mouth was snapped...
They didn't even hear a scream.

"JOTARO!!"

They were here again. They were in this kind of situation multiple times, but Jotaro always came out. He always survived. So he'd do it again this time.

Right?

"Kh- Is it too late?" Avdol's voice was cracking.

A stubborn voice answered him, "No! Jotaro!"

The hazel-haired girl stood up and using Galileo, she detached several graphite from the pencils she still kept in her pocket. She proceeded to merge them into one, creating a large graphene bullet and launched it towards the teeth.

It managed to make a crack.

Midler screamed and reacted by knocking Kirika over with her Stand's tongue. "IMPOSSIBLE! HIGH PRIESTESS' TEETH ARE AS HARD AS DIAMOND!" She growled, "JOTARO IS DEAD, YOU STUPID LITTLE BITCH! ARE YOU BLIND?!"

"Graphene is 300 times stronger than steel, and harder than diamond. Also, it's not hard to crush diamonds, you moron!" In an act of fury, she had Galileo brought the merged graphene down into her tongue and dragged it, causing the muscle to bleed. The woman screamed once more, "Jotaro might still be alive in there!"

She refused to accept that her brother is dead this time.

She brushed off that notion everytime it appeared in her mind.

She ignored the fear gripping her heart.

Jotaro was still in there, he always found a way to survive.

"And I'm getting him out!"

She launched the graphene stick again and crashed it against the tooth, cracking it again. She then launched it again, more cracks started appearing, this time they were bigger.

"Wait, Kirika! Hold on!" Joseph pulled her by her shoulder.

"I can't stop now, Grandpa-"

"No, wait! I can hear something."

Kirika stopped in her action. It was faint, very faint. But she could hear something familiar, "... Ra...?"

"It sounds rather distant." Avdol noted.

"It's getting closer." said Kakyoin as he tried figuring out the source.
"Th- That voice!" Polnareff perked up and pointed at the teeth, "The teeth! It's coming from inside the teeth!"

Joseph instantly warned the others when he realized what was coming, "Everyone brace yourself!"

As if using Joseph's warning as a sign, Star Platinum's fist broke free from the tooth as it kept punching it out. Jotaro stood tall behind it as it worked, the Stand constantly shouting its catchphrase.

"Jotaro!" She knew it! He would always survive somehow!

"Even though they're as hard as diamonds, he broke out!" exclaimed Polnareff, forgetting what Kirika said earlier.

"Oh, my god! He's not done!" Joseph gave a short squeal, "He's smashing the other teeth!"

Kakyoin sighed, but smiled in relief nonetheless, "Talk about overkill."

"As always, his Stand demonstrates immense power." praised the fortune teller beside him.

After Jotaro was satisfied with how Star Platinum just obliterated the some of the Stand's teeth, he proceeded to swim nearby the lips, "Hey, we're getting the hell outta' here!" To do so, he made Star Platinum simply destroy the whole set of teeth, and the Crusaders could finally escape. "Gimme' a break... Well, it had hard teeth, but breaking them was a snap. Looks like your diamonds are a little low on calcium."

His revenge was served.

They found the user lying on the beach. Not dead, and she was still conscious, but she probably would choose not to get up anytime soon.

"Hrk!!" Polnareff choked on his spit once he looked at how the woman looked, "N- No comment! Stop! Don't look! Her teeth are fucked up! There's no reason to look!"

"Why do you even try to check out someone who's unconscious, you pervert?"

"I just wanted a look! Kirika, you're acting more like Jotaro now..." the Frenchman complained.

Jotaro chuckled quietly, as Kirika grinned cheekily at the Frenchman.

Now that things had calmed down for a moment, the group just stood there on the sand, staring at the rising sun in the horizon. Simply feeling the gentle breeze and fresh air, after being underwater for hours. Their journey was nowhere near over yet, there would be more dangers to come. But for now, they could just simply enjoy the moment without any worry.

"We've finally arrived in Egypt." Avdol was glad to be back home, despite the goal of this journey he was in.

"Indeed," Joseph chimed in, "in a jet, this trip would have taken 20 hours, but it took us 30 days."

"It was tiring, frustrating... I hated every setbacks, but everytime we stopped somewhere, I enjoyed every moment." Kirika confessed.
Kakyoin nodded as he thought back on their journey they went through, "We visited so many places. Inside a brain, and in a dream."

"A dream?" Jotaro quirked his eyebrows. "What are you talking about, Kakyoin?"

"Hey, now, it's morning! Wake up already!" teased Polnareff.

"Oh, right. You guys don't know about that."

Kirika started chuckling at that, with Kakyoin following suit. Noticing the girl winking at the redhead with a knowing smile, Polnareff whistled, "See? I knew it! Something must've happened between you- OW!"

Kirika already kicked him on the back of his knee again, "Polnareff, shut it!"

"Okay! Okay! You don't have to be so violent, jeez!"

Jotaro smiled, looking at the sunrise one last time before turning around. "Well, whatever. Let's go."

They have 20 more days.

The real struggle had just begun.

Chapter End Notes

I realized this chapter is super fucking long, but consider this akin to an hour-long special as the closing of the first cour of an anime, where they tie up loose ends before they start up the next cour. Or not, because you're probably annoyed that you had to read this long and boring chapter with line breaks every few minutes.

If that's the case, then I'm really, really sorry.

Anyway, ONTO EGYPT ARC.
Interlude; A Town Within A Triangle

Chapter Summary

Discovering new things; trying out new things.

Chapter Notes

Yooo, sorry there isn't really much in this chapter, I just felt like I need to write some downtime after that monster in the last chapter. I hope you can still enjoy this!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Shalateen.

A Bedouin town within the Hala'ib Triangle, a disputed territory between Egypt and Sudan. It was set up as the administrative centre for all the Egyptian claimed territories in the triangle. Sadly, these tribes living in this area barely received any exposure to modernization from either the Egyptian government or the Sudanese government. There were no roads and barely any electricity in the area. But the group decided to stay here for the night, before they head off to Abu Simbel. Visitors to the area itself were rare, so the locals would come up to ask if they were medical or charity envoys. They were rather confused when Avdol explained to them that they weren't, it seemed like they were the only ones who came around here. It made sense, considering the circumstances.

As they rest up at the hotel, Avdol decided to buy them all milk to replenish their energy. They barely had much to eat or drink since yesterday. Polnareff balked when the man told them where the milk came from, "Camel milk?! Are you serious?! Isn't there a more normal source for this? There are goats!"

"I assure you that they taste just like any milk you have ever drunk, Polnareff. For the thousands of years, they have became one of the main source of sustenance for the Bedouin people. It has enough nutrients to sustain a person for a whole day." Avdol said calmly, as he began drinking his share.

"Quit complaining, Polnareff. At times like this, we need all we can get to replenish our energy. That last stand battle drained us quite a lot." Joseph proceeded to simply chug the content of his cup. "Man, it's better than I thought!"

Kirika eagerly drank hers and seemed satisfied with the taste, "It's really nice! A little salty, but it feels more fulfilling than a regular milk! I guess it's because of the higher fat content. I wonder what kind of cheese it'd make."

"I heard it's pretty hard to make because it doesn't thicken well. Bovine rennet doesn't help much, either. I can see them developing the technology to produce them better in the future." Kakyoin sipped more from his cup, "I imagine it'd be pretty good, considering the milk itself."

"If you go to Sudan, camel farms there store the surplus of milk during rainy season. The resulting curds would then pulverized and add water to it. It's something to eat during the dry season." added
Avdol.

Seeing Polnareff was still pretty skeptical about what he's given, Jotaro scoffed, "If you don't want it, just pass it to me. It'd be waste of a good milk if you just dump it somewhere."

He's immediately got side-eyed by his sister, "Says the dine-and-dasher who doesn't even finish the food he ordered from the restaurants he ditches."

Jotaro scowled, "I'm not just gonna' finish some piece of shit they served me. They don't deserve my money if they think they can get away with serving me those."

"Yeah, whatever. Just stop doing that." Her brother acted like everyone knew how picky he was, unless when it came to their mother's cooking.

"I'm surprised you've never gotten caught by the police for that yet. And all the other things, for that matter, aside from the time you crushed-"

"Don't you dare finish that sentence, Kakyoin."

It prompted Joseph to laugh, since Kirika did tell him the whole circumstances that got his grandson into jail, "I'm sorry! I'm sorry! It's just too funny!"

The redhead chuckled along, "Come on, it's not like it's a secret anymore."

"I'd rather not hear about it anymore." the raven crossed his arms in annoyance.

"Does that mean it's a blackmail material-"

"Kirika, don't start."

Polnareff then suddenly exclaimed, "Hey, it's actually not that bad!"

"Jotaro, I'm bored." Kirika complained as she pushed at her brother's back with her head. They were just done walking around the market area, while their grandfather and Avdol was settling some things, but they didn't disclose any details. Polnareff and Kakyoin were exploring the other side of the town.

"Well, what do you want me to do about it?" he peered over his shoulder to look at her.

The girl was still for a moment, before she perked up and tugged on his jacket, "Oh, I got an idea for a game!"

Jotaro quirked his eyebrows in confusion, "What game?"

"I kinda' want to test something out with Galileo too, but if I can steal your hat, you have to play something with me when we get back home!"

"... Gimme' a break, that sounds really dumb." the boy sighed. "You'll probably use Galileo to knock me over too, and that's already cheating."

"I'm not gonna' use him for that, but- Just roll with me here. You can use Star Platinum if you need
him. Please? It's not gonna' take long!"

Her brother then suddenly smirked, "Heh, you're saying that it's not gonna' take long for you to get my hat?"

Kirika grinned mischievously, "Well, you wanna' find that out?"

"I have no choice now, don't I?"

They went to an area where there wouldn't be anyone walking on them if they happened to use their Stands. It was simply part of the town that people don't usually wander into, and like all of the other parts of Shalateen, underneath them was sand. It's going to be a little hard for her to run around as if it was a normal pavement, but she could still manage.

"Ready?" asked Jotaro, standing with his hands inside his pockets like usual.

"Well, are you?" Kirika prepared her stance before him, eyeing his torn hat determinedly.

"Since when are you this cheeky?"

"Hey, I'm living with you, remember?"

Jotaro chuckled, "Alright, start whenever you like."

Kirika took that as a cue to start running. She circled Jotaro once, waiting for the perfect time to jump and snatch it away from the older teen's head. When she circled Jotaro again, she summoned Galileo. There was immediately some sort of movement in the air. Jotaro could feel it, but he couldn't pinpoint where it was coming from. Unbeknownst to him, it centered around her legs, forming a small vortex that surrounded them. Then it started to flow, gathering underneath her feet. Once Kirika felt that it was enough, all of a sudden, the girl shot towards her brother's back. The air acted as a propeller, allowing her to reach great distances.

Her hand reached out to grab his hat.

"This is too easy." she heard him say.

Jotaro proceeded to move out of the way quickly with the help of Star Platinum.

Only to widen his eyes when the wind rapidly shot her towards his direction again.

"Too easy, huh?!" Kirika once again tried to reach for his hat again, only to fail when her brother suddenly ducked so fast. She failed to anticipate that, so she proceeded to fall and rolled against the sand. She coughed up some of the sand that got into her mouth in the process, before standing up again.

Jotaro straightened up, but this time, he decided to get more serious. Add more challenge for her. "I thought you can only control solid objects."

"That's what I thought too! It's really difficult to concentrate the molecules in the first place. But I figured out how to do it so I just kept training myself," his sister then wasted no time to manipulate the air to shoot her towards him again, "and it worked!" This time, she let Jotaro dodged her by ducking again. She expected this, so once she landed on the ground again, she tried knocking his feet off the ground. Unfortunately, Jotaro expected that she'd do that, so he rolled away and had Star Platinum punch up a wall of sand to block Kirika when she shot at him again.
Jotaro widened his eyes when the wall of sand came down.

Kirika wasn't there.

"Where is she...?"

He realized the sound of rumbling underneath too late.

He suddenly sank into the sand as Kirika came shooting up from the ground behind him. Her fingers managed to grip the top of Jotaro's hat, and in reflex, Jotaro gripped the brim of his hat. He then made Star Platinum stomped the ground beneath him hard enough to launch himself away. The force of it knocked the girl away from him, failing to capture the headwear once again. The raven was a little worried that she got hurt on impact, but was relieved when the girl could stand up just fine, and seemed to be ready to get back into action.

"Damn it, that was so close!"

"Not bad, but you can do better than that!"

Meanwhile, Kakyoin and Polnareff were just done exploring the town when they heard the siblings voices from around the corner. So they peeked around the corner, and the first thing they noticed was the fact that both their Stands were summoned. "A- Are they fighting?!" asked Polnareff in confusion as Kirika kept trying to grab at Jotaro's hat.

But upon seeing the full face grin on Kirika's face, and the occasionally laugh or two from her, Kakyoin quickly relaxed. Jotaro, while he was still showing his usual stoic expression, Kakyoin could still see the slight smile on his lips, the taller teen was clearly enjoying himself. "It's alright, they're just having too much fun to notice us."

Once again, Kirika ended up rolling on the ground from Jotaro dodging her again. This time, she started feeling a little tired. As she raised herself from the ground with her hands, she could feel her arms trembling slightly. Her breathing was labored and her throat felt a little dry. She really did exert herself trying to steal the torn hat. But she wouldn't give up now. Blue eyes still looked straight at her brother with resolution.

The moment she felt that she wouldn't trip once she started running, her feet moved fast across the sand. Galileo once again propelled her with the wind, and she shot towards Jotaro again. As usual, Jotaro was able to move away, and he was anticipating the moment he should duck to avoid her. He foresaw Kirika landing behind him and he thought that she would try to knock him off his feet again, but what he didn't foresee was Kirika quickly jumping to latch onto his back, automatically causing the older teen to lose balance, as he didn't expect to support the sudden weight.

"Wh-"

He didn't get to finish his word as Kirika snatched his hat and quickly wore it on her head, before jumping off.

"I did it! I finally did it!" she exclaimed cheerfully as she spun around. "Now you have to play anything I want once we get back home!"

Jotaro couldn't find it in himself to be mad to be caught off guard like that. What she did could be considered as cheating, but he couldn't care less, seeing how happy she was right now. It had been a while since she laughed and smiled this freely, ever since this journey started. He made a noise of approval and gave a small smile as he walked towards her. Once he was right in front of his sister, his fingers snapped against the bottom of the brim of his hat and made it tip backwards over her
head, causing Kirika to let out a surprised noise. He easily caught it and placed it back onto his head. "Hey," he looked down at her, a stern look on his eyes, "you said "something", not "anything". So I'll only play one game with you."

In a rare instance, Kirika pouted at him, "But I won, didn't I? Winners should be able to decide whatever they want the losers do!"

"Oi, oi, oi, oi, that wasn't in the rules whatsoever. I'll only play one game with you and that's it." Jotaro squinted at her.

"We didn't really set up any rules in the first place aside from not knocking you off the ground, anyway! So anything goes!"

"That's not how anything works, that's just unfair. What is it with you and your obsession to force me play video games?"

"Because you never wanted to play them!"

"I told you I'm really not interested."

"Well, you're missing out a lot, dummy!"

"Dummy? Really, now?"

"Yeah, there are lots of good ones and you just say no to them!" She crossed her arms, "Also, since I won, take off your jacket."

Her brother groan, "Gimme' a break, now you're just pushing it. I'm not taking it off, either way."

"It's in the middle of the desert and you're wearing a black, long - sleeved jacket, Jotaro. Take them off!"

"You do know you're supposed to cover yourself from desert sun, right?"

"Not with a black jacket for winter! Aren't you suffocating yourself in there?"

Polnareff chuckled, "Heh, they really are having too much fun... Should we go and greet them now?"

The redhead smiled as he watched them bickering, and it became wider when Kirika's eyes met his, she finally noticed them there. "No need for that." he gestured to the girl who started running towards them.

"Kakyoin! Polnareff! You guys saw all that?" Kirika approached them excitedly. "Also, thanks, Kakyoin. I wouldn't have thought of doing that if it wasn't for you."

That confused Polnareff, and the man quirked his eyebrows, "Wait, when did Kakyoin even do that?"

"Ah, it's just some trick I showed her a while ago. It's nothing big." the redhead waved off the other's concern. "But, I'm glad that could be some help for you, Kirika. Anyway, that was some game, wasn't it?"

Jotaro let out a short exhale akin to a quiet laugh, "It's a good exercise. She said she wanted to test something out with Galileo, so I just indulged her."
"It's like a "capture the flag" game, honestly. But with the flag moving around and it also has a guard." Kirika chuckled. "Maybe you guys could join us sometime?"

"Hang on a second, don't tell me that we're still going to use my hat as a target. It's not a toy." Jotaro protested.

"Why not? You're going to try really hard to make sure it's still on your head, and you had so much fun back there." his sister gave him a thumbs up.

"She's right, you guys seemed to be really enjoying it, so count me in next time!" Polnareff grinned enthusiastically.

"In that case," Kakyoin closed one of his eyes, the corner of his lips turned upwards, "I suppose I have to join too, don't I? It's not really a battle of strength, but consider it a rematch, Jotaro."

Jotaro gave a blank stare for a moment, before he sighed, and smirked, "I'll take you guys on next time, definitely."

The day was almost ending, and Kakyoin decided to tag along with Joseph to buy some supplies for their long journey tomorrow. They of course, purchased some camel's milk, and a couple of halva bars. They also ended up buying some sharboot, Sudanese spiced date juice, and gabana, Nubian spiced coffee. Kakyoin was rather intrigued by the former, getting rather confused when his attempt at pronouncing it invited loud laughter from the locals. He'd ask Avdol about it later.

He was also pretty surprised to find out that it was an alcoholic beverage once he started drinking it, though it wasn't really strong.

Joseph, on the other hand, was rather pleased as he finished his cup of gabana. It was good coffee, he said, and bought 2 more so he could drink it together with Kakyoin. It reminded him that it was the first time he actually interacted closely with the teen, and found that he was a really pleasant companion to have. At some point, the teen sort of reminded him of an old friend once. A rigid individual, who could just kick back and relax once in a while.

Once they were done in their discovery of the local cuisines, they departed from the market back to the town. "Thanks for helping me out, Kakyoin. Let's go back to where we stay, I'm sure you're quite tired right now."

"It's no problem, Mr. Joestar. I'm happy to help." replied Kakyoin. Avdol was right about the camel's milk being a great source of energy. He might still feel a little drowsy from the lack of sleep, but he didn't really mind it at all.

The elder Joestar chuckled, "Today was fun, wasn't it? After all the troubles we went through to reach here, it was worth it."

"I couldn't agree more. If I have the chance, maybe I'll visit Shalateen again, and the other towns in this territory. With proper permits, of course." the boy added.

"Hm..." Joseph started contemplating whether to say what he had been wanting to ask the teen or not, "Kakyoin, I know it's way long overdue to talk about this, but... You didn't tell your parents
Kakyoin went silent for a long while, but just as the elder Joestar was going to drop the topic, the boy finally spoke up, "Yes, I didn't. It's fine, though. I can explain it to them once I got back home." He wondered how his parents were doing right now. He didn't doubt that they were worried sick about him. Over the years, he had to admit that he became pretty distant from his own parents. But they were not bad people by any means, they meant well and were pretty attentive of him. The problem was really him not being able to connect with them anymore, because he thought that it was pointless.

He stopped trying to open up to them the moment he realized they weren't able to see Hierophant Green. He couldn't imagine what they'd say if he kept insisting that there was a spirit living right by him all the time. So obviously he couldn't tell them about joining this whole journey, either.

But at the same time, he felt guilty for leaving them in the dark.

Joseph watched as the young man continued to forward, looking ahead with a hardened expression, almost a reminisce to Jotaro's stoic mask. The guilt that he kept throughout the course of this journey began welling up. Kakyoin evidently was more concerned about the whole situation than he let out. This was his fault, "Kakyoin, I'm sorry."

Purple eyes widened and thin eyebrows quirked in confusion. Why was this man apologizing to him? "M- Mr. Joestar-"

"I know you're the one who wanted this. You willingly went with us in this journey. But, I realize that this was a mistake." He noticed that Kakyoin was going to question him again, but he held up his hand. "There was no way for us to turn back now, I realized that in the first place. Then again, it shouldn't be this way. For you, for Jotaro, or for Kirika. I was too selfish to realize that before we even started this, and I let you to be on this path. All of you could get yourselves killed, and at this point, I'm the one who'd let that happen."

Kakyoin's mouth gaped slightly. He disagreed with the man wholeheartedly. He understood what he meant, but for him to put all the blame on his shoulders was unacceptable. One thing that the elder Joestar was right was that he chose this for himself. So if anything happened to him, if he died... Then it was all on him. But that didn't mean he would just let that happen to himself. He'd try his hardest to survive, and he was sure the same went for Jotaro and Kirika. "Mr. Joestar, you said it yourself. I'm in this by my own choice. So stop blaming yourself."

"Kakyoin," Joseph gritted his teeth, "if this was about you being indebted to Jotaro for saving your life-"’

"That was just a part of it." The boy quickly retorted. "That day I spent overnight in that house... It felt nice, to put it simply. Ms. Holy treated me with gentleness and put me at ease around her. She just did that without any question, as if I'm just one of her children. Jotaro and I were pretty awkward back then, considering what happened. But over time, he became someone I could trust wholeheartedly, and I still am indebted to him. I don't think I could ever repay him. And with Kirika," a small smile slowly grew on his face, "I put my complete trust on her as well. Even after what I did, she simply accepted me and continued to believe that I was above Dio's manipulation. I thought I didn't have a second chance after all that, but she gave me one without hesitation.

"If I have to put my life on the line for them, I would. That's why I did this in the first place. That and," his tone turned serious, "for that house to lose just one of the people living in it, it's something that I don't dare to imagine."
He couldn't even start imaging how his friends would be if they lost their loving mother.

The house full of joy, despite the mundanity of it, would become very lonely without Kujo Holy.

Joseph stayed silent throughout the boy's whole speech. He still felt plenty guilty for dragging the boy into this. But to tell him again that bringing him along was a mistake, it was already disrespectful to his wishes the first time he said it. At the same time, he couldn't help but appreciate the thoughts the teen put into this. The man ended up smiling, grateful, that Kakyoin told him all of this, "Thank you, for joining me in saving my daughter."

Kakyoin smiled back, "Anytime, Mr. Joestar."

"Grandpa, are you sure we should call Grandma right now?" asked Kirika, concerned about how the conversation would go down after that whole fiasco in the submarine.

"Well, I have to assure her that we're all fine somehow. Jotaro picked up the phone when she could clearly hear that everything was going to hell." Then again, he couldn't really blame his grandson for doing so. He probably felt that it was his grandmother who was calling, and tried to put her at ease. It was just that he planned not to let his wife know that both his grandchildren were in on this too.

Jotaro kept silent at that remark. He admitted that he was a little impulsive at that time, but what else was he supposed to do? He got the feeling that it would still worry his grandmother if he didn't pick the phone up, either way. "Grandma Suzie was already calling in twice by then, if I didn't pick it up, she'd get more suspicious."

His grandfather narrowed his eyes at the payphone before him for a moment, before sighing. "I guess you're right..." He put in some coins into the slot and punched in the number to reach his home back in New York. He started explaining the situation, or rather, lying about it as soon as he got in contact with Suzie. That Jotaro was with him to help with his work overseas, teaching him the ropes in case he'd follow him in this path of career. It sounded really convincing.

"Kirika."

"Yeah?"

Jotaro leaned down as he ushered his sister to get closer and started whispering, "The thing here is..."

"... Oh, crap..."

Meanwhile, Joseph turned to call his grandson, "Jotaro, your grandmother wants to talk to you." As Jotaro moved to take the phone from his hand, he noticed Kirika walking closer towards him. "It's been a while since she saw both of you, and she misses you so much. I wish she could come with me and meet you, but the circumstances doesn't allow it." said the elderly man to his granddaughter in a low voice.

Kirika perked up slightly and smiled, "... Ah, well... I miss her too. I'd love to see her again." As Joseph turned to watch Jotaro in case he said anything that would tell Suzie that it was obviously not a business trip, Kirika pursed her lips. "Uh, Grandpa, you see-"
Grandma Suzie wants to talk to you.

"W- What-" his grandfather immediately shut his mouth before he shouted at full volume. "Sh- She knew Kirika's here too?!"

The girl immediately accepted and turned away so her grandmother wouldn't hear her husband possibly freaking out nearby, "G- Grandma, hello!"

[Oh, Kirika! Why are you here with your brother and grandfather, my dear? What about school?] she sounded so concerned, and Kirika felt bad for lying to her.

"It's taken care of, Grandma, don't worry! The principal said it'd be good for me to learn with Grandpa too, so it's alright!"

There was a sigh at the other end of the line, [Well... If that's the case, then I suppose everything's fine then! I've missed hearing your voice, my darling. It's been so long since we last met. I wish I could've seen how much you've grown now.]

Kirika smiled gently, "Next time, maybe visit us in Sendai, or I'll come to you next holiday! I'd look forward to it!"

It was nice to hear her grandmother's laugh happily at that, [I'll definitely visit all of you in the future, I hope your father would be there too.] She wished that too, honestly. [Now, Kirika, take care of your grandfather and your brother, alright? They maybe strong, and it seems like they can overcome everything. But they need all the help they can get nonetheless. When they're in danger, you're the only one who could give them the strength to go through it. They need you. So Kirika... Don't falter, no matter what happens.]

She hoped she would never find out.

Like her grandfather, she didn't want her grandmother to worry about them.

But those words, that sounded so simple, gave away everything.

How was she actually feeling right now?

"Grandma, I-"

[Don't sound so serious now! Jotaro also did the same, just now. What's the matter, sweetheart?]

She lowered her face, so no one could see that her eyes were getting wet, "No, no, it's alright. I'll keep that in mind, Grandma. Thank you!"

[Hmm... Alright, see you someday, then! Goodbye!]

"Goodbye!" she then put the phone back on, before immediately wiping her eyes with her arm. A hand landed on her shoulders, her blue eyes looked up to see Jotaro. She didn't have to say a thing, he understood.

"Hhh, I suppose I can't hide everything from her, huh? Her intuition has always been pretty strong." Joseph smiled wryly. "But at the very least, she still doesn't know the full story. That's all that matters."

Both of his grandchildren nodded, noticing that despite his words, he didn't know about Suzie possibly knowing about the true situation. They decided to keep quiet about it. It already weighed
enough on the old man. He didn't need to worry about breaking his wife's heart right now.

"Alright," the man put his hat back on, "let's go! The ties of our family has held to Dio for a century will finally brought to an end by us Joestars!"

Jotaro smiled at that, ushering Kirika to turn around, "It won't be just us."

Just then, the sound of a car horn called them. Kakyoin, Avdol, and Polnareff were waiting for them in a dune buggy, that was ready to take them across the large span of desert. Kakyoin stood and waved at them, "Hey! Mr Joestar! Jotaro! Kirika! We got a dune buggy!"

"Let's get a move on!" Polnareff chimed in, looking excited to be driving the group again.

"We need to leave before it gets dark!" added the redhead.

Kirika felt all the worries almost left her upon seeing the others. There was no point in dwelling in the fact that her grandmother knowing that they were facing some dangers that they couldn't turn their back to. All they could do know is to face it head on, and succeed in putting an end to it. They will succeed, because they were doing it together with them. "We're all in this together until the end."

Joseph grinned and chuckled, "For sure, we're pretty lucky."

Dio was near, and the Stardust Crusaders marched head on.

Chapter End Notes

Another collection of drabbles, or chopped up stories that can't be a full chapter on its own. This time, I want to focus on interactions between characters who, in the original series didn't exactly interact much on a personal level? Like Kakyoin and Joseph only really have a full, one - on - one interaction in Dio's World arc, and honestly that isn't really much since they were fighting Dio.

Then Kakyoin died.

FFFFFFFFFFUCKING DIO, MAN.

Jotaro's personal interaction with Polnareff is also pretty sparse, we see them chatting throughout the course of Bastet and Sethan arcs, and it's obvious that they have a quite friendly relationship, considering Jotaro taught Polnareff his cigarette tricks. But, I want more brondings. So here we are.

AND ONWARDS TO EGYPT- HEN.
**The Blind Wielder of God**

Chapter Summary

Fear brings loyalty, a blind man once breathed.

Chapter Notes

Sorry this took so long. There's the holiday season, family hanging out, and me getting sick in the middle of it.

BUT WE'RE HERE AT THE START OF EGYPT ARC, BOYS AND GIRLS!

IGGY THE GUD BOI IS HERE!!!

As usual, I'm not gonna' put Kirika in every fight, unless the fight affects the group in general. Hope you enjoy the meat on this journey, and we will definitely save the Jobros.

JOBROS MUST LIVE.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

They've been riding through the desert for a few days, and it seemed endless. There was nothing but sand as far as their eyes could see. In the middle of it all, was their temporary destination before they get to Aswan, Abu Simbel.

It was a complex of two ancient temples that was built into the rock cliffs situated around the area, built during the reign of Ramesses II. They were built in part to celebrate the Pharaoh's victory against the Hittites in 1274 BCE, and the temples were dedicated to the gods Ra - Horakty, Ptah, the deified Ramesses II, the goddess Hathor, as well as the favoured wife of Ramesses II, Queen Nefertari.

But they weren't exactly going to Abu Simbel itself.

They stopped a few meters from it as they waited for... Something. Joseph hadn't really told them anything. Until a helicopter flew over them and circled the space above them. "That's a Speedwagon Foundation helicopter. They're looking for a place to land."

"Speedwagon Foundation? They the guys taking care of Mom back in Japan? Those friends of yours?" asked Jotaro.

Joseph nodded, "Yeah, that's them."

"You said you were settling something yesterday," Kirika looked pointedly at her grandfather, "so this is what you meant."

"That's right! I kind of wanted it to be a surprise for all of you, so Avdol and I kept quiet about it."
"Don't tell me we're going for a helicopter joyride." Jotaro frankly had enough of aerial accidents to last him a lifetime at this point.

"Nope, as much as I'd like to, the crew aren't Stand users. If we were attacked, they would be at risk."

Kakyoin quirked his eyebrow after hearing that, "Then why is it here?"

"They brought us some backup."

That surprised the teens and Polnareff, "What's that? Backup?"

Kirika turned her attention fully at the helicopter then, "You mean, there'd be a new Stand user joining us?"

The elder Joestar nodded once again, "He has a few personality issues, so it took a while to get him here."

Avdol then suddenly spoke up, "Mr. Joestar! Him joining us on this trip is inconceivable! He could never be of use to us!"

"You know him, Avdol?" asked the redhead teen next to him.

"Yes, quite well."

"Hold on," Jotaro turned to Avdol, "if he's flown all the way here as backup for us, his Stand must be pretty strong, right?"

Before Avdol could answer, he let Joseph took the initiative to do so, "You could say so. His Stand represents the Fool card."

"The Fool?" Polnareff laughed, "He must be pretty stupid with a card name like that."

"You can't take Tarot card names as literal, you know?" Kirika chimed in. "Also, considering how Mr. Avdol reacted, it's one we can't just underestimate."

Avdol hummed in agreement, "It is most fortunate he is not our enemy. You would lose to him."

That remark irritated Polnareff, who aggressively walked up towards Avdol and grabbed at the front of his shirt. "What's that, you son of a bitch? Better watch your mouth!"

"It is the truth." He waited for the hot-headed man to release him, but he didn't. "Why so forceful? That hurts!"

Polnareff instead tightened his grip, "Trying to sound like you know everything-"

"Cut it out already," Kakyoin chided the Frenchman as he walk past the two, "it's landing."

As the rotor slowly came to a stop the moment the wheels of the vehicle touched the sand, the front door clicked open. It revealed two men in white uniform, the hats they wore was immediately familiar to the group. When they turned to look at the Crusaders, it put the group a little on edge. They weren't sure which of them was the Stand user. After a moment, the both of them stepped off of the helicopter and approached them. "Mr. Joestar," one of them offered his hand for a handshake, "I see you're well."

Joseph gladly accepted the gesture, "Thanks for flying out here, I appreciate it."
"So, which one of you is the Stand user?" The two men immediately turned to look at Jotaro. "Who is it? You?" he focused his sight on the one who greeted Joseph first.

"No, it's neither of us. He's in the back seat." The man pointed at the passenger seats, which the other Speedwagon employee opened the door to. Inside it, was a lump covered with a dark green cloth. It was quiet, unmoving.

The raven teen squinted, "There's nothing there."

"No, he's there..."

The man was then cut off by Polnareff, who boldly moved closer to the helicopter, "Hey, hey, hey! So he's there, but where is he?"

"Polnareff, I don't think it's a good idea!" Kirika didn't exactly feel anything malicious from the passenger seat, there was still something... It felt, annoyed?

"Relax, I'm just checking out the guy!" He poked his head in, "Is he some kind of a midget? Come on out here! Come on!"

The Speedwagon employee behind him quickly turned pale when Polnareff started slapping on the seat, "B- Be careful!"

It was then that the Frenchman suddenly slapped his palm on something sticky. It stretched and looked grey when he pulled on it, "What the hell is this sticky crap?"

"Please, be careful!" the man warned him again. "He's in a terrible mood from the helicopter ride!"

"Stay back!" shouted Joseph. "I told you he has personality issues?"

"Polnareff, you will not win." Avdol once again, reiterated his point from earlier.

Kirika ended up tapping the back of the other employee, "Uh, excuse me, Grandpa kept mentioning personality issues... Does he mean like anger issues, or something?"

"Ah, yes, something like that. You see-"

The man didn't even need to start explaining.

Polnareff yelled in surprise as a growling and barking dog with a mushed in face leaped at him, then it started ripping his hair off.

"A dog?!!" exclaimed Kakyoin, baffled by the reveal.

Kirika continued to stare at the dog for a moment, before letting out a small squeal, "It's a Boston Terrier!"

"Don't tell me this dog..." muttered Jotaro, who was just as surprised.

The dog, Iggy, was captured back in New York with Avdol's assistance. He had been dominating the alleyways of the city as the king of the strays. Joseph wasn't joking about his personality issues, Iggy was a really aggressive dog from the way he went all out on Polnareff's hair. He also seemed to think that he could do whatever he wanted, like farting right on the Frenchman's face. It angered him, of course, and Silver Chariot was summoned.

But as the silver knight was summoned, the sand around Iggy suddenly moved. It started to spin and
swirled around him, before shaping itself into something akin to a mechanical beast, its fanged mouth emitted a loud growl, preparing itself to defend its summoner. Iggy himself, stood still. Watching as the Fool was split in half, only to turn into a swirl of sand that swallowed up Silver Chariot's sword. It effectively rendered Polnareff unable to attack him at all. Not a smart move in the first place for the man, especially when he barely knew what their new companion's ability is. Then the dog proceeded to rip out Polnareff's hair again as revenge.

It was a simple, yet strong Stand. Something that Jotaro admitted to be stronger than him, that it would defeat him in a straight up physical fight. Something that Kirika and Kakyoin didn't expect to hear.

"Hey!" shouted Polnareff, Iggy was still ripping his hair out. "Help me! Do something about this dog!"

"Sorry, Polnareff, but I'm not going to let my hair get ripped out." said Kakyoin nonchalantly, flipping his twisting, hanging fringe.

Kirika snorted, "Gee, never thought you're this vain."

"You monster!" cried the Frenchman, as the others let him suffer for a little while.

"Good grief..." Jotaro sighed, "We warned you, so deal with it yourself."

"Stop! Help me!"

Surprisingly, Iggy did stop. But not because Polnareff pleaded him to. He could immediately smell the familiar scent of his favourite treat. A peculiar one to be given to a dog, but it was a treat for him nonetheless. He abandoned his endeavour in making Polnareff's life as hellish as possible, and ran towards Avdol when the man only just now procured it from one of the Speedwagon employee, "What an incredible sense of smell!"

Kakyoin peered over to see what the Egyptian man received, "What's that?"

"Coffee - flavoured chewing gum. It is Iggy's favourite treat," he picked one from the pack and offered it towards Iggy's direction, "he would die for it."

"Wait, gum?! He's been eating gum?!!" Kirika was baffled by the information. "How's he not dead from xylitol poisoning yet?!"

"It is fine, Ms. Kirika. It seemed like having Stand helped in that department, aside from him being quite of an unusual dog."

"Mr. Avdol! Keep the box hidden from-"

It was too late, the excited dog leaped and snatched the whole entire pack, ignoring the one gum Avdol was holding, "Curses!"

Iggy just ignored the others surrounding him and ripped into the box, chewing the coagulated coffee gum gleefully. "He loves coffee - flavoured chewing gum, but he still won't let his guard down for anyone," lamented Joseph. This was not the best idea they had, if he had to be honest, but this dog was still the only one he could rely on. His Stand was strong, he could be a formidable ally.

Kakyoin on the other hand, was less optimistic than Joseph was, "There's no way this guy can help us..." He appreciated the extra hand, but at this point, he couldn't see any possible cooperation from the dog.
"Gimme' a break..." Jotaro seemed to agree with his friend. It just seemed like they were getting desperate. But seeing how formidable the Fool could be, he supposed he should give it a benefit of the doubt.

"Well, if we could get him to trust us somehow, maybe it could work. Somehow." suggested Kirika. Though aside from coffee - flavoured gum, she didn't anything else on how to best approach the dog without getting her hair ripped out or getting farted on the face. "Well, thank you for bringing him all the way here. I could imagine that was almost life - threatening." the girl joked slightly with one of the employees.

The Speedwagon employee chuckled slightly at her comment, "Well, while he's eating, he won't be a problem. Let's go grab the supplies."

"You're stressing out." Jotaro's words snapped Kirika out from her stupor. Green eyes softened when she looked up at him, "I know that the situation's not good at all, but you looked like you're going to explode any moment now." Just before they left after they collected the supplies, the Speedwagon employee reported the fact that Holy was barely clinging to life. The deadline for them was coming closer.

But the situation was made more dire with the information that 9 more people gathered to meet Dio, possibly new Stand users he recruited to slow them down.

Just like the Tarot Stands.

The girl looked down and didn't immediately respond to her brother, her skirt had wrinkles where she had gripped it. She exhaled from her nose, "2 weeks left, but we still have to deal with 9 more people... What if we find Dio too late-"

"We'll find him on time." Joseph immediately interjected. His eyes still focused on the desert ahead of as he spoke to reassure his granddaughter, "We're already in Egypt, after all. Once we get to Aswan, things will be easier for us to find him. We definitely will find him." He realized it sounded as if he's trying to convince himself. But it wasn't a little white lie that he made up just to ease her mind.

Encountering Dio was inevitable for them, the Joestars.

Polnareff suddenly grunted from the back seat, "Mr. Joestar, can you do something about him?! Why is this fucking dog taking up an entire seat while we're stuck in the back?! My back is starting to ache!" It was getting uncomfortable with him having to share such a small space with Avdol and Kakyoin, who decided to just bear with it for the next few hours. Each of them having large frames were not helping the case.

"You'll have to wait for the flavour of his coffee gum to fade. He'll move once he sees a new piece of gum, then you can switch seats."

Iggy then growled and snarled as the Frenchman attempted to nudge him away from his spot on the seat, "Alright, alright! Calm down! Jesus..." Because Iggy would definitely go berserk with any of them seating beside him, even Kirika and Jotaro had to share the front passenger seat together. This wouldn't be an easy ride for them at all.
Just as he finished that sentence, Joseph let out a startled noise and slammed on the breaks. The sudden deceleration caused the back of the dune buggy to be tilted up past 90 degrees. It ended up lifting the whole car up into the air, causing all of them to let out a scream in unison. The buggy then crashed back onto the sand, thankfully on its wheels. Kirika would have been flung out of the car if it weren't for her brother holding her down.

Kirika's heart kept pounding hard minutes after that, "God, what-

"Wh- What the hell?!” shrieked Polnareff.

Joseph quickly pointed at what's before them, "L- Look over there!

Just a distance away from them, was the helicopter they just witnessed flying away not to long ago, now in a crushed rubble of machineries. They couldn't see any Speedwagon Foundations employees they met earlier, but the group could only hope that at least one of them survived the apparent accident.

"It shows no outward sign of attack..." Avdol noticed after observing the damage from afar. To him, the vehicle looked like it just happened to experience an engine failure and that was the cause of the crash.

Kirika quirked her eyebrows, "So it's an accident? It just crashed like that?" That didn't feel quite right. They were fine just a while ago, the pilot looked capable. There was something more to this, obviously. An enemy sent by Dio could be behind this, but they had seen no one so far. Where are they hiding...?

"It does look like it," Kakyoin chimed in, though he felt the same doubt as the other, "it's as if it just fell right to the ground, with no attempt to stop it at all." This was something that could involve a Stand, but how would a Stand attack without doing it from the outside of a flying helicopter?

"There's no way! Those guys..." Polnareff was ready to immediately run to save the possible survivors.

"Be careful," Joseph warned him before they all moved to inspect further, "we may end up being attacked by an enemy Stand!"

Jotaro's exclamation stopped them in their tracks, "Look, it's the pilot!"

They immediately directed their attention to the man who was obscured by the shadow cast by the helicopter. The man they saw alive not to long ago, was now dead, with his fingers bloody as it left deep scratches on the side of the vehicle. It told them that he was trying to escape something, which unfortunately caught and killed him. His face gave off a haunting expression, as if something scared him greatly moments before his death.

Kirika gulped nervously, "What the hell did that Stand do to them...?" Moreover, why were they attacked? They had nothing to do with this. All they did was helping them by delivering supplies.

"What a mess... Approach carefully, something could be hiding." With that, the group began moving closer towards the scene.

It was then Jotaro realized that there was fluid flooding the man's mouth. On closer inspection, it was simply water, but when the teen lifted the man's head up, the water started streaming down to the sand. A small fish came out of his throat, and was taken along by the stream. Jotaro was taken aback by it and immediately stood up, away from the body, "All of that water... It's coming from the pilot's mouth- No, the lungs. Even a fish came out..." He grimaced, disturbed by the conclusion he drew,
"He drowned, right in the middle of the dessert!"

"But how...?" Joseph was at a lost for words. They have zero information on this particular Stand, let alone its user. They were completely unprepared when they decided to finally confront them.

Meanwhile, Polnareff spotted the other Speedwagon employees a distance away from the crash. He immediately ran towards him, followed by Kirika, Kakyoin, and Avdol. His skin looked like it was starting to flake and peel off. "It's like... Someone drained him, and just left him to die from severe dehydration." commented Kirika as she knelt on the other side of the man. She gritted her teeth, what were they facing against?

"Mr. Joestar, Jotaro!" Polnareff called out to them. "The other guy's here!"

Kakyoin then noticed he was actually breathing, but shallowly, "He's still alive!"

Joseph was quick to get close to the man as he lied there on the sand, barely conscious, "Can you talk? Hang in there! What the hell happened?!"

The man slowly turned his head around and his lips quivered. His voice initially came out as barely a whisper, but he kept struggling to speak. The man slowly lifted one of his hands and pointed to a distance, "Wa... Wa... Ter..."

"What- You want water?" The old man looked around them and noticed a closed canteen of water next from the corner of his eyes. "Polnareff, hand me that canteen." Polnareff swiftly grabbed the container and handed it over to Joseph. He turned the lid open before offering the water to the man, "Here, stay awake. Have some water."

It was then that Kirika felt something was terribly wrong. The moment her grandfather opened the canteen, the familiar oppressive feeling quickly gripped her heart. Her instinct started screaming at her to run, but she was frozen to the ground. Whatever was inside it, its presence felt as if it was pinning her down on the spot and squeezed her voice box close. She couldn't help the gasp she let out as the canteen moved closer to the man's mouth. That caught Kakyoin and Avdol's attention, who were the closest to her. The redhead immediately followed her line of sight, purple eyes quickly narrowed at the canteen she was staring fearfully at.

A Stand was there, no doubt about it.

But before the boy could voice out a warning to Joseph, the man suddenly screamed out.

"No! The water's gonna' kill me!"

The elder Joestar was too late to pull the canteen away. A hand shaped out of water shot out of its hiding place. Its claw-like fingers grabbed onto the man's face, before ripping it off along with his head. A stream of blood shot out from the stump of the man's neck, creating a trail following the decapitated head, which the hand forcefully shoved inside the canteen Joseph was holding.

"It's the enemy Stand!"

It sent the group bolting away from the body. Kakyoin grabbed Kirika's arm in reflex as he ran behind Polnareff, getting her to safety. They were separated into two groups of three, as they lied on their front on the sand, waiting and hoping they were ready for any potential attack. Between them was the canteen, now overflowing with the fresh blood of the corpse lying just next to it. For them, it was safe to assume that the Stand was now hiding within. Waiting to catch them off-guard if they dared approaching it again.
"Fuck, where's the user? I didn't see anyone else other than us!" Polnareff quickly became more vigilant, his eyes scanned the area trying to find somebody that could be controlling the Stand.

"They could be really far away. This isn't the first time we meet a Stand controlled from a long-distance, suffice to say that range isn't a problem at all for them, considering we can't even find them." Kakyoin couldn't help but moving his eyes towards the girl beside him, as he was reminded with their fight with the Lovers. However, this was still an entirely different situation. All they knew were that it was made from water, and that it was strong enough to rip a human's head clean off his body. There was not enough information for them.

Kirika then gritted her teeth and dug her finger into the sand. She had came to a realization, and she didn't like it one bit. "This was a trap. The enemy attacked them and just left them lying there because they knew we're going to find them. They were waiting for us, they already knew we were here." It was possible that the Stand user had already been watching them since they stopped in Abu Simbel. Maybe they had already anticipated them to arrive right at that location because of the Speedwagon Foundation helicopter How else would they know where to start following them?

The worst part was, those men were innocent.

They didn't have to die at all.

In the distance, nearby their buggy, Jotaro was already looking through the binoculars for the potential user. But it didn't seem like he had any luck so far. All they could do now was to formulate a strategy, or for the enemy to make their move again.

"Polnareff," said Kakyoin after a while, "attack the canteen."

The Frenchman quirked his eyebrows, "Me? Why me?"

"Kakyoin, you have a plan in mind?" asked Kirika.

"Not exactly, but we're not doing ourselves any favour just lying around here waiting for the Stand to come out." The redhead then repeated his demand again, "Just use Silver Chariot to stab it, Polnareff."

"Th- The pilot's head was completely sucked into that tiny little canteen... So if I start poking holes in that thing..." Polnareff then protested vehemently, "Hell no! You're closer anyway! Why can't you just hit it with an Emerald Splash?!"

Only one simple answer replied him, "I don't want to."

That bewildered Polnareff and he immediately pointed a finger at the teen, "Don't make me do something you won't do yourself! What the hell is wrong with you?!"

"No means no."

"Well, then maybe I don't wanna' do it either!"

Kirika deadpanned at the older teen. She fought the urge to facepalm and instead tried calming down the situation, "Look, guys, let's focus-" She stopped herself as they realized that right next to them, a puddle of water started forming out of the blue. When the similar liquid-based hand started forming from it, Kirika instinctively summoned Galileo and quickly transformed the surface of the sand around them into glass. The Stand predictably went to attack Kakyoin, but the girl acted fast. She pulled Kakyoin away from it as she raised the glass to shield him.
But the water easily pierced through it, shattering the glass as the result. Kirika widened here eyes in surprise. The Stand then shot itself into the ground, perhaps knowing that it had to wait to strike again when they least expected it. "It barely slowed it down!" she hissed.

"Run! We gotta' run!" yelled Polnareff, but as he started lifting himself up, he didn't notice that the hand was quickly growing a from a puddle that suddenly appeared just before him. There was no time for him to evade at all. He could only widen his eyes as the imminent danger was only inches away.

The clawed fingers headed towards his eyes, only for Polnareff to be pushed away.

Kakyoin's vision was immediately filled with red. Pain flared as his eyes started bleeding profusely. He felt nothing at all afterwards. The shock caused him to pass out, there was no resistance as he briefly felt his body losing its balance. The redhead just fell to the ground with a thud, shocking his two companions.

"It got Kakyoin!" Polnareff shouted. "I- It got Kakyoin's eyes!"

Despite the tremble she felt all over her body, Kirika forced herself to move to inspect the redhead's wound. The two lines that was scratched from his cheeks to his eyes were still dripping blood into his forehead, as well as his hair. The girl was grateful that his eyelids were still able to close over his eyeballs despite the angry red line over it, she couldn't even begin to imagine the state of his eyeballs right now and would rather not see it anytime soon.

She had Galileo transformed some sand she grabbed into a glass shard, before immediately ripping a part of her skirt with it to act as a bandage to simply cover the injury. But the fabric was not quite as absorbent as a conventional bandage, some drops of blood still dripped down his hair once the skirt piece was saturated with the fluid, some of it still freely running down his temple. The girl clicked her tongue, she couldn't even apply pressure to stop them from hemorrhaging. For corneal laceration, it would only make the wound worse. "This isn't enough, we still have to get him to a doctor immediately. Polnareff, help me get him up!"

But the man's eyes kept themselves glued at Kakyoin's now covered eyes, still freezing in place. As Polnareff continued to splutter from the shock, Joseph who was growing incredibly fearful for them shouted at him, "Polnareff! Quit panicking! Bring out Chariot and defend yourself!"

That snapped the man out, driving him to finally act. But before he could even bring out Silver Chariot, he suddenly realized where his right hand was placed, a puddle had formed. Once again, the hand barely gave him any space or time to prepare for it, so he could only stare at the menacing hand. Waiting for that split second in which the hand charged at him.

Something gave off a high - pitched beeping in the distance.

It was almost too fast to comprehend when the hand swiftly diverted from Polnareff to charge at the source. It came from the dead man's watch's alarm. So the Stand proceeded to chop his hand off. Blood once again spurted and flowed from the stump it resulted, as if the man's body wasn't already desecrated enough.

Blue eyes widened as the hand was flung away, before landing just a few meters from the body, while the metallic wristwatch lied broken into two from the attack. Kirika subconsciously raised a hand to cover her mouth, before whispering behind her palm, "It was detecting us by the sound... It went to us when we bickering!"

"Sound?" It was then that Polnareff noticed something as he raised Kakyoin to help with the girl's
earlier request. There was a dripping sound nearby. He noticed quickly that it was coming from Kakyoin's blood, some of it still dripping from his head to the resulting puddle on the sand. The sound became louder as he was lifted from the ground.

The water Stand wasted no time to charge at them again, detecting their location from it. Joseph immediately shouted, "Shit! Polnareff, Kirika, it's coming for you!"

"Gh! Kirika, let's go!" Polnareff was quick to lift Kakyoin up into his arms, and the three of them narrowly escaped an attack from the Stand. Kirika took the initiative to manipulate some of the sand to transform them into glass shields like before. The Stand could still break through them, but at least the glass blocked it for a split second.

But with it still clearly chasing them, Joseph became even more anxious. He told the others to climb onto their vehicle so the Stand wouldn't be able to reach them, "Run for the buggy!"

Jotaro's heart started pounding fast in anxiety as he watched his sister and his friends desperately tried to outrun the Stand, although he tried not to show his fear despite of it, "They're not in Star Platinum range. I can't grab them at all from here!"

With their breathing gradually became ragged, Polnareff and Kirika kept pushing forward. The glass shard Galileo produced was barely helping in the long run. "As long as we're still on the ground, it won't stop chasing us!" The girl could only hope that both of them could run faster, but the surface of the desert wasn't really helping much. Their feet sinking slightly into it everytime they took a step.

Polnareff turned his head slightly to find out how much distance they made from the Stand. He was horrified to discover that there wasn't much at all. The water was merely inches from their feet, and it gained even more speed. "I- It's too fast!" Their situation become even worse when the Stand shot up, before swirling in the air and charging down at them, "Kirika, watch out- Agh!" Blood spurted from where Polnareff's leg was cut, red soaking into his white pants. He was losing his hold on Kakyoin fast.

"Polnareff, Kakyoin!" Kirika herself managed to stop the water again for a second, by letting it strike through the glass shield again. But in the end, she let out a pained yelp as her knees were sliced open. Blood immediately pouring down the sand and she was falling. If it wasn't for Hermit Purple that immediately grabbed them towards the roof of the buggy.

The water entered the sand and passed under the vehicle, before stopping.

"It receded into the ground..." Avdol commented after letting out a long exhale, relieved that all of them were safe for now. He proceeded to check up on their injuries. While Polnareff and Kirika only needed their wounds to stop bleeding and be bandaged, Kakyoin received the worse injuries. Kirika made a good call not to apply any pressure to his eyeballs, aside from using the piece of fabric acting as just a shield to protect them. But there was nothing else they could do.

"The enemy can detect sound through vibrations in the ground. It can move undetected underground, and when we least suspect it. It will attack us from behind, or through the bottoms of our feet. Its user can keep a huge distance from us." explained Joseph.

Kirika took her shoes off before attempting to peel off her stockings from her legs, hissing when the thin fabric rubbed against the deep, gaping wounds that was still bleeding, "S- So, it's like echolocation... A really good one at that too, and they almost have complete advantage here. There was barely anything else that could produce sound on a desert like this." She gave a slight whimper when she tried to stand up.
Jotaro stopped her from doing so, keeping her on the sitting position, "Don't move so much! You're still bleeding!" He then took out a handkerchief, tearing it into two before wrapping them around her wound, giving them pressure. "Stay still."

"But, the others-"

"Don't worry much about me, Kirika. I can still just use my pants to cover it, it's no big deal!" Polnareff reassured her as he kept applying pressure to his own injury.

"Then, Kakyoin..." Her eyebrows furrowed deeply in concern, "Mr. Avdol, is he going to be alright?"

"The bleeding has more or less stopped, but it is not well." replied the Egyptian. "He may have been blinded. Let us make haste, we must get him to a doctor immediately." Polnareff gritted his teeth in anger in response. They better find the Stand user soon, and they were going to pay.

"But if we move, we'll be attacked. We can't be careless." Joseph reminded them, causing his grandson to click his tongue in frustration as he looked at his unconscious friend. While the possibility was small, Kakyoin may not have been blinded yet. But he would, and this encounter with such a dangerous Stand could ensure that the boy would really lost his vision.

"Aswan is still really far away too..." Kirika pursed her lips, trying to think of a way to get out of this situation. But it proved to be extremely challenging. "How are we supposed to do anything if we can't even step on the ground...?" she murmured. As the group was silent, deep in thought in trying to formulate an idea, she heard a faint noise coming from below. It sounded like when someone was filling up a bean bag. "You guys heard- Whoah!"

"What?!" Joseph shrieked as the buggy started sinking down from the front. It was as if a quicksand started swallowing the whole vehicle. From his peripheral, he noticed Iggy had exited the car and jumped onto the sand. The dog knew this would happen.

All of them scrambled to grab a part of the car's roof. Kirika almost slid off completely from the car as it was tilted up even further, but managed to grab onto the side of the car before helping Avdol to keep Kakyoin from falling over. "Damn it, it's trying to force us to the ground!"

"The tires are in the water! Fuck!" exclaimed Jotaro. The teen tried using his body to force the car to go back to its original position, using his weight to push it back, but to no avail. "It's no use, we're being pulled in!"

Avdol could feel his finger straining from his grip on the side of the buggy, cold sweat dropped from his temple at the thought that he would lose his hold on Kakyoin too, despite Kirika's help. "We cannot hold on!"

"Move further back!" Joseph commanded the others. Avdol and Kirika simultaneously pulled Kakyoin up, with Kirika almost slipping once as her legs were still unstable from her injuries. As they did so, they could see Iggy not too far away from them. Lying on his stomach and seemingly ready to simply continue his nap.

"Backup, c'mon, damn it!" cried Polnareff in frustration. "Back us up already, hey!" His demands were quickly ignored as the Boston Terrier began dozing off, "How careless can you be?! You dumb dog!"

They still had to figure out how to somehow stop the buggy from sinking while still not touching the ground, but the situation made it harder for them to do so. Then it only got worse. The Stand...
suddenly sliced off the front tires, surprising Joseph, who then realized what the enemy was planning. "It's throwing us back! S- So that's what it's trying to do. Shit, everyone hang on!"

They had no choice but to jump away from the car.

Polnareff grabbed Kakyoin as he leaped, while Joseph took Kirika along with him. The action would be difficult with the injuries they suffered from the earlier attacks. They all landed with hard on the sand, and even with all the noise, Iggy continued to have a peaceful nap.

Avdol was the first one to notice that the water had gone back underground, and he gave a signal to all of them so they stayed silent.

None of them was to make any sound.

The only noise surrounding them was the dry desert wind.

The dark-skinned man then suddenly, quietly, sat up and knelt on one knee. Everyone watched in uneasiness as he took off four his bracelets one by one. He threw the first one before him, then another one just a couple of inches in front of it. He did the same with the rest. The vibration it caused would mimic a person's footsteps. It was designed to be a perfect trap for such an enemy.

Silence returned to them.

But for some of them, their ears were filled by nothing but their hammering heartbeats.

They intensified when the puddle of water suddenly formed in front of the last bracelet. Avdol prepared his stance and summoned Magician's Red. He waited for a bit more before finally launching his attack. The bird-like Stand's fiery fist shot above the rings and headed straight to the living fluid. But as it managed to touch it with the flames, the water suddenly moved and swerved to the man's side. Causing a breeze that blew back his coat.

Joseph couldn't stand it and screamed for his friend, "Avdol!"

Iggy finally opened his eyes again.

The Egyptian let out a stuttered breath, "Who are you?" Blood suddenly spurted from his neck, a wound opened from where the Stand grazed him. He fell down, conscious, but bleeding profusely.

"Avdol!" shouted Polnareff.

"No, Mr. Avdol!" Kirika wanted to quickly moved towards the man to check his injury, or at least move him away, but moving recklessly now could make it more dangerous for them both. Damn it, is there really no way to defeat this guy?!

Things became even more dire once she finished that thought. The hand of water formed again, and it slowly inched towards Avdol's face. The man couldn't move, weak from the rapid bleeding. He could only breathe in gasps. The group watched helplessly, what could they even do?

What could they possibly do in this very moment?

Was there nothing at all?

They could actually lose Avdol today.

Kirika gasped when she heard quick footsteps, bewildered when she realized who it was. "Jotaro?!"
"You fool! Jotaro, what are you doing?!" But the young man ignored his grandfather's scolding, and he kept running.

It was only reflex when the water quickly entered the sand again in response to his action.

"It dived! Now the water is chasing after Jotaro! exclaimed Polnareff.

Joseph really didn't like where this was going, "So that's what he's doing. It won't attack Avdol again, but," he yelled out another warning to his grandson, "Jotaro! It's going to catch up to you!"

"Go faster! And don't stop until you find something to get on top of!" Kirika shouted at her brother, though she doubt that running to distract the enemy was the only strategy he had. But it did shock her when he just roughly picked up Iggy by the neck and continued running with him, "Wh- Why Iggy?!

He then suddenly stopped, and Joseph was quick to stand up, "Don't stop, Jotaro!"

"What's he planning?!" It was sure nice to be more informed about what her brother was going to do. Understandably, they couldn't exactly group up and discuss, or something of the sort here. But his impromptu actions were stressing her out. Her brother suddenly knelt down, and she swore she saw a glimpse of him forcing Iggy onto the ground. Moments later, sand started swirling around and engulfing them before forming into The Fool.

In the distance, they could still see very clearly that the black and white dog lifted himself up into the sky, leaving Jotaro on the ground.

Jotaro swiftly summoned Star Platinum and had his Stand propelled him to grab onto the flying Stand.

"This is good," Polnareff and Kirika turned to Joseph as he started talking, "Jotaro's going to travel through the air with Iggy to find the enemy! If we can find the User, our chances in defeating this powerful Stand are good.

The girl could only hope that this strategy worked for Jotaro, "Now the enemy's distracted, right? I'm going to check on Mr. Avdol!" Polnareff followed her, while Joseph stayed behind. They still minded their steps, just in case, so the enemy wouldn't suddenly divert their attention to them. Once she managed to reach him, she immediately went to work, cutting up her skirt again to make a makeshift bandage, "Mr. Avdol, stay awake." Thankfully, her skirt was quite long, but it was clear that she could no longer wear it after this.

"M- Ms. Kirika, Polnareff?" he gasped out.

"It's okay, you'll be fine! Polnareff, help me press on his wound." she pointed at where she first started the bandage.

The Frenchman nodded, "Right!"

Jotaro just made himself the target. Kirika feel like the enemy would actually be too focused on him to actually be bothered with them. As she began wrapping up Avdol, she could only pray that her brother succeeded somehow.

Be back safe.
Jotaro returned to them as the sun set in the horizon.

N'doul, the wielder of Geb, had died. A blind man who had never feared death, killed himself with his own Stand, just to avoid being interrogated for more information. The only information they have as of now was that he was part of the Nine Egyptian Gods, and there were 8 Stand users they still need to face before they reach Dio.

The one who made him fear death.

The one who made him realize his destiny.

"So, he feared that Dio would kill him, so he became loyal to him?" Jotaro nodded at his sister. "It's like he negated people's fight or flight responses... And some people are more vulnerable to it, or in some twisted way, found something really meaningful in following him." Like N'doul did, or Enya. The old woman whom despite being betrayed by Dio himself, even in the verge of death still pledged her loyalty to Dio until the end.

"Perhaps it is more of a case of them being unaware of Dio prior to meeting him. He approached them, and they were caught off-guard by the kind of presence he gave off, then fall victim to his brainwashing." added Avdol, recalling his experience. "I only survived his charm because of Mr. Joestar, and I managed to get away fast enough before he could implant a flesh bud in me."

The raven teen frowned, "I didn't see any flesh bud on him. So far, the only ones who had it were Kakyoin, and Polnareff. Maybe he only implanted them in people whom he knew wouldn't follow him as willingly as N'Doul or Enya, or those who're only in it for the money. Though in a way, even the ones who're only after his riches were still more or less loyal to him without the brainwashing, even if they're not aware of it."

"It makes sense. Despite what he did by sending Dan to eliminate Enya with the flesh bud, Dio still knows to differentiate those who are truly loyal to him from the rest. He knew the three of you would resist him, so he had to ensure a complete control over you," explained Joseph, while concentrating on driving the buggy backwards.

Polnareff shuddered slightly, remembering his own experience. But a part of him wondered if he was actually trying to resist against the vampire, recalling how he was too caught up on vengeance, that he blindly accepted the lies about how someone in the group was responsible for Sherry's death. He clenched his fist, "That man... He's too dangerous to exist at this point."

"That's why we're here to kill him." While their goal in doing so was to save his mother, at this point, getting rid of Dio would do the world a favour. Jotaro then turned to Kakyoin, who was still unconscious. Their next destination was still hours away, made even harder by their buggy losing its front tires. He wouldn't be surprised if it just broke down halfway. "He's still not waking up, huh?"

The Frenchman nodded forlornly, "Yeah... We really need to find a hospital quick. You too, Avdol. You still need to get that checked by a doctor."

"Ah, I think I will be just fine, Polnareff. Ms. Kirika treated my wound well enough." the man pointed at the bandage around his neck.

"Well, there's no harm to have a professional check on it." The silver-haired man then turned to Kakyoin again, "There's still a chance he's not going to go blind, right?"

"It's a small possibility, but something like this should have gotten an immediate treatment..." Kirika
shook her head, trying to brush off the pessimism, "Let's hope we get a doctor good enough to treat his eyes, that was really a bad cut."

"If needed, I'll contact the Speedwagon Foundation to treat him. They have the best doctors, Kakyoin's injury should be easy enough for them to deal with." Joseph reassured them. "For now, let's just focus on getting to Aswan first."

Jotaro then felt something familiar on his head. "Here you go," it was his sister, putting back his hat onto him, "it's still a little sticky, but I got rid of all the gum." Speaking of the culprit, Iggy now didn't seem to mind the fact that Polnareff and her were sitting on both his sides, though he still wouldn't let them get too close. Kirika chuckled slightly, "You helped Jotaro, didn't you? Thanks a lot, buddy."

Iggy didn't give her any response, he was too engrossed with the new coffee gum they gave him after the whole ordeal.

"Heh, the mutt finally made himself useful." The terrier didn't appreciate the insult and growled at the Frenchman, "I'm sorry! Jesus..."

"Surprised he didn't do more than putting gum on my hat, considering what I did." commented Jotaro.

"What else did you do other than forcing him to the ground...?"

The boy stayed silent, causing his sister to squint.

"Jotaro, what did you do?"

He still didn't answer her.

"Hey, Jotaro..." Kirika started poking him on the cheek.

"Would you stop that?" he shoved her hand off.

"Well, what did you do to him?"

"I just threw him at N'doul to distract him. He's fine, he's good at defending himself."

It only took a second for the girl to scream at him.

"What?!"

Avdol let out a hearty chuckle at that.

Chapter End Notes

Kakyoin is such a little shit.

Poor his eyes though, when I first watched this episode, I freaked out internally at that scene.
Myriad of Despair

Chapter Summary

The nightmares started blurring the edge of reality and dreams.

Chapter Notes

God, I was unable to write anything for the past month because I was just so tired, then there's also Lunar New Year so I was spending week just visiting relatives and eating food. Then there's also author's block. But here we are!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It hurt to open his eyes, but keeping them closed didn't help either, it still stung.

He had no idea where he or the other was, the only thing he was sure of was the fact that he was sleeping in the buggy. The world around him was dark and the only thing he heard was the desert wind. Panic started brewing as he started to feel more vulnerable in this situation. But he took a deep breath, attempting to calm himself down and recounted to himself of the previous events.

Right, they were facing an enemy and his eyes was slashed when he pushed Polnareff away. The Stand user was surely dealt with, otherwise he'd already be dead. Now, if only he could check-

"Kakyoin, you awake?"

The hushed voice jolted him to sit up, but he reminded himself that it was someone familiar, "Jotaro? You surprised me. Why are you up?"

"It got uncomfortable inside the sleeping bag, so I'm walking around to stretch. Keep your voice down, Kirika's sleeping on the front seat. Avdol's in the back." the other boy informed him as he draped his gakuran over his sister. It's a better blanket than the pile of ruined clothes she decided to use as one. The girl would discard the destroyed uniform in the morning, considering she already changed into a baggy shirt and denim pants.

"Wait, where are we?" They couldn't be at Aswan right now, considering how cold it was. "Why are we stopping?"

Jotaro let out a sigh, he could hear the exasperation from him. "The front tires got sliced up, and something got busted when the car slammed down. So it broke down halfway. We're continuing on foot tomorrow."

Kakyoin furrowed his eyebrows, "I see... That guy really gave us a hard time, huh?" He stayed quiet for a moment. Pursing his lips, he berated himself for not being so cautious. He could have summoned Hierophant Green then and there, then maybe he wouldn't have been blinded like this. Now, what if he was unable to continue this journey with the others? He began to worry if he would be blind for the rest of his life. "Is everyone alright, though?"
"Well, Gramps and the mutt are fine. Kirika got her knees cut open, and Polnareff got his leg slashed. It's a close call for Avdol, the Stand almost slashed his artery. We're lucky Speedwagon resupplied us with the first-aid box." Jotaro leaned a little on the side of the car. "You're still getting the worst of it. How're you feeling?"

"It's like something is stuck on my eyes and I couldn't get it out. Except it's not dust, but a giant glass shard." While he imagined that the pain would probably be worse if he was awake right after the Stand slashed his eyeballs, the slight pulsing burn was still wholly uncomfortable for him right now. But he supposed he could deal with it.

"Yeah, I figured." The raven couldn't help but feel some sympathy for his friend. "Whatever you do, don't press on it. Kirika will change the bandage in the morning." Looking back at his sister, his eyes softened, "She insisted on keeping watch on you guys, but seems like she tuckered herself out."

Kakyoin turned his head to where Kirika would be. He unconsciously raised a hand over his bandaged eyes and only realized the action when he felt his fingertips through the fabric. He then noticed that it felt... Clean. Like it was changed not too long ago before he finally woke up. He turned to the girl again. She really was watching after them throughout the night, and it wouldn't surprise him that she only fell asleep shortly before he gained consciousness.

"She doesn't have to do this..." It wasn't like he wasn't grateful, but she was injured too. She couldn't just ignore her own well-being like that. "She should look after herself more."

"If I didn't insist on patching her up first, she was seriously considering going around with just my handkerchief around her knees to tend to everyone else's injuries." The taller boy frowned. "She's always been this stubborn, too stubborn. She'd do anything to get to those she wants to help... It's fucking stupid. If she wants to do that, fine by me. But to get herself hurt and ignoring it-

That was the first time he heard Jotaro losing his cool, apart from when they were facing against an enemy. It felt like he was going to say more before he cut himself off, but the boy decided not to pry, letting his friend calm himself down. Despite his gruff tone, Kakyoin could still hear the fear underneath the frustration. It was his only sister after all.

He remembered what the other said once, what his grandmother told him about the Joestars. Kind-hearted people, who would give so much to their beloved until there was nothing. It had killed their ancestors. There might be a day, when Kirika stretched her arms too far and fell to the same end.

... What if that day was closer than they imagined?

There was an ache in his heart. He unconsciously clutched the front of his uniform as it grew and spread. It bothered him even more than the pain in his eyes, because the thought it erupted from was unbearable. It was even worse compared to when he feared her death during the fight with Lovers. They wouldn't know what would come until she herself rushed head first into danger, and by then, it might be too late for them to do anything.

So Kakyoin prayed, to any higher being who would hear him, and he hoped whoever it was would be merciful enough to grant it.

That such a day would never come.
"Kakyoin, you're up early!"

The redhead smiled at the voice greeting him, "Morning, Kirika." He didn't have a wink of sleep after his conversation with Jotaro. His wounded eyes continued to bother him throughout the night. The uncomfortable feeling nesting in his chest also persisted until now, and he couldn't help but think about it continuously. But, he noticed, that it somewhat dissipated when he heard her Kirika his name. It was as if just by hearing her voice, it assured him that she might not meet the end he feared.

He wasn't sure how it made sense even to himself, though.

"Hey, I'm going to replace your bandage. Are your eyes still hurting?" He felt her fingers fiddling with the binding that tied the fabric together, carefully so she wouldn't put even the slightest of pressure onto his eyeballs.

"A little bit, but I can bear with it." replied Kakyoin. As Kirika moved away once she finally took off the bandage, he asked, "What about you? Jotaro said you got injured too yesterday. You should take it slow, you don't want to put a strain on it or it'll get worse."

That reminded her that she still had to replace her own bandages. While the wounds didn't hurt anymore, thanks to her being a Stand user, her knees still felt quite raw. Her cells were still trying repair the damaged skin and muscle. She’d deal with it later. "No, it's fine! It's just my knees, no big deal." She noticed that his scars had started to scab, except for the part that went across his eyelids. The delicate skin was still trying to pull itself together, and there was no telling about the condition of his cornea.

"Getting sliced on the knees doesn't sound like "not a big deal" to me." His brows then furrowed as the girl simply laughed it off, as if telling him to just forget about it. As if he could do that. "Kirika, I appreciate you caring for me, but you need to take care of yourself too. Don't worry so much about me."

She sighed before moving back to bandage his eyes again. "Look, I'm fine, I'm alive. It's just going to be a bit inconvenient for a little while. But you got the worst of it. So of course I'm going to worry about you more than myself. You, and Mr. Avdol too in this case, you guys take priority. Well, you, especially." They need to get Kakyoin to a doctor fast. Hopefully they could reach Aswan soon, preferably tonight. Otherwise... He could go blind forever, and that image seemed so wrong to her.

As Kirika began circling the white mesh from behind the boy’s head, his fingers suddenly circled around her forearm. The hold was gentle, barely any pressure on her skin, but it stopped her. She quirked her eyebrows, and Kakyoin spoke before she could ask, “I know how dire my situation is. There’s a really good chance that I’ll never see again.”

“But there’s also still a chance that you’ll heal!” exclaimed the girl, trying to shake away such a prospect from Kakyoin’s mind. “We just need to get you to the hospital really soon. They can fix your eyes, I’m sure of it.”

“That still depends on the doctor, but that’s not my point.” He let her arm go, and she let him continue. “Again, I appreciate you caring for me, but just because my injury is worse than yours, it doesn’t mean yours is less important. You might not be concerned about yourself at all, but Jotaro is. Your grandfather must too, and," he couldn’t even see, but he hoped he was looking straight at her, “I worry about you. This journey is also far from over, and you still need to save Ms. Holy. If you keep this up... You know you’ll have to stop when you get too injured to even function.” This was probably what would happen to him once they arrive in Aswan. “I don’t know if it’s the voice or it’s
just you, either way, please, don't set aside your own well-being, for whatever reason.”

He didn’t hear anything from her, but he could still feel her presence in front of him. Kakyoin assumed that she was contemplating what he just said. A moment later, he heard a shift and Kirika’s hands continued their work in bandaging over his eyes. Once she was done, she still hadn’t said anything and the boy thought she’d just leave. So the pair of hands surprised him when they held his arms.

"Alright. I can't really make any promises, you know what kind of situation we're in. We're in a team here, after all. If someone's in trouble, we have to back each other up. While I do want to save Mom and go back home to her, I'm not the only who wants to come out of this alive, you know? But," he could hear her grin as she continued, "I'll do my best. No more putting myself aside. I... I'll also keep myself out of danger that I can't handle myself. It's the least I could do. I promise."

He supposed that was enough. He agreed that there was no way for them to completely stayed out of trouble. They're going against Dio, this was the inevitable path they're walking on. No one knew what would happen in the coming 2 weeks. But still, he wanted his friends safe. Kakyoin chuckled before smiling at her, one of his hands covered hers, "Thank you. That's all I need to hear."

Kirika smiled back as she lowered her hands, gently closing her fingers over Kakyoin's hand, as if trying to reassure him more, "Well, besides... I'm not going to listen to it telling me to basically be suicidal for this whole thing."

The boy then frowned again, "Hey, Kirika? I can't help but ask... You said the voice gave you warnings, but why? From what you told me, it sounds like it wants you dead. So why does it bother doing this?" There must be more to it. Kirika must've left out some details back then, which was understandable, but he needed to know more as it was seemingly becoming a threat to herself.

Right.

Kakyoin deserved to know. After all, this was partly involving him. But there was still no right way for her to tell the boy that he might be dead in the future. She was easily able to tell Jotaro because he was her brother, and with Avdol, he was the reasonable choice for her to find some semblance of answer.

This was complicated.

"Ah... W- Well, that's... It's complicated."

"... You're not ready to talk about it?"

Kirika averted her eyes, it's not about if she was ready to tell him, but how. She didn't want to frighten him, even if his response was that it didn't bother him, she imagined that it would still be scary to be told by someone that they knew he would die.

From her silence and her tightened grip around his hand, Kakyoin understood, "It's alright. I'll wait, I'll be there when you want to talk about it."

A grunt from the back seat interrupted her before she could say anything else, and the warmth around his hand left him.

"Ugh... Oh, Kakyoin, Ms. Kirika. How long have you two been awake?" asked Avdol as he stretched himself awake.
Kirika moved closer to the man so she could check on his bandages, "Ah, morning, Mr. Avdol! I only woke up not too long ago, Kakyoin woke up before me, though."

"I see... Are your eyes alright, Kakyoin?" the man turned to the boy, noticing that the bandage seemed to be brand new.

"Well, it was difficult to sleep with it. But," he lifted one of his hands to touch the bandage, smiling at the other teen's direction, "it feels a little better now, thanks to Kirika."

"Ah, I didn't do much aside from covering them, but glad it helps!!" The girl then grabbed the first aid box again, "Mr. Avdol, I'll help you replace your bandages."

The corners of the older man's mouth couldn't help but curl upwards, as he gave Kakyoin a knowing look. "Oh, don't trouble yourself, Ms. Kirika. I can handle it myself."

"It's fine, I'm going to fix mine, anyway. So I might as well change yours too. Hope we get too Aswan quick, though. This box isn't enough."

---

It was supposed to be just a long walk across the Nubian dessert with no other disturbance. After all, they were not exactly that far away from the city. When they needed to, they stopped at a town along the way for the night. The townsfolk had been kind enough to let them stay and rest. But aside from that, things had been going south for them.

They had been walking for 4 days. It was clear to them that the supplies that they managed to carry with them wouldn't be enough to sustain them, but they had no choice. The scorching beam of the sun trailed their faltering steps. Joseph as well as Polnareff started suffering from sunburn, and despite the bandage, the weather did nothing but affect Kakyoin's wound, worsening his eye condition. They also had to deal with unimaginable objects being thrown at them, objects that seemed like illusion or mirage at first yet they materialised before their eyes. They weren't even sure if they were real by that point.

As if it wasn't enough the world seemed eager to punish them further, mocking them for having even a sliver of optimism.

They were trapped between a sandstorm, and a mysterious train driven by man who went by Absalom.

Their hunch screamed at them that the man was dangerous.

The train they were entering could be their grave.

But they had no choice.

It was fitting when Absalom announced their next destination; Hell City.

"Kirika, stay with me!" She didn't know who it was. The voice was muddled with heavy noise. Her eyes could no longer focus on the environment around her, no matter how much she tried to clear her mind. The mirages attacked them again not long after the sandstorm outside subsided. It was Michal, Absalom's sister, who was the one behind them all along.
They had stalked the group for sometime.

"... -bring her here-!"

"I'm try- Holy shit, J-!..."

"... Kiri-!

"There-... time!"

She heard crashes and bangs around her. Then there was a loud snapping sound, like multiple windows getting snapped shut in unison. It stopped the barely unintelligible voices that began crowding her head. But after a while, she noticed that something remained, and it was getting louder and louder. The static - like noise filled her ears and her hands came to cover them.

The girl realized now that it wasn't from the mirage.

It came from something deeper.

The unfortunately familiar presence she had known since young.

Damn it, I don't want to deal with it right now.

She regretted saying that when all of a sudden, a long high pitch sound broke through the heavy static. The pain it induced, it felt like her skull was splitting up and started breaking apart violently inside her head. Kirika felt herself whimpering and shouting in agony, she felt the muscles in her throat moving, but she didn't know if her voice even came out. She begged for it to cease, but when did the voice ever listen to her? She felt her whole body coming into contact with a hard surface, then her head. The girl knew she fell over onto the floor, but it didn't even matter.

The pain went on.

Please, please! Make it stop! Please, I'm sorry! Stop!

"Kirika!"

She barely recognized the voice, but it sounded like multiple people yelling in unison. Somehow it stopped the static and the painful noise. Her breathing came out as if she was choking from her holding it for so long, and she felt her eyes getting wet. Her trembling hands stopped blocking her ears, as she used them to struggle to hold herself up, "... Wha-

She didn't recognize her surroundings when she turned around.

It was no longer the train, but a dark room. She wanted to run out of it immediately. The metallic stench of blood and the cold, entrapping atmosphere immediately sent her sense of danger haywire. But with the darkness, Kirika couldn't see what she was stepping on, so she tripped. She tried not to look, but the odd feeling of the object that was just under her shoes was prompting her to turn around and look closer. Perhaps something else was also forcing her to see.

No sound would come out of her, only hurried gasps.

Her eyes kept widening in horror at what lied still on the floor.

A pair of arms, cut at the elbow, silver bracelets adorning them.

She could see the bones and sinew jutting out.
Kirika bolted away once she saw white clawed hands reaching for them from the darkness. She kept running, she didn’t even know where to go, but she wouldn't stop running. She didn't even begin to know what to think. This must be a nightmare. She passed out, and she was having a nightmare. There was no doubt the voice also had a role in this, and it was making it even worse. She refused to accept what she just saw. She refused to accept that that was how Avdol would die. It was too cruel, too horrifying to be true.

**How could she let him die that way?**

She had to wake up.

"Somebody! Please! Please! Wake me up!"

It didn't seem like time had passed since she started running, but to her, it felt like hours. Once she stopped, she found herself in another unfamiliar place. A town, no, a city. It was eerily quiet. She wondered where the people were, before reminding herself that this was still a nightmare. The sky was dark, a faint red painting the horizon. Kirika walked slowly past the buildings, her danger sense still keeping her on edge. She supposed she could run again, but it wasn't like it would do anything.

What else was she going to see?

A dripping sound answered her.

There was a puddle of water on the road, but upon closer inspection, she noticed that something was mixed into it.

"... B- Blood..." she whispered to herself.

She knew she was making a mistake, but she felt like there was no choice. She couldn't simply ignore it. Once again, there was something else forcing her to look up, and it was not curiosity.

This time, her voice could only form one word.

"... N-... No... No, no, no!"

She recognized that red hair anywhere.

The sight of its owner against the destroyed water tank, maimed and mangled was so wrong. It couldn't be the boy, but no matter how much she denied it, it was still him. She couldn't stand looking at him any longer, but her eyes kept themselves glued on the gaping wound that opened right in the middle of his torso. The water from the tank was still soaking through it. Something was keeping them open, not allowing her to close them, and she wondered if she could scratch them out. Just so she could stop looking at Kakyoin's lifeless body.

"Jotaro... Kirika..."

Her heart skipped a bit.

This was a nightmare, she tried remembering again.

Nothing she saw so far had been any good, she warned herself.

But it was her grandfather's voice.

How could she not look, even if it was just to make sure that he was alright?
She braved herself, turned around, and paid for it.

There was a loud whine, and it took her a moment to realize that it came from herself. Gravity brought her down to her knees and she screamed. Her throat felt dry and it hurt, but she kept screaming despite it. The pain it induced was incomparable to the agony exploding within her heart. Her fingers curled, her nails scratched over the asphalt, before they dug into the skin of her palm. Something warm started pouring over the gap between her cuticles and the skin beneath them. Her scream wouldn't stop. Joseph Joestar was lying there on the pavement, as a greying, empty husk.

This wasn't real.

This couldn't be real.

She didn't want to believe that all of this was real.

> *Know your place, know your purpose, or do I need to remind you again?*

Fiery hands closed around her neck, the heat was something she recognized.

> *You're simply my tool, the one I created to reach my goal.*

Kirika stopped registering what the voice was telling her. Something began burning her from the inside. She couldn't even care about it anymore. Her throat had closed up, stopping her from screaming any longer. The girl was simply trapped in a state of despair and shock.

> *Look at you, already failing to protect even Kakyoin Noriaki's eyes... Just right after I praised you for protecting Joseph Joestar, and you think you're worthy enough to keep living alongside them.*

The hands began squeezing, and her skin once again felt like it was melting.

> *I told you before that if you fail, this would be the result, and I'll make you regret your existence. But don't think for a second that your existence have any meaning even if you succeed.*

"... Just... Stop this... Please..."

What was she even saying? Begging for her life? For the nightmare to stop?

For their fates to change?
There was a bright burning flame in her peripheral vision, it slowly enveloped her.

Only that it suddenly stopped before the heat consumed her completely, then it disappeared.

There was an angry shout, and she saw a glimpse of... Stars?

A galaxy of stars surrounded the corners of her vision, covering her back, as if shielding her from behind. If she looked up, she would surely see a bone white mask. For a second, she thought it was odd for Galileo to be acting on its own accord. But nothing made sense anymore. What was the use of questioning anything that was happening right now?

"Hey, what are you doing just sitting there?"

... Who was it?

“Come on, get up, you can't stay here.”

Hazy blue eyes kept themselves downcast, her limbs rooted to the ground, still shaking.

“I know you're scared, but you have to get up. Everyone’s waiting for you.”

It took her a moment to register that a hand was being offered to her. But while her senses didn't warn herself against it, she just couldn't trust the hand. Nothing ended up good here, it was a nightmare after all. If she took it, there was no telling what she would end up seeing next. Her mother? Lying still in the futon where they left her? Alone in her last moments without anyone being there beside her?

She wanted to cry, but she was too drained to even let out a tear.

"... Look. I want you to trust me. Nothing bad will happen, you just need to take my hand. If anything happens, if it comes back again, I'll protect you. I promise you that."

"... How do I know you're not lying?" Her voice came out harsher than she intended. "This is a nightmare, after all..."

She heard a soft chuckle, then the smile in his voice, "If I betray you, then you can have that spirit gut me with its claws."

That still didn't quite convince her. But, there was nothing else she could do until she could wake up, or someone finally wake her. Whoever it was, in the waking world. So whether she accept his hand or not, it wouldn't really make any difference, would it? Her hand was hesitant, but in the end, it still moved towards the other's.

The first thing she noticed when she finally took hold of his hand was the scent of sunflowers.

It caught her off - guard.

It was what finally made her lift her head up.

She remembered soft blond hair and green eyes, before everything turned pitch black.
Blue eyes shot open as she let out a gasp. Her cheeks felt wet, but she was more concerned about where she was than to dry them off. The first thing she saw was white ceiling, and beneath her was a soft bed. The beeps from the machine beside her and the needle in her arm gave her a clue of where she was.

*That means we all got out okay...?*

*Everyone was alright, right?*

Moments later, a doctor and a nurse came to check her condition. They told her that she simply suffered from dehydration and collapsed from it. They also made sure the wounds on her knees were not infected, and confirmed that she did a good job patching herself up. She was discharged not long after.

The first thing she did was to ask where the others were held, if they happened to be hospitalized.

"Ms. Kirika," Avdol greeted her with delight as she appeared from behind the door, "you're awake! You gave us quite a scare when you suddenly collapse in that train."

Kirika forced herself to smile, "Don't worry about me, they said I'm completely fine. I'm glad you seem okay too, Mr. Avdol. Did the doctor give you a clean bill?"

"They will discharge me tomorrow, actually. For now, they want me to rest for a day and they will monitor my condition."

"I see... That's good to hear." The girl then pursed her lips. She talked about the voice before with the man, and the man was the one who had to know about anything that ailed her so he could give her the advice she wanted. But this was different. This felt more final. Now that she knew the exact fate that might come for him, how was she supposed to tell him? Remembering how horrifying it was, how much anguish she felt when she saw what remained of him...

It was too much.

But she couldn't keep it in any longer.

"I can tell something is bothering you, Ms. Kirika." The man's calm voice snapped her out of her thoughts, "If you would like to, I will listen to your turmoils."

This wasn't going to be easy.

So she started telling him, with much difficulty, pausing her words every once in a while. She almost let out a sob at some point, but she forced herself to keep going. In the end, she realized that she needed to get all of this out of his chest. She still left out the confusing mess about her being a tool, but it wasn't like that wasn't quite clear from the way it had been talking to her before all this.

Of course it surprised even Avdol.

Being a fortune teller didn't mean you would know when you would die, or how you would die.

"That is... Quite a predicament." the Egyptian said after a while.

"Is that seriously the only thing you're going to say to that?"

"To tell you the truth, I am not sure what to say to the fact that the only things that would be left of me are my arms."
If she had the energy, she would be chuckling at that. But she could only manage to out a short exhale, before falling completely silent.

"Ms. Kirika, I suppose you knew what to do." She raised her head to look at him directly. "You cannot do this by yourself. Sooner or later, you will have to tell the others too. They have the right to know, after all."

"... I know... I know I have to." She lifted her hands and brushed her palms up her face, lifting her fringe back. "... Mr. Avdol, aren't you scared?"

The man had expected that question, "I would be lying if I say no."

"Then-"

"Even then, I remind myself, that this is simply one fate from many. The future is never set in stone, Ms. Kirika. Something could change along the way and diverge the path. Just as how things always are. Each choice you take yields different result. It what keeps me from fearing it too much." With that said, the man smiled earnestly at him. "If that is what you are worried about, I am sure, with the kind of people they are, they would have similar feelings about it as I do."

"But, it said... It said that I failed before."

"It does not mean you will fail now. What matters right now is the present, and what you plan to do from here on out. Remember that."

It didn't reassure her one bit.

Then again, he was right, the only way for her is forward. There was no use worrying what had happened in the past, especially the things that she didn't even know happen. Whatever happened, it was not her fault and it never was.

"Now," Avdol spoke up again, "I believe that you are to visit Kakyoin's room next?"

Kirika nodded, "Ah, yeah, I'm planning to."

"Then you better get going, I am sure that he would need someone familiar to be by his side."

"Come on in." stated Kakyoin when he heard a knock on his door.

He heard the door swinging open, then a voice he didn't quite expect, "Hey, sorry if I'm disturbing you."

"Kirika! No, not at all!" His voice ended up being more giddy than he intended, "I wasn't sleeping or anything, so it's alright."

"Well, after what Mr. Avdol told me, and that 4 - day journey, I was pretty sure you're going to just sleep for the whole day." she giggled. "So... How're you doing?"

He chuckled, "Well, they told me I'll be alright in a few days. Despite the condition we were in, the bandage helped minimized any further damage I could have gotten. More importantly, the Stand managed to miss my pupils, so I'm supposed to recover just fine."
"But, you would still need a surgery, right?" asked Kirika. It was much more than getting hit in the eye, it's corneal laceration. So he would surely need further attention.

"Yeah, but I'm sure I can still catch up with you guys later." the boy smiled, attempting to remain positive and to reassure the other teen.

She let out a sigh, and for some reason, he was suddenly wishing he wasn't wearing a bandage. He could clearly hear the smile from her voice, "That's good. Glad that everything is gonna' end up just fine."

"I feel the same." He didn't say anything more for a little while, letting them both just bask in the moment of relief. Kakyoin was the first to break the silence, "How about you? Are you okay? I... I heard you screamed in the train, and then you went silent. The others told me you passed out, so I was... I was getting really worried."

"I'm just fine! It was- With everything, the mirage and all, I got too overwhelmed. I..." She paused. It was time, wasn't it? She had to come clean. "Hey, Kakyoin? If I tell you that you're going to die in the most horrible way, how would you feel?"

Silence filled the room almost immediately, and Kirika internally facepalmed herself for thinking that she could just go about this the way she did with her brother and Avdol.

"Just forget-"

"Is that what the voice telling you?"

Kirika snapped her head up at that. He didn't freak out, but after a moment, she realized that his shoulders were tensing up. Of course he would be, who wouldn't? Even Avdol himself admitted that he was scared. "... Yes."

She told the story all over again, enduring the wave of pain that came along with it, and by the end of it, she felt guilty for telling her friend all of this.

"I'm sorry."

"Why are you apologizing? It's not your fault. You're basically just the messenger. I might be scared shitless right now, but I'm not going to blame you for it." The boy took a deep breath, and he tried to calm his trembling hands.

Her hand came closer to cover his, "Well, I'm still the one that caused this... I'm sorry."

"No... It's still not your fault." Mimicking what Kirika did days ago, he turned his hand and locked their fingers together. It somehow helped him calm down, "You're just telling me what you have to say. It's not good keeping all of it on your own."

Kirika subconsciously tightened her hold on his hand, "God, I'm telling 3 people about how they're going to die. Mr. Avdol took it better than I expected, though. You too. I... I don't know how Grandpa's going to react. I'm worried about stressing him even more than he already is. Not to mention... Now that I was given this much detail... It's... It's scary."

At first, Kakyoin wasn't quite sure what to say. This was a peculiar situation after all, and a terrifying one at that. It must be even harder on Kirika, being the one who became haunted by it. Not to mention being constantly threatened by it. But this kind of thing, it was still a future, right? Not the future. "Hey, if that thing thinks that it can decide my fate," he grinned, "then it's dead wrong. No matter how accurate it thinks its premonition is, I'll defy it. If it keeps bullying you every time I, or
the others, get hurt, then it gets another thing coming."

Blue eyes widened in surprise at the response. She couldn't help but actually becoming a little bit optimistic from his little speech. "Well, what do you think you can do about it? Enter the dream world and somehow fight it?" Kirika found it easy to joke about it with the redhead, despite the subject matter.

"It happened once before, we can make it happen again somehow," he chuckled, "we live in a world with Stands, after all." Kakyoin's features then softened. "But I'm serious. I won't let it keep treating you like this. More importantly, it doesn't own you. You're Kujo Kirika, you're your own person and your life is your own. Nobody gets to tell you to sacrifice that for the sake of others. Nobody has the right to change that fact. The others, and I, will fight with you to keep it that way."

She found herself smiling wider. Hearing that made her indescribably happy, having her existence affirmed by someone else, after all the voice said about how her existence didn't matter no matter what she did. Those may just be simple words, but she became terribly grateful of the boy for just saying them to her. Her other hand came up to cup the hand she was already holding.

"Thank you, Kakyoin... Thank you so much."

The warmth from his hand was slowly creeping throughout his whole body. He found himself yearning for more of it, and wishing he would never have to let it go. It was such an odd feeling, and it was the first time he ever experienced it in the entire 17 lonesome years of his life. He didn't quite understand it at the moment. But later, as the girl slept on the bedside chair, and he ended up focusing on her soft breathing, Kakyoin Noriaki discovered something precious.

*Ah, this is such a bad timing.*

Chapter End Notes

Y'know.

It's hard.

Writing teenage romance, when you never experienced it itself.

*forever alone*

Also that scene with the train, that actually came from the Genesis of The Universe novel. It's non-canon, but I love the concept too much not to at least reference it. I really want to read it but it's only available in Japanese.
Chapter Summary

12 days left.

They need to reach Cairo and find Dio fast.

But the amount of times where their plans actually went smoothly has been rare, especially with them getting injured left and right.

Chapter Notes

Jesus Christ these people got injured so much in this season.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The room was silent when Kakyoin woke up.

It seemed that Kirika had left, she did tell him that she was going to fetch Avdol when he got discharged in the morning. He wondered if he slept in, judging from the heat from where the ray of sunlight coming through the window touched his arm. Then again, the weather in Egypt was much warmer than it was in Japan, so he couldn't really tell if it was actually almost noon. But he supposed, considering his bandage started feeling uncomfortable on his skin, it was still too early in the day for the doctors to check in on him again.

He had been noticing it for a while now, but his other senses did become more sensitive after he lost his visions. Along with that, he discovered that he also became a little more... Tactile. He suddenly remembered how he kept clinging to Kirika's hand in the previous day. How he kept holding it, intertwining their fingers, and rubbing the inside of her palms as she decided to stay to accompany him.

Kakyoin realized that he was most definitely fond the warmth that came off of her hold, which led him to come to the conclusion he made that night.

The boy's cheeks were heating up.

*What the hell am I, a teenager?!!*

... Well, he was, but still!

He groaned and buried his face into his palms.

Truth be told, it might be a little early for him to tell. He may have already known her for a little more than a month, and he even met her before all these. But he still didn't want to rush head first without thinking and call it love, it could hurt them both. It could have been just some momentary crush or mere admiration. But after contemplating it for a while in silence, he was sure that it wasn't some sort of 'suspension bridge effect'. He didn't know when it started, but he knew how he appreciated the
comfort she gave him, how he admired her determination, and how he wished to know even more about her.

He wanted to protect and cherish her for as long as he could in return.

These feelings he had for her, they are genuine and he wouldn't deny it even if he could.

He could already hear Jotaro calling him cheesy.

But... This was really a bad time for it.

He couldn't possibly confess to Kirika. The girl already had so much in her mind that to suddenly drop this on her would just be unfair. Asking for an advice for something like this would just be crude in this situation. They're on an important mission, they're here to kill Dio and hopefully survive it. Everything else took the lowest priority. This was not the time to indulge in some teenage bliss. It had to wait until all of this was over.

*What if it was too late by then?*

*What if I die like she said I would, and I was never able to tell her?*

It didn't matter.

He wouldn't allow himself to be so selfish. It shouldn't be too hard to hide it from the others. It shouldn't be too damn hard to ignore his beating heart when Kirika returned with the rest of their group in tow. He had to brush it off and keep it locked up for now.

After telling his friends the concerning story of his middle school classmate leaking optical fluid after getting hit by a baseball, Kakyoin questioned the necessity of it. At first it was simply to assure his friends that he would be just fine, but it probably just spooked them a little bit more. Well, what's done was done. "So, I'll catch up with you later. We're less than 800 kilometres away from Dio's location in Cairo. Guys, be careful moving forward."

"Well, I suppose it's time for us to go. We got ourselves a boat ride to Cairo. We'll leave Aswan once we made the payment to the hospital." Joseph informed the group.

Kirika quirked her eyebrows, "Wait, you mean the *felucca*? Do we have enough time for that?" She learned early on that the mode of transportation is often favoured by tourists and it would be easy to get one just for their group with no one else. But would they even reach Cairo on time on it?

"Yeah, I'm worried about that too." Polnareff spoke up after contemplating it for a moment. "It's a completely traditional sailboat, wooden boats with no motor whatsoever. If there's no wind or it's not strong enough, it's just going to slow us and we might not get to Dio fast enough. Is there really no alternatives other than that?"

"It is regretful, but while we could have taken the train like we did in Singapore, we have to remember that this is Egypt. There would be other passengers in it. We are trying to keep people safe from whatever Stand attacks we will definitely face, so this is our best option." Though Avdol wished there really was another way, they were really in time - constraint after all.
The elder Joestar nodded in agreement, "If we use the ferry, it would be an even bigger target too. We're trying to avoid any confrontations at least before we reach Cairo. So the felucca is our best option to be discreet. We'll have to make some stops along the way too, though, but it should be fine. It's just part of the agreement."

Jotaro had been quiet for the whole discussion. Anything he would say had already been said by the others after all, not that he needed to add anything. But he observed how his sister, who was sitting by Kakyoin's bedside, reacted towards it. He saw one of her hands reached for her pants and her fingers were ready to start crushing the fabric. He sympathized with her, they didn't have much time at all. 11 days were too short, and they still didn't really have Dio's exact location. So Jotaro It surprised him that she suddenly balled her fists on her lap instead. He then walked towards her and put a hand on her head, "Come on, let's not waste any time. You'll be alright on your own, Kakyoin?"

"Jojo, I'm a blind man in the hospital. I couldn't really just walk around freely without help, so I won't just bump into someone dangerous. I'll be just fine." the redhead chuckled. "It's a good thing, too, because Kirika won't be here as some sort of danger alarm to alert me."

That earned him a laugh from the girl, "Well, that's too bad. I'd keep you company if I could. Just so you won't be lonely from being cooped up in this room for days."

Kakyoin hoped so badly that no one noticed he was blushing at that statement, because he definitely was. At least, he hoped anyone who did would just chalk it out as a trick of light, or something. He really didn't expect her to say that at all. Now he also realized that he was holding her hand again, and that Kirika just let him. This was not helping with his efforts to suppress his feelings at all.

The girl then gave one last squeeze on Kakyoin's hand, hoping that the message was clear. That she was telling him to be safe and they'd see again later, before standing up and letting it go. "Now, get well real soon. We'll be waiting!"

He cursed at himself for feeling disappointed by the sudden lack of contact. But it quickly dissipated, as he couldn't help the warm smile that curled the corners of his lips from hearing her words. He wished he could actually see at that moment. He wished he could go right now with them. "Yeah, I'll be there. Stay safe."

As they all started to leave, Kakyoin listened as their footsteps slowly receding. Just when he thought he was all alone now, a hard tap on his back almost sent him jumping off his bed. The gruff chuckle from the culprit immediately told him who it was, "J- Jojo, what was that for?!"

Jotaro didn't exactly know how to feel about the realization of his friend having a crush on his sister. Kakyoin is a good person, but it's still his sister, he had the right to have a bit of concern. Though for now, he decided to just observe, see how it would develop later on. "You suck at hiding it. But Kirika didn't seem to notice, so good luck." To be fair, it would take a lot more than a blush to make Kirika realize, especially right now.

The shorter teen stiffened at that. "... What exactly are you talking about?" That was a terrible attempt at feigning ignorance and he knew it.

"Just because you're blind right now, doesn't mean everyone else is." the raven sighed in annoyance before turning to leave. "Later."

"Hey, it's not my fault your passive perception is 20!" Once the door to his room was shut, Kakyoin was left stewing in embarrassment. He really didn't count on Jotaro finding out that quickly. But it was his fault, he should've expected it. "Damn it..."
Kom Ombo was their first stop in their voyage through the Nile river.

An agricultural town that was famous for its Temple of Kom Ombo. The southern part of the temple was dedicated to the crocodile god Sobek, the creator of the world with Hathor and Khonsu, as well as the god of fertility according to Egyptian mythology. While the northern part was build to enshrine Horus, the falcon god. It was an interesting considering the two gods were enemies.

While Kirika usually would jump at the chance to see the Crocodile Museum that was just outside the temple, she didn't feel like she could relax at a time like this. The timer was reaching zero for her mother. It still might take them a full week before they could get to Cairo with how they needed to stop at Luxor next. That wasn't even counting how long they would take to search around for Dio in that big city.

Then there was also Kakyoin, whom they had to leave behind. She couldn't even begin imagine how lonely it would be for him from this point onward. Surrounded by darkness without anyone familiar near. If she could stay with him she would, but she really couldn't. She needed to move forward, her mother still took priority over him. It sounded callous, but that was the situation.

Besides, maybe it was better for him to be left out of this.

So at least, the nightmare wouldn't come true at all for him.

"Hey, Kirika!" her grandfather's voice snapped her out of her thoughts. "Come on, it's dangerous for any of us to be separated."

Ah, that reminded her. She hadn't had the chance to discuss the nightmare with him. Wonder how Grandpa would take it... Maybe he'd really freak out about it. Despite Avdol's advice, she was seriously considering not telling him at all. To be honest, she would rather forget that premonition of her grandfather lying lifelessly on the pavement. "Coming!"

"Wait, where's Polnareff?" asked Jotaro. He assumed that the Frenchman had followed them from the market, but he just realized that he wasn't there. Iggy also seemed to ditch them. "Ugh, did he get lost again?"

Avdol covered his forehead with his palm, "We already told him not to wander off on his own! There is no telling what kind of trouble he is getting into right now."

"He shouldn't be far from the market, we'll just have to ask the people around there if they've seen him. Iggy too, for that matter." Kirika suggested to the others. God, she hoped that he wasn't being attacked by a Stand user.

Joseph was already moving back to where they were, "Let's not waste any time then! Seriously, I'm really going to have to give him an earful when we find him!"

When they got back to the market, the group first turned to a traditional craft dealer. Coincidentally, the man offered Polnareff a papyrus paper and the man ripped it up in half, so the dealer sought compensation from them instead. But then the Kujo siblings pointed out that the "papyrus paper" was simply paper painted with acrylic paint. He really was a scammer, and they managed to dodge the attempt of scamming them.
Luckily, they didn't come out empty handed from the brief confrontation.

Polnareff was chasing Iggy into the temple complex.

"Ah, Iggy!" exclaimed Kirika when she spotted the dog.

The Boston terrier was munching on the coffee gum that Joseph gave Polnareff earlier. The girl approached him and leaned down to get closer. While Iggy momentarily growled, protective over his treat, he calmed down after realizing that Kirika wasn't going to take the gum away.

"Hey, buddy! You know where Polnareff is?"

"Careful, the mutt might rip your hair off and fart on you." Jotaro warned her.

Kirika squinted at him, "He might do that to you, you threw him like he's a baseball."

"Touché." He noticed the dog smirking at him, so he glared at him, daring him.

Avdol gave a small chuckle, "If he's here, Polnareff must not be too far away."

"Wait, is that him?" Joseph pointed to the distance. The silver cylinder of a hairstyle was very visible from the distance. "It is! Come on, guys!"

"Hhh, I hope he's alright. Let's go, Iggy!" The girl gestured him to follow them along.

It was almost as if he wanted another chance to just mess with Polnareff again. Once he scarfed down all of the gum, Iggy excitedly ran ahead of the group. He seemed almost delighted to be able to antagonize the man again. But once he finally got a little closer to the man, there was something wrong, something terrifying. Polnareff was holding a sword. It should be just something normal. But he was staring at it too intently.

This didn't feel right.

So Iggy barked and barked.

The man seemed to snap out of it.

"Polnareff!" Kirika called to him. "There you are! Why weren't you following us?"

"Hey, finally found you." said Jotaro. "I swear, you're like a 5 year-old, getting separated from us all the time."

Joseph sighed in relief when he finally reached the place, "You worried us after you wandered off alone. What if you got attacked by an enemy?"

The man turned around and seemed to falter a bit, as he felt himself becoming quite disoriented. "Huh? O- Oh, Mr. Joestar..." He turned around a little, before dropping the katana he was holding.

Iggy started growling at it.

"Polnareff, why are you crouching?" asked the elder Joestar with concern. "You step on something nasty?"

"Are you alright?" asked Avdol. His eyes then caught attention of the item beside him, "What is this? You have a katana. Has something happened?"
Polnareff gulped, "Yeah, I got attacked by an enemy..."

"What?! An enemy?!"

Well, I can't be surprised by that anymore. "Did he hurt you? Here, let me check!"

"No, it's alright! I'm fine, and it's over now." Polnareff reassured her.

But the wound on his chest told Kirika otherwise, "That's a deep cut! Nothing's fine about that!"

"Kirika, the bleeding stopped. I promise I'm fine! You can patch me up later, alright?" The man then gestured to the man lying on his stomach among the rubble of the temple, "That's him, by the way. His Stand was called Divine Anubis. He was a Stand user and expert swordsman who could phase his sword through objects to cut behind them. It was a tough fight." His hand then reached for the katana, only for it to vanish, "Huh? Where'd it-"

"Behind you, Polnareff!" exclaimed Avdol when he noticed a completely bizarre sight.

Four mice ran as they carry the katana together on their backs.

"They're trying to steal the sword?!" Polnareff then bellowed at them, "Hey!" It immediately startled the rodents enough to drop it, and the Frenchman picked the weapon up, "Talk about creepy... So there are thieving mice here, eh? You guys like stealing cheese, so stick to that!"

"Stop basing your views on cartoons." stated Jotaro casually.

"Oh, shut it! It's what they do, anyway." As he held the katana once more, he tried to unsheathe it, only to find that he was no longer able to. "That's weird... It's so tight, I can't remove it anymore."

"Don't try unsheathing it, then!" exclaimed Kirika, startling Polnareff as she suddenly appeared beside him. "You said it belonged to the Stand user, so you better not mess around with it. He's still alive, so the Stand's power might still somehow affects it."

"Alright, alright! No funny business, I promise."

"Polnareff!" Joseph called him once again. "I'm glad you're safe, but don't forget we should always travel in groups. Don't be careless!"

"Our enemies will not hesitate if they find us alone." added Avdol.

Before Polnareff could respond, a whistle was sounded from the distance. "Damn! That whistle is from our ship!" Joseph then gestured everyone to start moving, "Let's hurry, we're heading to Edfu next."

"Hey, wait!" Polnareff shouted as he ran after them, bringing the katana along with him.

Once they were settled at a hotel in Edfu, Jotaro decided to focus their attention to the sword, "Polnareff, what are you going to do with that sword?"

"I'm gonna' hand it over to the police, since it's a dangerous weapon and all." replied Polnareff nonchalantly.
"Yeah, it's for the best." added Joseph. "If you had left it in those ruins, anyone could have found it."

Avdol hummed in agreement, "It appears to be quite valuable too. Perhaps the authority would send it to be stored at a museum."

"It's a little weird, though. Why a katana?" asked Kirika as she went near it. "It looks really ancient too, I wonder why it's not a khopesh instead..."

"Maybe someone brought it all the way here? It doesn't sound too strange." her brother suggested.

Iggy, who had been growling at it for the entire time, suddenly started barking at it again.

"Hey, Iggy! Be silent!" scolded the Egyptian.

Joseph tried shushing the dog as he looked around the walls, "What if we get thrown out?!"

Kirika wasn't exactly sure what to do, and she didn't want to risk being bitten by Iggy either. "W- What's wrong, buddy? What's bothering you?"

Polnareff, who thought that Iggy was barking at him, became agitated by the dog's antics, "What the hell is wrong with you today?! Now the fucking dog won't shut up. I guess I'll take care of this now." He grabbed the sword and proceeded to head towards the room's door.

His decision baffled Avdol, who immediately stopped him, "Polnareff! Did we not just finish telling you to never go alone?"

The Frenchman let out a dumbfounded noise and Joseph furrowed his brows at him, "I just told you! Jotaro, go with him."

"Sure." Jotaro swiftly followed the older man as they exited the room. Iggy was growling behind them still.

"Take care. Polnareff, be careful with your wound." warned Kirika.

"Yeah, got it!"

With that, the two left.

Iggy then quieted down, which Kirika noticed right away. "Man, you really have it out for Polnareff."

Avdol sighed, "It made sense, considering Polnareff's body language has been quite antagonizing to Iggy."

"Yeah, dogs have better perception about people." Joseph then stretched and felt his back made a satisfying cracking noise, "Well, at least that problem is taken care of."

Now that everything quieted down, Kirika had begun thinking again. She glanced towards her grandfather who was sitting on the bed. The thoughts about the nightmare had began resurfacing again. She slowly looked towards Avdol, hoping that he could at least give her a clue, a sign, anything. But unexpectedly, the man suddenly turned towards the exit.

"Wait, Avdol, don't leave me alone here! Was this his idea for a sign? She needed more than that!

"Huh? Where are you going, Avdol?" asked Joseph, standing up in case he had to come along.
"I am going for a walk and I'm taking Iggy with me. Come, Iggy." The dog somehow decided to follow him without any hesitation.

The door clicked shut, and only the two of them were left.

Kirika stared hard on the floor. It was clear that Avdol was urging her to start talking to her grandfather. She did mention to him that she hadn't talked to him about the premonition. So the man just saw his chance to push her to this direction and went for it. She knew that at the end of the day, she would have to talk about it after all. It was unavoidable. But she was panicking on the inside. It was difficult to find the right words to even start talking about it. It was already hard enough to inform Avdol and Kakyoin. This was her grandfather. The family she hardly saw until a month ago.

To think she might lose him so soon, to even talk about it with him...

Why does the world keep wanting to take away the ones precious to her in such a short period of time?

"Well, you think we should go out too? There's no point staying in the room the whole day. It's a whole new place to explore out there!" Joseph put on his hat as he stood up from the bed and ruffled his granddaughter's hair on his way out, gesturing her to follow him.

But before he could take another step, something tugged at his shirt. When he turned around to see what was wrong, his eyes widened at how... Grief stricken she looked. What just happened to her?

"Kirika, what's wrong?" he immediately sat down on the chair, his hand holding hers. "Is it... Is it about your mother? Don't worry, we'll get to-

"Grandpa." She cut him off, the tone of her voice sombre. Sorrowful blue eyes slowly looked up at the other, "I need... I need to talk to you about something important. Please, just listen to me until I'm done telling you."

Whatever Joseph was expecting Kirika to talk about, he definitely didn't expect that he would be given a death premonition. Part of him didn't want to believe it, but he knew that it was possible. Their enemy was an ancient vampire, so hearing that he could die as a greying, shrinking husk on the side of the road wasn't a far-off concept at all. He feared the scenario, it was a terrifying way to die, and he honestly would rather avoid any of it. Joseph still wanted to go back to his beloved daughter and wife. But whether he liked it or not, he had to be prepared for it. He was a Joestar, after all. Dio would definitely target him and his blood. Not just him either, his grandchildren too. If anything, he was prepared to die if he could ensure their safety.

Then again, he knew that what his granddaughter told him, it was simply a single premonition. Even though there was a high probability that it could happen, he had fought against fate before. He fought the curse of the Joestars. He cheated death.

If he had to do it again, he will.

But that was not the only problem here.

There was this force, this entity residing within Kirika, that had practically been psychologically torturing her. His own granddaughter had been keeping it to herself for so long and it angered him. It wasn't the fact that she had been hiding it from him that he was angry about, his wrath was reserved for and only this creature. How dare it manipulated her into harming herself and telling her that her existence didn't matter. That it was fine if she died as long as the rest of them survived.
But what angered him even more, was the fact that he wasn't sure what to even do about it. He used to be so quick on his feet, always managed to come up with answers and solutions to any sort of problems, even when everything seemed impossible. This time, he had none. There were only questions, and none of them were answered.

Why was it doing this in the first place? What was the creature's end goal here? Why Kirika?

You're just 15.

You don't deserve having all these weighing down your shoulders.

What was he talking about? This was partly his fault too, wasn't it? He should have said no, he should've made her stay behind. Hell, he should've made Jotaro stay behind, too for that matter. But at the time, since he had seen what Star Platinum was capable of, he couldn't help but take Jotaro along with him for this mission. On the other hand, he hadn't seen what Galileo was capable of before they decided to depart for Egypt, but he still decided to allow Kirika to join them too. What the hell had he done?

At least back in Japan, despite the Stands and Holy's condition, they could still have with some semblance of normalcy. Jotaro might lead quite a rebellious and carefree life, but at the very least that was where it would stop. He'd skip school and get into some skirmishes on the street, but he wouldn't get to the point where he almost died multiple times. Kirika would still have those visions and nightmares, but it wouldn't develop into what it was now. She wouldn't have this monster invading her mind and basically threatening her, that her loved ones would die if she didn't do something about it.

No danger would come after them.

But deep down, he knew that it was inevitable. No matter how much he said no, they would still stubbornly come along with him. For Holy, for their mother.

His hands went to grab hold of her small shoulders, "I'm sorry. Kirika, I'm sorry."

"Wh- Grandpa," after the several minutes of silence, she had expected the "It'll be fine" or the freakout she thought he would give, not an apology, "why're you saying sorry? If- If anything I'm sorry for not telling you all of these earlier."

"That's not your fault, either. All these things... It's not something that you're supposed to have as a problem. You should only be worrying about school and friends at this age, instead of fearing about people dying," Joseph looked her in the eye, the inner corners of his brows angling upwards as one of his hands was raised to hold her face. "I'm sorry, I tried- I tried to figure it out. Maybe I can find the answer to all of it, so you'd at least worry less, but there's nothing, I don't know how to solve this. I'm sorry."

Kirika was unable to say anything for a moment. Her eyes widened when his words completely sank in. This wasn't right. He should only be concerned with the fact that he might die horribly, not feeling guilty for not being to solve her issues. It's not his responsibility. "Grandpa, it's alright! You don't have to find the answer, I'll find it myself. I mean, this thing's living in me. So, it makes sense that I'm the only one who can deal with it. Don't worry to much about me, I'll be fine!"

"How could I not worry about you?!" His voice was filled with agony and frustration. "You're my granddaughter, and as your grandfather, it's my responsibility to care for you when Holy's not here! This is not something so small that you can just brush off or for me to sit down and do nothing about it. This is concerning your own life in the end!"
There was nothing she could say to that, but now she wished that she never told him about the voice and everything.

She didn't want him to feel this guilt.

He shouldn't even feel guilty in the first place.

Stop, please, you're the one who's going to die here.

"Kirika," Joseph called her when she averted her eyes, "Kirika, look at me." Once the girl finally looked back up to him, his thumb rubbed against her cheek and they stayed like that for a few seconds, before Joseph gently pulled her into a hug. One of his hands went to stroke her head while the other circled her back. "Forget what it said about me."

Blue eyes widened in disbelief, "Grandpa-" She wanted to pull away from his hold, but Joseph kept her there.

"Kirika, I'm old, I'm turning 70 soon. You remember when I told you about my adventures? I was supposed to be dead all those years ago. But I survived it and I went on to live all these years with my beloved family. Maybe I'll do it again, I'll fight back the premonition and come out of this alive. Then I'll go back with all of you, back to your mother, and your Grandma Suzie." He paused for a moment, he'd regret saying this to her, but it was the truth, "But maybe I won't. I'll die, just like what the voice said. But if this journey is the end of the line for me, and it could at least be for your sake and Jotaro's, then I'm willing to die. When that happens, let it-"

"Stop!" Kirika wrenched herself away the elder Joestar's hold abruptly. It surprised Joseph, who still managed to settle his hands on her arms. "Don't- Don't just- You can't tell me that I should be just fine letting you die!"

Her eyes felt blurry, but she didn't bother wiping away the flood that kept spilling down her cheeks.

"I know you'd do everything in your power to keep Jotaro and I safe, but I don't care whatever your reasoning is! I still won't let you die! I won't let it come true! The others- The others said that they'll fight against it, so you will too! We're all together in this! And... I'll do my best so you don't have to worry about me getting hurt. We'll... We'll all come out of this alive, okay? We'll make sure of that. I'll make sure of that. So," she choked a sob, "don't tell me to just accept that you're going to die..."

There was a moment of silence between them. Joseph ultimately couldn't help but feel even more guilty. He wanted her safe, and if that required sacrificing himself, he'd do it. But seeing how it made her worry more, how it made her cry, he didn't know what to do.

He could only brush off her tears and hug her again, try his best in comforting her. "I'm sorry," he apologized once more, "and thank you. I'll... I'll still fight against it too. I'll face whatever fate has in store for me and fight it. So please, don't cry." His words sounded unsure, what's worse was he couldn't promise her any of it.

But that was all he could say to her at this very moment.

Hours later, after Jotaro and Polnareff came back with wounds from facing another enemy Stand Divine Anubis, Kirika asked to talk in private with her brother. She felt like she didn't need to go into
details anymore with him. There was no need for her to recount what she had seen happened to Kakyoin, Avdol, and Joseph to him. Frankly, she didn't want to talk about it anymore, the messages stopped at the intended people. He was the one who knew all about the voice the longest, so she hoped he'd understand.

"I thought you know you shouldn't go out alone." said Jotaro when he spotted her in the alleyway next to the hotel. "You could've waited for me."

"Jotaro." The tone of her voice immediately stopped him from talking any further. It concerned him, her voice was quiet yet heavy. But he let her finish what she wanted to say first. "I want you to promise me something."

He came closer to her, "What is it?"

She balled her fists for a moment, before relaxing them and she lowered her head. It was as if she was accepting her fate. "... If something happened to me, I want you to save Grandpa."

"Wait, Gramps? What do you mean if something happened to you? Kirika, what did the voice tell you?" he raised his voice slightly. Panic started stewing in his stomach, but he kept it down. What was going to happen to his sister? He wouldn't just stand by if she's going to get herself hurt. Jotaro was going to ask her more questions when she suddenly grabbed his hand.

When she lifted her head, his stern green eyes met her sorrowful blue ones.

"Jotaro, just..." she pulled out his little finger and curled hers around it. It looked silly, childishly so, but somehow it was the only thing that could assure her in this. The only thing that could seal this agreement between her and her brother. "Listen to me. If I fail, I want you to save him in my place. So please, Jotaro, promise me. That's it, I won't ask for anything else from you."

"Kirika-"

"Nothing's going to happen to me, so just promise me this!"

The sudden outburst was followed by silence.

While Jotaro wanted to pry more from his sister, the desperation and fear that bled into Kirika's voice made him refrain from doing so. He didn't trust what she said, that no harm wouldn't come to her. There must be something more to this. She saw something that terrified her, and it led to this. The voice was definitely behind this. But seeing her so shaken, it didn't seem like a good idea to push her further.

So he relented.

He raised his hand along with their hooked fingers.

"I swear I'll save him."

Her relieved expression was enough to him, for now.

Chapter End Notes

So Kakyoin's a mess, Kirika's a trainwreck, and Joseph got really bamboozled.
Angst train choo choo!

You were hoping for some romance after that ending in the last chapter? Too bad, Joestar Egyptian Tour Group can't have that break. The voice and Dio ruin everything. No time for teenagers sorting out their feelings like teenagers should. Because let's face it, all those YA novels about dystopia where 90% of the time it ends up being a romance novel instead? I hate them. Those are not realistic. I was a teen and I'm damn sure I'd be panicking, then sorting my priorities while still panicking in those kinds of situation. No time for making out.

YOU THOUGHT THIS WHOLE CHAPTER WILL BE FLUFF, BUT IT WAS I, DIO.

#obligatorydankoldjojoke
It was a chaotic day, and all they wanted was breakfast.

GODDAMN FINALLY.

I GOT OUT FROM AUTHOR’S BLOCK AND GENERAL EXHAUSTION.

I'm so sorry this took so long to come out.

Like I had to erase and rewrite scenes to streamline them. Honestly, right now this chapter is looking pretty disjointed and overdrawn still, but I'm not even sure which to cut out now. I'll probably come back to this in the future and fix it, but for now, I'm tired. I'm suffering from jetlag and my head felt like it's boxed in while it's floating.

So, uh, can we all agree that we all rather have Alessi dead? That creepy motherfucker deserves to go to hell. But we get to see baby PolPol and Jotaro because of him so-

No, I'm not gonna' get conflicted over this.

Gut 'em.

The dry wind was getting colder as they sat near the Nile.

It was their first night in Luxor, and they have decided to stay until the next morning to recuperate. Jotaro's wounds hadn't really healed up yet and Joseph's mechanical arm was acting up for the whole day. Once they'd prepared themselves properly, they would depart for Cairo. But for now, they could rest, and Polnareff took that chance to take Kirika and explore the market.

It was not exactly an eventful trip, aside from Kirika buying a set of 3 Egyptian glass cups and Polnareff trying out some street food. As Polnareff was busy eating his shawarma, Kirika decided to check out the stuff she just bought. "Ahh, things had been so hectic, I ended up not buying a lot of souvenirs... I hope Mom likes it." She held one of the glass cups she just bought. The moonlight glinting against the material as the girl inspected the Egyptian figures carved into it.

"It's original handcraft, of course she'll like it! It's much better than buying keychains, at least they have more uses." Polnareff took another bite of his food. He knew he could count on his keen eye for things like this, it was exactly why it was easy for him to spot the papyrus back in Kom Ombo to be fake. He swallowed the piece of shawarma before talking to the girl again. "By the way, glad to see you more relaxed now. I'm worried you're going to end up like Jotaro with all the stress."

Ah, he noticed the sour mood from the previous evening, didn't he? Kirika chuckled, "What? Turn into a emo lone - wolf? That would take hours of watching only Clint Eastwood movies and thinking
that overhauling his look into a hardcore bad boy is the coolest thing ever." That caused the Frenchman to burst into laughter. "He's such a paradox, though! He acts so aloof and serious all the time, but he's actually a dork. He's obsessed with the ocean, and his favourite food is clearly Mom's cooking, even though he acts like he doesn't care about any of it."

The man continued laughing for a few more minutes, before calming himself down, slowing his breathing and brushing off the tears from the corner of his eyes. "Oh, my god... Guess that explains why he kept dining - and - dashing every so often. Man, you gotta' spill more of the details! I won't tell Jotaro that you're saying all these, though. So don't worry about him hunting you down!" he gave her a thumbs up for reassurance.

"Hmm, should I?" The girl smirked before snickering, "Well, I don't know about this for sure, yet. But you know, he never wants to play video games when I asked. He said he didn't like playing them, but he never even tried! Not even once! Maybe it's because he's actually really bad at it, or he's scared that I'm going to beat him if we ever do play together."

Polnareff whistled, "That's a really bold statement, there! What if he turns out to be really good and he beats you?"

"I honestly doubt that," it sounded cocky, but she is confident in her abilities, "still, challenge accepted!"

"Well, I'm betting on you, then. Call me when you finally face him off!" With that, he bit into his meal again. "So... After all of this, you're going back to school, right?"

"Yeah... It's going to be a pain when we get back, but we'll try our best. Jotaro needs to stop skipping school, too." Kirika then turned to the other with curiosity. "What about you, Polnareff? What are you going to do, then?"

He didn't answer for a while, contemplating on what he wanted to say. His shawarma rested in his hand as he place it on his lap. When he finally spoke up, his voice was a little quieter than usual. "I'm not so sure about that... The whole reason I'm fighting with Silver Chariot on my side was to avenge my sister. But now that that's done, I don't know what I'm going to do after we kill Dio." He had nothing left in that small town of Vézelay. All there it was for him was the small, empty house in the middle on top of the hills. Admittedly, he wasn't any good in anything aside from fighting. So there wasn't much he could do there, either. If he returned back home, he imagined that he would just stay there, lamenting the years he lost to vengeance, and then he would die of old age.

He didn't think about it before, but suddenly the thought of home didn't feel so appealing anymore.

"I really don't know."

The tone didn't fit the proud man. Suddenly, he sounded like a lost child instead. Kirika curled her fingers as she hugged the box of cups closer to herself, closing her eyes as she sympathized with the other's feelings. "... When you were younger, what did you say you wanted to do when you're older?"

Polnareff let out a short exhale with a small laugh, "I wanted to be a comic artist, and I thought of rivalling Walt Disney himself! I even wanted to open a theme park like Disneyland! It's still something that I'd like to do, but well... It sounds too far - fetched right now, doesn't it?" He paused for a second, before his eyes went half - lidded and a wistful smile formed on his lips, "There was also the time when I to explore the entire world. It was Sherry's dream actually, and she wanted me to follow along. Just the two of us, travelling all of the countries we could reach, and find new things. She even already decided our first stop, Paris." He let out a soft, regretful laugh, "She... She
was looking forward to it, after high school, and I really was going to go with her."

Sherry never even managed to see Paris, and Polnareff hadn't managed to fulfil that dream for her.

*Man, this is getting depressing, and I thought I was trying to cheer her up.*

"You can still do that, right?" When the man looked at her with confusion, Kirika smiled wider, "When this is all over, you can still go back to France and start all over again! Go to Paris, then go anywhere you want in this world. Eat all kinds of food they have. Meet new people. While you're at it, bring your memories of Sherry along with you, like you always do now. So in a way, she'd be travelling with you and she'd still see the world through your eyes." One of her hands went to pat his back, "But it's all up to you, whether you want to do it, or do nothing. I just think that it's something to give tribute to her, and... I'm sure Sherry would never want you to be miserable on your own."

He was a little taken aback. How could he not think of that? He was still alive and as long as he preserves her memories, Sherry is still with him. Just because she was no longer here, it didn't mean her dream died along with her. It was up to him to keep her dream alive. Jean - Pierre Polnareff was the only one who could carry out such a task, and he happily accepted it. "First thing first, I'm going to survive this. I won't lose to Dio or any of his jobbers. I'm going to help you save your mother. Then... I'll head home, before I prepare for Paris." The man then grinned at Kirika and circled an arm around her shoulder, "After that, I'll visit you guys in Japan! Show me all the fun places, will you?"

She couldn't help but laugh in joy, and the girl grinned back, "Sure!"

"Hey, hurry up in there!" shouted Polnareff, calling out the still - sleeping Joseph from below his room window.

It was 8 in the morning. Him, Jotaro, Kirika, and Iggy had been waiting several minutes for the elder Joestar, and they hadn't eaten anything. "Just hurry and wake him up, Avdol. Tell him he's got 5 minutes! Old people are supposed to be early risers!"

Kirika crooked one corner of her lips downwards, "This is strange, usually Grandpa wakes up pretty early. Did he forget to set up his alarm?"

Her brother shrugged beside her, "He's probably getting forgetful. Good grief... I'm with Polnareff, we'll leave him if he's not down in 5 minutes."

The girl elbowed him on the arm disapprovingly, "Come on. Just wait for a little bit, he'll be down soon."

Jotaro sighed before muttering a "fine" and lazily shifted his weight onto his right foot. Truth be told, he was getting a little hungry. Now, he couldn't help but think back to the mornings at his house. His mother would be there at the dining table, setting up Kirika's and his breakfast. The smell of food would fill the room, and he would try as hard as he could not to look too enthusiastic when he was eating up his mother's cooking. It didn't matter if it was so good that he would ask for a third portion.

He wished he had at least said something.

"Oi, Avdol!" Polnareff's voice snapped him out of his thoughts. "So are we leaving him behind? I'm not waiting for him any longer, I'm hungry!"
"Quiet down," Avdol put his hands on his hips, "he would join us in a moment. It seemed that his watch broke in the middle of the night, thus he could not wake up on time."

While Avdol was calming down Polnareff's rants, Kirika's attention was turned to the two girls who just exited the hotel. She could hear them talking about some "sleazy old fart" and that he apparently flipped up the skirt of one of them. "He tried to act like some kind of gentleman, but a pervert's a pervert!" the one with the twin buns said.

Kirika crooked the corner of her lips as she shook her head slightly, Some people have no shame... His frontal lobe's shrinking, I guess.

"So we still have to wait for him now? Gimme' a break." grumbled Jotaro.

"It is just for a little while. He should be heading to the lobby by now."

But after around 5 minutes, Joseph still hadn't shown up, so Avdol ended up going back to fetch him anyway. The remaining four decided to move somewhere so they wouldn't block the path. While they were waiting, Kirika noticed that Iggy was lying down quite away from the rest of them. She decided to do something about it, somehow, by crouching just 10 inch next to him. That elicited a low growl from the small dog, but the girl persisted in keeping her position, keeping her eyes ahead. It looked silly to the onlookers, but she hoped it worked in getting Iggy to get his guard down a little, at least around her. She knew that Iggy wasn't a normal dog. He's someone with an above average intelligence compared to most canines. But at the end of the day, he was born and raised a dog, wasn't he?

She smiled a little when the dog eventually became seemingly confused and slowly began to be less concerned about her presence. Jotaro kept his eyes on her, making sure that the dog didn't suddenly lunge at her. So far, there wasn't any sign of oncoming attack from the dog, and he relaxed.

"Jeez, that old man's wasting so much time now... What's holding him up?" said Polnareff as he sat down on the pavement with a grunt.

"If I have to guess? The toilet. Congratulations, you somehow passed off your curse to him."

"Ugh, it's not like I asked to have so many incidents involving the toilet! It's just coincidence! Coincidence, I tell you!"

Sighing, Jotaro suddenly felt the need to smoke as they passed the time.

It had been almost an hour since Avdol went to get the siblings' grandfather, and none of them had shown up. Joseph couldn't still be asleep, he wouldn't let them wait around for so long. He wasn't that kind of person, considering the position he had in this journey. Avdol wouldn't let him do that either, being the responsible, no - nonsense person he was.

An enemy must have found them.

They immediately went back into the hotel to investigate.
"You're acting like I'm going to kill you." remarked Jotaro, lazily eyeing his sister who actively stayed away from him.

"You already did, I died, this is my ghost avoiding you." Kirika stayed close right behind Polnareff, peeking at her brother with peeved eyes.

Jotaro scoffed, "Gimme' a break, you're being overdramatic."

"Say that after you get trapped in a 5 - minute headlock by someone like yourself. Polnareff, do it to him."

That sudden order surprised the silver - haired man, "H- Hey, why are you even involving me in this?! Jotaro, just apologize to her or something!"

The raven quirked an eyebrow, "She's the one who messed with my lighter. Just ignore her, she'll give it up." He promptly ignored Kirika sticking her tongue out at him.

"Ugh, I expected that from you…" Polnareff trailed off as he looked at the girl behind him. "Kirika, just let it go, it's kind of your fault in the first place."

Kirika's response was to glare at him, and the man couldn't help but see her similar to a fuming cat, "Excuse me, what else do you suggest I do?"

At first, Polnareff was going to straight up reply to her with "let him smoke", but he thought twice on that, and decided he'd rather not risk the girl's anger. So he simply ignored the question and kept walking straight ahead. He already had a rabid mutt targeting him, he didn't need to get attacked by a Stand that could manipulate matter.

After Jotaro reminded them to stay on guard, they opened the door to see an empty room. Nothing told them that there was any altercation happened here. Aside from the opened windows, there was nothing there that was out of place. But they still couldn't shake the feeling that they might have encountered an enemy somewhere.

"They can't be too far away, let's hurry and find them!" urged Polnareff.

Kirika nodded, but stopped to think for a second, "Could Grandpa's hand acting up have anything to do with it?"

Her brother frowned at that notion, "You're saying that the enemy has been tailing us since yesterday?"

"Wait, what?!" shouted the other man. "How did we not notice? Kirika, did you sense anything?"

"I know I somehow became a living detector for enemies, but no, I didn't. But that could mean that whoever it was, kept their distance. That doesn't explain exactly what it did to Grandpa's hand, though."

"A long - range Stand... Gramps and Avdol must've been caught off - guard by them somewhere." murmured Jotaro. He then turned to exit the room, "Come on, we're wasting time."

As he passed Polnareff, the older man put up his hand immediately, "Hang on, where do we look first? I know I said they might still be around this area, but honestly that's still pretty vague."

"We can still ask around the guests and the employees. Pretty sure if the enemy Stand caused a ruckus, people would've seen it." said Jotaro as he turned the doorknob.
Kirika grimaced as she exited the room, "That's very likely... They probably had to get away from it too and ended up escaping the hotel some other way. We can ask the people outside if that's the case."

"We can't catch a break at all, can we?" Polnareff groaned as he followed the siblings. "By the way, where's Iggy?"

"That damn player! He dared to play with my emotions and then blatantly stepping all over it in public! Shameless bastard!" yelled a short middle-aged woman that Kirika decided to ask nearby the hotel.

"Uh, Madame, what did he exactly do to you?" And the young girl wondered why she even asked.

"He... He made me feel wanted! He looked up my skirt and peeked at me in the bathroom, like he's very interested in me. But the next thing I knew, he was playing around with his boytoy!"

"B- Boytoy...?"

"Yes! He was doing all sorts of vulgar acts with him! In front of everyone to see! Humiliating me! I was so furious, so I beat them both over the fence and if a train came to run over them right after I left, I'd be very grateful!" she huffed loudly, comically tilting her head up and crossed her arms.

_Lady, you're getting this all wrong from every single angle!

"... Right, okay, thanks for the help!" Kirika then left to relay the info to her brother and Polnareff. Not all of them of course, "She said she last saw them by the train tracks."

"Are you sure that's all she said? She seems to tell you a lot-"

"Yes! It's basically what she said." Kirika cut her off adamantly.

Polnareff quirked his eyebrow at that, but let it slide. "Hmm, the train tracks, huh? Hey, maybe they had something to do with the tracks being cut off! Remember the people yelling about it earlier?"

Jotaro nodded, "Right. The enemy probably trapped them there, and they escaped. I'm willing to bet that they must've left some sort of clue there. Unintentionally, but that'll still point us to them."

"No one saw Iggy, though." she frowned in concern. "I should've just picked him up and brought him in. I hope he's okay."

"That dog is more than capable to defend himself, but most enemy would probably just ignore him. Also," Polnareff raised a finger, "that's not a good idea, he'll chew your face off."

So they moved through the crowded streets again. Only this time, they seemed to have a company. At least, that's what the alarm blaring in Kirika's head told her. She grabbed onto Jotaro's coat as she stopped, prompting him to do the same. "Someone's nearby."

Jotaro immediately snapped his head around. There was only Polnareff following them, and he looked confused as to why they stopped. Was the enemy hiding? "Can you pinpoint their location?"

"No, it doesn't work like a GPS, I can only sense if they're nearby." Strangely enough, the voice in
her head telling her to turn around. Quiet at first, before it became a shout all of the sudden. She flinched as she shut her ears, letting out a small cry.

Before Jotaro could even ask her what happened, they suddenly heard Polnareff shouting, "Jotaro, Kirika! It's an enemy, an enemy showed up!"

When they both turned around, Polnareff wasn't there anymore, "Wh- Polnareff!"

Jotaro clicked his tongue, "Polnareff, where'd you go?!

"Guys, over here!" The voice came from around the corner of a building in the distance.

The raven cursed as he instinctively pulled his sister closer by her arm, "Don't get too far from me!"

Kirika nodded, gritting her teeth as she ran alongside him. Spotting a distinctive, silver cylinder - like hair should be easy, but for some reason they still couldn't find Polnareff anywhere. A man pointed them to an alleyway, but even after they followed through a series of turns and ended up on the other side of the block, they still couldn't find him. Frustrated, Kirika threw her hands up and brushed her bangs up. "Great, now we lost him too! Argh, we all warned him not to run off on his own! He could at least just stay put first!"

"Gimme' a break," muttered Jotaro annoyedly. "Calm down, he could still be around here. But when we find him," he clenched one of his fists, "we duct tape him to a chair and drag him by it."

"You're the one who should calm down." she commented. "Come on, then. Man, for claiming to want me to save you guys, it seems to focus a lot more on torturing me instead." grumbled Kirika, low enough so Jotaro wouldn't hear it. There's no need to worry him with her well - being right now.

As they walked down the sidewalk, a small child, who looked a little bit like their friend, strangely enough, called out to them. He seemed to attempt to call out their names. But they never met before, so how would he know who they were? The boy eventually stopped doing so, after saying a scramble of names starting from "J". That in itself was even weirder, that the boy would know to start from said letter. The girl couldn't help but frown, who was this boy?

"Hey, kid." Jotaro's voice halted her train of thought. "Have you seen a French guy around here? He's about this tall," the older teen stopped his hand around near the rim of his hat, "and his hair looks like yours."

"Th- That's me! Me! Me!" the boy hurriedly pointed at himself.

Silence greeted him, as Jotaro stared down at him, disappointment clear in his eyes. "Gimme' a break... That's the last time I ask a kid for help." He received an elbow from his sister as he turned around.

"Don't be so mean to him, he's just a kid." she scolded him.

"He still didn't help at all, what do you want me to say?"

"Jeez, you're gonna' be a bad dad too."

As they walked, Kirika still couldn't shake off the feeling that they missed something so obvious. But for the life of her she couldn't figure out what it was. She ended up thinking back to the boy from earlier. He really did look similar to Polnareff. But as strange as Stands were, there was no way. No way in hell that a Stand actually turned the man into a child.
Right?

She immediately turned around.

Just in time to see the boy being dragged away into a nearby alleyway. By an eerie looking man who exuded the same malice that she sensed earlier in the crowds. There was no struggle coming from Polnareff.

Kirika wasted no time to act. With Galileo summoned, burst of air propelled the bottom of her shoes, launching her towards the alleyway. Blue eyes widened as she spotted Polnareff being hung by the strap of his clothes on a pipe, "Let him g-

She didn't anticipate the man to grab the collar of her shirt and flung her into the air. Everything suddenly felt slow, when her eyes met those vile-looking ones behind the orange shade. The odd man smiled wickedly, and dread immediately filled her. Right at that moment, she felt like she was shrinking. Both her mind and body. But before she realized what was happening to her, there was a burst of pain, and everything turned dark.

She saw… A light.

It was small, yet warm.

「I wish… To save.」

It was a voice that was vaguely familiar, but a stranger at the same time.

「I don't care how, but please, let me save them.」

The light began to flicker and scatter.

Kirika tried to reach out to it, but she found herself unable to even lift her finger. It was like she was meant to be the sole audience in this theatre. Everything happening before her was trapped in a screen, and she was unable to leave her seat until she saw the end of it. No matter how much she tried to move, she was stuck to her invisible chair, and the scene before her continued to play out as she struggled.
"Your wish comes with a high price."

She went still at that, just as the screen before her burst into a myriad of colors. She blinked, surprised herself at being able to do so in the first place, and slowly, the colors turned into scenes of different lives. Their beings surrounded by a light the moment they were born, being guided to intertwine with the same line of fate. They all followed the same pattern each time. Then she noticed, when each of them faded to black, they started with the scenes of the ones that had played next to them.

Like a candle, with each replay, the light surrounding them became dimmer.

"Why all of this?" she found herself muttering in confusion.

As if to answer her, the scenes merged into one, and this time, it was as if she was them, her existence was the same as theirs. A man with blonde hair, adorned with a colorful headband, became her focus, and Kirika instinctively tried to grab onto him before she even realized that she recognized him. But the man started running, leaving her- them- behind, and he continued running head first into the darkness beyond those foreboding doors.

No matter how those hands tried to stop him, they couldn't.

He would listen to none of them.

That man would never come back out.

The warm light finally disappeared, replaced by a red hot flare of anger, grief, and despair.

Yet, it felt lost and misplaced.

The screen then flickered between the faces of those close to her. The people whom she tried to protect from their demise, whom she was scared to fail. Like the countless others- No, they were her-who failed Caesar Zeppeli.

It started becoming a blur as it shifted through people she didn't recognize, before it turned into a mirror.

As she stared at her reflection, the familiar heat burnt her back.
"Hey, wake up! Please, wake up!"

Slowly, a pair of big blue eyes opened, blinking away the blur in her vision, and she saw a boy with a weirdly-shaped silver hair, seemingly holding her up. He seemed familiar, but she didn't remember meeting him. There was a dull pain on the back of her head, which made her whimper quietly. What happened? What was that nightmare? Before she could ask any of that, the noise she let out caused the boy's eyebrows to furrow in panic.

"N-No, don't cry! It's okay! Look, we have to get away from here. You can move, can't you?"

She looked at him for a moment, unsure of what was actually going on. Was she supposed to know who this boy is? But nonetheless, she nodded. She at least recognized the fact that the man thrashing behind them was dangerous.

Once they crawled out of that alleyway, they came across a young woman, who immediately gasped in surprise at their conditions, "Little ones, are you okay?"

"Ah!" Kirika spoke up, shocked at the fact that her voice was suddenly a higher pitch. The woman before them also seemed so gigantic, even though she was sure that she herself should at least as tall as her. Did she actually shrink? Now that she thought about it, she felt like tiny mannequin with her clothes just mostly pooling around her. What did that man do to her? Where was her brother, anyway? She was walking with him not too long ago.

"He," she gestured at the boy helping her up, "he helped me. So I'm okay. But..." Kirika frowned at the blood trickling from the boy's temple.

The boy, who was looking out for the man from earlier, then nudged her, "Hey, come on, we gotta' go!"

Kirika felt like retorting, because none of these didn't feel quite right. But at the same time, she didn't really understand what was happening either. Wait, no. They were looking for a P-Polo? Polly? Who was it? Seriously, where was her brother? Her brain wasn't giving her any answer. It was like having completed a puzzle, but one day she found that someone had stolen some of the pieces away. Maybe she should just follow him for now. "R-Right!"

"Hold on, you two!" The lady called after them. "You're both hurt, what happened?"

"Huh? Uh... Um!" the boy scrambled from an answer. That piqued Kirika's interest. Did he know what was actually going on?

"What are you mumbling about?" She walked towards them and took hold of their hands, "Those wounds don't look good, I'll fix you up at my place. Come on!"

"Oh, um, thank you..."

The lady smiled at her, "Come along now." After only taking a few steps, she stopped, puzzling them both momentarily. "That's right," she then crouched on the ground and looked back at the older child, "here, grab on. I'll carry you too." She turned to Kirika.
"W- Wait," protested Kirika, "it's okay, I can walk."

"No, I insist, your legs are bruised, it must've hurt walking with them."

They did hurt.

Her stubborn little mind wanted to persist and just walked. It's fine, they were just bruises. She fell on sidewalks before, it should be fine. But in the end she relented. She let the lady pick her up and carry her in her arm after she had the other on a piggy back.

"Are you both brother and sister?"

The boy was the first to correct her, "No, I have my own sister. Her name's Sherry! She just- Uh… A friend! We're just friends!"

Kirika followed suit, "I have my own brother too!" Speaking of whom, "Have you seen him? He has black hair." She felt like she should have added more details than that. "He has green eyes too, and taller than him," she pointed at the silver-haired boy, "did you see him, Miss?"

"Hmm," she thought about it, "no, I don't think I've seen anyone like that. But after we're done, I'll help you look for him, alright? He must be worried about you."

The little girl smile widely at her offer, and nodded, "Yes! Thank you! Thank you so much."

After a while, she ended up leaning into the woman's hold, and she couldn't help but be reminded of the times her mother would carry her. Even when she insisted that she wasn't tired, when she wanted to walk more and she wanted her to let her do so. But every time, she always knew before she could stop and said, "My legs hurt." She giggled under her breath, thinking it was silly that she missed being carried like this.

... I wonder where Mom is.

She should've known the answer to that.

As they got further and further from the main street, a young man clad in all black frantically ran past the alleyway, searching for his sister. He kept cursing under his breath, cursing himself. How could he lose sight of her?!

"Kirika!"

Kirika winced slightly as the woman applied a cold salve on the bruises on her back and her head. It made her wonder what else did the man do to her aside from turning her into a child. She vaguely remembered being thrown into the air, but nothing else came up to complete the memory.

"Oh, what is this?" The woman Malèna, asked, as she tapped on her left trapezium, "It looks like a star!"
"Um, it's a birthmark. Mom said that everyone in my family has it." She felt like she should have remembered it being more than just a birthmark.

"A star birthmark?" she heard the boy mutter. Did he know something about it too? But how?

"I see… It looks beautiful. I suppose that means you and your family are lucky people." Malèna smiled as she applied the last patch of salve.

*I feel like it's the opposite instead.*

She didn't know where that thought came from.

"Alright, it's done! Now, I'm going to prepare the bath. Just make yourselves and home, I'll call you when it's ready."

"Okay!" they replied in unison.

Once she exited the room, both of them stood there in silence, unsure of what to say. If they were both actually children, this would probably be much easier, but they were not. They're both stuck in a very peculiar situation, of which they were unsure how to break out of it.

"Uh, hey," she decided to take the initiative, "I'm Kirika. You know what's going on? Because I only remember falling and hitting my head." And having a strange nightmare, but it wasn't time to discuss that.

"Oh, right! My name's Jean - Pierre Polnareff!" The boy then took hold of her shoulders, "Listen, we're both not actually kids. Someone scary turned us into this, with a creepy shadow Stand!"

Her eyes widened when he said his name. That was the name she was looking for, wasn't it? Polnareff? How could she forgot? Was she… Slowly losing her memories? His action then startled her, "I- I think I know that, but what's a Stand? Like some sort of superpower"

Polnareff's eyes widened at that, "Oh no, you don't have one yet…" He looked distressed for a moment, before shaking his head, "Doesn't matter, then, but we have to find him! Otherwise, we'll keep losing our adult memories and we'll stay kids forever! Once we find him, we beat him. That's the only way we can turn to normal."

So that was why she kept drawing up blanks. She would only remember being a 5 - year old? That thought scared her to no end at this point. "Wait, how do we even beat him?" Kirika quirked her eyebrows in confusion, "Do you have a Stand too?"

"Y- Yeah, something like that. But it's not as strong as when he's an adult. Don't worry, though, I have some tricks up my sleeve!" he smiled reassuringly at her. But then, his lips curled downwards as he glanced to the side, "I'm sorry, you were trying to help me, but instead… Now you get separated by your brother too. I'm really sorry."

Kirika immediately decided that he didn't like the other blaming himself.

"Hey, don't apologize! I wanted to help you, didn't I? There's nothing wrong with that. The only one that should say sorry is that man! So we'll beat him up until he does!" Her determined blue eyes stared right into his. "Besides, *Nii - san* will find us. I know he will, and he'll help us beat him up."

"Huh? How are you so sure that he'll find us?"

"He will, I believe in him. Don't worry too much about it!"
"WHY IS HE NOT HERE YET?!" Kirika screamed as she ran alongside Polnareff. She heard a ruckus coming from the outside and found that the man had ambushed the other and Malèna, turning Polnareff even younger and the woman into a fetus. Now all they could do was run. The boy's Stand couldn't even fight it off.

"You're the one who said he'll come! Why are you asking me?!" the now younger boy shouted back. He gasped in horror as the man was gaining speed at them, inwardly cursing himself for not being able to run faster.

"Are you talking about Jotaro~? How foolish, he won't be able to help! I'll turn him into a useless child just like you!" Alessi laughed boisterously as he enthusiastically chased after his victims.

"Shut up! Get away from us, you creep!" Kirika retorted back as she kept running, as fast as her small legs could bring her. "We have to be quicker! Miss Malèna will die if we don't!"

"You think I don't know that?! But he has all the advantage here! Argh, if only I didn't step on his shadow again!" he shouted in frustration.

"Ahh, that's right, you just got your Stand very recently, didn't you?" Another laugh, this time in a disturbing high pitch. "Oh, killing you would be much easier then, Kujo Kirika!"

"Crap, he's right behind us!" cried Jean - Pierre and grabbed one of Kirika's hands as they both sprinted and dodged Alessi's grab.

"Why are you both so concerned with protecting that dying fetus? You're gonna' end up just like her before long, anyway!"

It happened again.

In just a split second, their bodies and mind were once more being chipped away, and they shrunk. When they landed on the ground, their legs felt much shakier. Like toddlers who had yet learnt how to balance themselves.

That's exactly what they were right now.

But they finally found somewhere to hide, even if it was temporary. As Polnareff locked the door up, they moved away from it as Alessi kept banging from the outside. At the very least it would buy them sometime to cook up an escape plan, or not.

"Crud!" cried the boy as he climbed up to the window. "The bars are too close together! Even as a little kid, there's no way we can make it through!"

"C- Can you use your Stand? Maybe you can cut them off with it!" Kirika then yelped as Alessi banged on the door again.

Polnareff tried doing as she suggested. But Silver Chariot failed to even make a dent on the steel. "Th- They won't break!"

"Looks like your precious Chariot has also become a 3 - year old! It can't cut through those bars and it's far too slow!" The assassin taunted the boy gleefully.
"Oh, no. We have to hide, we have to hide!" Kirika frantically searched around the room. But all the hiding spots would be so obvious to the man, it's a completely closed space. "Who am I kidding? He'll find us right away!"

"Wait," Polnareff stopped her panicked ramblings, "I got an idea."

"Now, then, here I come!"

The situation just got even worse.

After a second of silence, there was a swinging sound, before an axe cleaved through the wooden door.

It struck again, and again, and again.

When the man finally made a hole sizable enough for him to stick his face in, with his tongue disgustingly slithering out of his mouth like a snake, he bellowed, "Here I am!"

He expected to be greeted by the cowering faces of his enemies. Proud grown ups he'd turn into mere, pathetic children. But instead, he found the room empty, when it shouldn't even be possible. There was no way he could slip away when he wasn't looking. It also certainly would be so stupid of them to think he couldn't find them if they hid.

Then again, children are stupid little beings.

That's what he thought, and he stuck by it. Despite the fact that he hadn't had any luck finding them. It angered him, but he kept looking. In the clock, in the bucket, in the stuffed bear, and even in the drawers. They're in none of those places, but he would eventually find them! He wouldn't accept being defeated by measly 3-year-olds!

They deserved to die for humiliating him like this!

A mischievous laugh interrupted his malicious thoughts.

"Are you really gonna' lose to a kid in a battle of wits...?"

Alessi snapped his head towards the doorway in shock.

"Old Man Alessi...?"

It took him a while to realize that the voice was coming from the fish tank. It didn't make sense. There was nothing but goldfishes and a floating ball! But despite his rationale, he couldn't help his curiosity and looked closely at it. He was missing something, but for the life of him, he couldn't figure out what.

Until one of the goldfishes disappeared when it took a corner.

"I- Impossible!"

The floating ball drifted, splashing the water around it and catching his attention. His mistake was to look up and at the 2 holes cut into its surface. Nothing prepared him for a pair of different shade of
blue eyes to look back at him, before a tiny rapier stabbed through his nose.

He screamed as blood gushed through the wound and the holes of his nose.

The two "children" then popped out of the water, with Polnareff ripping the ball they both used as a makeshift mask and to contain the transformed Malèna. "We were hiding in the tank behind this mirror!" the silver - haired boy exclaimed. "Even a kid could figure out a simple trick like this! Good job for falling for it, dimwit!"

Kirika giggled as the man writhed in pain. Served him right! "For some skilled assassin, you're actually really dumb. That's what you get for underestimating us. You old, perverted creep!"

"Hah, you said it right!" The boy then commanded his Stand, and Silver Chariot violently ripped its sword from Alessi's nose. It was only appropriate to be gleeful at the sound of his pained shriek. But they were far from done. "Even as a 2 - year - old, Chariot can still slice your face up!"

It proceeded to do just that.

Kirika climbed out from the tank, carrying along the bundled up Malèna with the other's help. She gasped as the "fetus" whined audibly. She was withering away. "We have to knock him out quick." she looked at Polnareff, her eyebrows furrowed.

The boy promptly nodded and prepared himself for his next set of attack. But the depraved man had ran away before he could even approach him again.

"Very bad! Very bad!"

"Hey, wait!" they immediately ran after him. They wouldn't able to really catch up to him, but they simply needed to get just a little close so Chariot could knock him out this time. Though, they didn't expect him to jump out of the window just to get away from them.

Kirika snarled at that, "You don't get to escape now, creep!" She didn't waste anytime to climb up onto the windowsill. Jean - Pierre followed suit, supporting her before he himself climbed up. It took a while with their height and all.

They saw him trying to crawl away, pretending that he weren't some degenerate, child - killer. Polnareff immediately called him out, "Hold it, you cruddy geezer!"

That caught the attention of the man standing nearby him. Green eyes looked up at where the window was supposed to be, and widened in shock when he saw the little girl beside the boy. He had been searching everywhere- He almost couldn't believe what he was seeing.

"Mister!" the boy gasped. "Who were you again…? Who were-"

"Kirika!" the man unexpectedly shouted.

The girl immediately quirked her eyebrows. She didn't recognize this scary - looking person, let alone ever meeting someone like him. But at the same time, he looked familiar. There were glimpses of memories- Of her walking behind him, following him-

"Kirika, you- I said don't get too far!" His voice sounded relieved despite the harsh tone. Like he And somehow, it triggered something in her mind. Memories of the days she would wander away by herself and unable to find any of her family.
"Kirika, where've you been?! I've been looking for you!"

"Nii - san!"

" Nii - san …" He was here. Her brother was finally here. But she didn't have the chance to say anything else. In the corner of her eyes, a malevolent shadow moved. " Nii - san ! Behind y-"

A pair of intangible clawed hands creeped on the ground, encasing him, like a venus flytrap ready to feast on an insect, "You're wide open, Jotaro!"

"Watch out for his shadow!" shouted the boy beside her.

The man jumped in reflex.

Too late.

"Yes, I touched it! I touched Jotaro's shadow!

Almost as soon as he landed on the ground, Jotaro felt himself changing. He shrunk, and it felt like pieces of his mind was being robbed away as he became smaller. "He… Wh- Th- This is-"

"Jotaro! I heard that you were only recently able to use your Stand, Star Platinum!" A manic grin spread across Alessi's face at that reveal. "That means you didn't have your Stand as a child! Now you're turn into a normal brat again!"

Polnareff was fearful for the raven, no one was there to defend him at all. But then, out of the corner of his eyes, he saw Kirika standing up. He widened his eyes when she suddenly tried jumping down. His hands quickly grabbed onto her letterman jacket, "What are you doing?!"

"I have to get down! He's in danger!" The girl shouted angrily at him, angry that he stopped her. At this moment, it was like nothing else mattered. Not even the fact that she had no power that could help her save Jotaro.

"You don't even have any Stand right now! You'll die!"

"You can't expect me to just sit here and watch! It's my brother right there!"

"Kirika!"

The young voice was much more familiar to the current her, and it stopped the two of them arguing.

"Stay there. Whatever you do, just stay there!" He just found her. He'd be damned if he let her get killed because of his own mistake.

"Are you really this stupid as a kid?" Alessi laughed and laughed. What a joke. Did he not have any clue about his position right now? How dire it was? He'd enjoy seeing the reality sinking in on his face. "Don't worry! I'll send your sister to the afterlife too after you…"

With that said, he swung his axe into the air.

"I won! Lord Dio, I will be the one who kills Jotaro! You'll have to pay me a fortune for this!"
"NII - SAN!"

"Die, Jotaro!"

There was a slamming sound, similar to a bat hitting a baseball. Yet it came from a tiny fist, hitting against the assassin's jaw. An attack so sudden, Alessi was wholly unprepared and fell to the ground in shock. But that was not the end of it. The assassin deserved more pain than that. For being one of Dio's men, for messing with him, and for threatening his sister.

"Ora! Ora! Ora ora ora ora ora!"

A barrage of fists broke into the man's abdomen. Merciless and unstoppable, it wouldn't stop until Jotaro willed himself to stop. He was nowhere near done.

Both "toddlers'" jaws hung open at that. Polnareff was in awe at the fact that he was so strong even as a child. Kirika on the other hand was both amazed and bewildered at the same time. Maybe it was her spotty memories, but she remembered Jotaro being a gentle and quiet child. She couldn't even begin to imagine what changed him as he grew up.

Then again, she found herself not caring much as Jotaro delivered one last punch.

"ORA!"

The force threw Alessi into the distance. The axe in his hand slipped and he tripped on it along the way. He blacked out for a moment when he finally landed on the dirt. Stars then filled his vision, and when he came to, he was relieved when he thought he could slip away quietly again.

He was wrong.

3 very disgruntled people filled his vision. Jotaro glared at him, murderous intent still clear in his eyes. Kirika beside him looked ready to rip him apart right then and there. Polnareff let out a snicker as he loomed closer towards the creep, "Not good enough. Time to make doubly sure he's finished!"

When they were finally summoned together, their Stands agreed with that sentiment.

"You really could've just told me that it was really Polnareff." Jotaro really had wanted to be angry at his sister for being so reckless once again. But as he confronted his sister, he couldn't feel anything else but relief. He tried not to show it too much, but fear did have a strong clutch on him when she suddenly just disappeared without even so much of a yell.

Kirika stared at her feet for a bit, before looking up at him apologetically, "Sorry, he was being dragged away so I just… Went." She didn't think twice about going to save Polnareff. Even though that decision unexpectedly turned out as their lifesaver, it wasn't fair to put her brother through the distress.

"H- Hey, it's my fault for being so reckless." It always was the case, he realized. One of these days, he seriously might get someone else killed along with him if he didn't stop his short sighted tendencies. "She's only dragged into it because of me. So if you're going to be mad at someone, throw it all on me."
Jotaro was silent for a moment, glancing back and forth between Kirika and Polnareff. He eventually simply sighed as he put his hand on his sister's head. His fingers brushed against her hair slowly, as if he was taking his time, as if he wouldn't get to do it again. "At least give me a warning next time. Good grief..." The words sounded uncharacteristically resigned. Nothing he said could deter this from happening again, after all. Nothing really went the way they wanted it from the start.

Kirika raised her hand to grasp his. Her hold was firm, assuring. She couldn't really promise him anything at this point, but she genuinely wanted him to be sure that right now, she was safe. She then looked at him again, with a grin on her face. "Thanks for pummelling that asshole."

Her brother snorted softly, before he pulled his hand away, "That kind of face is bound to get wrecked anyway."

"He deserved it, that's for sure. Sheesh, what a creepy guy." Polnareff added. He then looked up, at the window of Maléna's house. They made sure she turned back to normal before leaving her in her room. He had contemplated waiting until she gained consciousness, but... He sighed. It was for the best that they didn't know each other. She would forget about what happened, and she would move on with her life. Someone so kind like her didn't deserve to get her life in risk simply because she knew him.

At least, I hope she's okay after all of that.

Just as he thought that, the young woman suddenly appeared. For a moment, Polnareff felt overjoyed. He momentarily forgot what he just thought, and wanted desperately to approach her. Just talk to her, even if she didn't remember who he was. But then, she noticed him, and approached him with a worried look on her face, "Um, pardon me... Did you happen to see a little boy and a little girl leave my house? The boy has silver hair, just like you. And the girl... She said her brother was looking for her..."

He snapped out of his reverie then, and he stayed silent.

Maléna then looked up at Polnareff, her eyes widening a little, "Pardon me for asking, but have we met before?"

Once again, Polnareff stayed silent. Red still painted his cheeks, as his blue eyes simply stared longingly at her, before he snapped himself out of it again once he realized that she was looking at his earring, "N- No, I didn't see any kid." The first step he took felt heavy, but he forced himself to take another and kept walking. "Let's go, Jotaro! Kirika!"

The siblings had simply watched him from afar as he faced Maléna. It didn't feel right for any of them to do so. Kirika especially would rather not interact with the older woman, lest she recognize her and in turn, ruining Polnareff's effort to protect her. When the man called them over, they silently followed. Passing Maléna, who looked like she wanted to say more, but the Frenchman's abruptness made her unsure.

"Come on, hurry up!"

"Ah..." In the end, she persisted. "W- Wait! Could you be... That earring..."

He stopped, his fists were clenched on his sides. The temptation to tell her the truth was strong. But it was such a far - fetched dream for him, to think that he could simply say that he'd be back and maybe they could grow into a relationship in the future. He could die at the end of this journey, whether he'd rather choose to survive or not. She should be spared from waiting for him, from the grief.
"We've never met before. There's no way we could have." He glanced at her with hardened eyes, "The two of us are travellers, this is the first time I've been here and I already have to get going to the next town."

Polnareff turned for the last time, never looking back at her.

He had to keep his resolve strong.

"You two, don't say anything. Not one word."

There were a soft chuckles following his warning, but then there were a consoling hand on his shoulder, and a smaller one patting him on the back. Even though he looked a little apprehensive at the gesture, in truth, he felt a little better. Knowing that he had them to support him in times like this was nice.

"Oh! Jotaro! Kirika! And Polnareff!" A familiar voice shouted, and they saw Joseph approaching them, with Avdol simply sitting on a brick wall, looking exhausted. "Where have you guys been?!"

"G- Grandpa, Mr. Avdol! We've been looking for you both!" Kirika ran towards them. "Are you guys alright?"

"I should be the one asking that! I told you not to wander off on your own!" the elder Joestar pointed an accusing finger at their general direction.

Jotaro clicked his tongue in annoyance and looked away from them, not wanting to deal with explaining what actually had happened. So he let Polnareff do the talking, "Look who's talking! You're the ones who disappeared!"

"Now, now." Avdol calmed them both down. "Let's go get something to eat."

Kirika felt her stomach rumbled right after that, suddenly remembering that their goal for the whole morning was to get breakfast. *I swear to god they're gonna' try killing us with starvation after this. That's it, they figured out their ultimate plan.*

"Ah! Iggy!" yelled Polnareff suddenly, spotting the Boston Terrier nonchalantly walked in the distance. "Where the hell were you?!"

Joseph sighed after finishing his last glass of water, "Finally, we can relax a little..."

"What should have been our breakfast became lunch." complained Avdol.

"Next time, I'm keeping some bread if this is going to happen again." said Kirika.

Polnareff sunk into his seat as he slung his arm across the back of the chair, "Yeah, but I guess we expected this."

"Well, in the meantime, we've got to figure out where Dio is hiding. We're almost reaching Cairo." Without any cue, Avdol immediately produced the camera given to them by the late Speedwagon agents and handed it over to Joseph.

Polnareff quirked his eyes in confusion, before realizing what he meant. "Oh! A spirit photo!"
"Will it show up?" asked Jotaro, a little bit skeptical considering what his grandfather said about his failed attempts before departing to Japan.

Joseph closed his eyes as he put the camera gently on the table, "I'm not sure, but we've gotten close. So it should be quite accurate."

"Well, if something's still blocking it, we can always rely on Star Platinum again." Kirika suggested, grinning.

Joseph nodded in agreement, "Alright, here we go!" He raised his hand high up, electricity sparking around his right hand. Along with it, purple - coloured vines sprouted and wrapped itself around his wrist. With a yell, he slammed it down on the camera, splitting it into two. Pieces of the inner machinery were scattered around the table and smoke was bellowing out of it. The scene of course caught the attention of every other guest in the establishment.

A waiter came up to them with a worried smile, "Sir, is something the matter?" His eyes immediately shifted towards the destroyed camera.

"Nothing. Just go back over there." Avdol told him off curtly.

Soon, even if the camera shouldn't be working anymore, it produced one photo.

"Well, Old Man?" Jotaro spoke up, trying to hide the slight anxiety from the anticipation. "Can you see anything?"

"Just a little longer... Almost done... Almost done..."

Kirika gulped, her feet started tapping on the floor impatiently. She almost jumped when her grandfather suddenly exclaimed and threw the photo for them to see. She didn't even realized that she was that tense.

"There!"

Slowly but surely, color started spreading across the black film.

"This is the place we have to find!"

A building appeared on the photo, in the form of a large castle, surrounded by high walls.

Dio was hiding there, living to enact whatever malicious plan he had, while Holy suffered and dying simply because he existed.

No matter what happens, they would find him.

They will kill him.

"Hey, Polnareff, you want some?" Kirika offered a bag of dates to the man, as she once again sat beside him by the Nile. They have to depart in a few hours, so they had time for this.

"Ah, thanks, Kirika." His hand reached into the bag, picking out one of the dried fruits and biting into it. "Man, we only spent 2 days here, but it felt like we've been here for a week at least."
"With everything that happened, I don't blame you for thinking that." she let out a slight chuckle. For a moment, they sat in silence, just staring at the river. Both trying to further wind down from the tension they experienced throughout the day. After a while, she glanced at Polnareff, at his now undecorated left ear. "I know you said not to say anything but, y'know... If you want to talk about it-
"

"No, it's fine. I made my decision, and that's final. It won't be fair on her if I go back on it, right?" He tried to smile. But he realized that he didn't seem convincing, judging from the frown on Kirika's face. It was hard, for the first time in his life, he genuinely fell for someone not just for some shallow reasons. Maléna's selflessness was what drew him to her. But in the end, he had to stop himself from going to her further, for her sake.

The young girl didn't say anything back for a while as she chewed on another date. "You don't have to do that, I think."

He quirked his eyebrows, "Pretending not to know her? What do you mean?"

"No, you don't have to walk back on it. But," there was a hopeful smile on her face, "you're planning to travel the world, aren't you?"

Polnareff blinked, before grinning sheepishly. His cheeks reddening slightly, "Jeez, Kirika. You can't be seriously telling me to just waltz back to her in the future and ask her out."

"Oi! What's with that response?" Kirika gave him a shove on the shoulder. "Yeah, I'm seriously telling you that! Just put on the charms like you always do, and then... Well, we'll see what happens from there. That's how it always goes, right?"

The man let out a laugh. He already said that he was fine not talking about it, but here he was. It honestly lifted a lot weight from his shoulders, and from the bottom of his heart, he was grateful. Grateful that he told Kirika about his simple dream of travelling the world, and for her to open his eyes to the wider possibilities of it. He didn't know if he himself would actually take it there, but it didn't hurt to dream further. To dream to come back to Maléna.

"Yeah. That's always how it is."
HEY GUYS!

Don't worry, I'm not announcing that this series is cancelled or anything, but maybe semi - hiatus. I'm not losing any passion for this story, but I feel a little bit stumped, so I'm going to get that in order at least. In the meantime, I'm going to do some edits and rewrites to some of the chapters, especially the interlude chapters. I'm probably going to delete one of them because of how redundant it felt. For chapters like the Singapore, I'm going to rewrite them a bit, so it's much more cohesive and actually has more meat in it, instead of a collection of random scenes with mostly nothing happening. The same goes for the latest chapter, I really need to fix that.

That's all for now!

Thanks for staying with me so far!

End Notes

Just a little description about OCs here;

Name: Kujo Kirika
Age: 15
Birthday: August 17th, 1972
Zodiac: Leo
Height: 165cm
Weight: 50kg
Blood type: AB
Hair color: hazel (tied into a ponytail with, a part was braided and circled on top of her head, pinned down with a sunflower - hydrangea hairclip)
Eye color: blue
Occupation: student (10th grade)
Favourite color: sunflower yellow
Favourite movie: The Shining
Favourite musician: Takeuchi Mariya
Favourite food: unagi kabayaki
Hobbies: writing songs, playing video games, and playing guitar

Name: Shimizu Himari
Age: 15
Birthday: April 1st, 1972
Zodiac: Aries
Height: 156cm
Weight: 48kg
Blood type: A+
Hair color: brown (layered cut, upper part cut into a bob, the rest separated into 3 parts, 2 curled and tied at the end with bells, the last part is braided back)
Eye color: black
Occupation: student (10th grade)
Favourite color: burgundy
Favourite actor: Sanada Hiroyuki
Favourite food: omurice
Hobbies: singing and photography

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